

I Peter 5:6-9

March 21/22, 2020

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn - "In Christ Alone"

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

Dear Friends in Christ,

The breakout of the coronavirus has humbled us and will continue to humble us until it is brought under control. It is not always God who smites us, but it is always God who lifts us up. God is always in control. If He allows an evil like this virus to infect the entire world, in due time He will lift us up and deliver us from this evil. We can be certain of His care. We have the Savior's rock solid commitment to believers on the cross and from the empty tomb. Our lives will be all right. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." (vs. 6-7). What a friend we have in Jesus.

The coronavirus is another evidence that life is a struggle. Problems don't evaporate but in the past week have escalated. The apostle Peter urges us to wake up and realize that we are up against the greatest and most fearsome enemy in the spirit world. Satan, the father of lies, is a dragon whose tail swept a third of the stars out the sky and seduced angels to join his rebellious conspiracy and is now committed to dragging you and me off to hell. We see the devil's work in the hearts of people doing sinful things during the coronavirus pandemic. People hoard paper products, take more than their share of basic food items, buy guns and ammo out of fear, and disregard official warnings of social distancing. "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (vs. 8). More talk is heard of fear and less of the faithful Father in Heaven.

The power of Satan has been broken by Christ. Christ has provided forgiveness for all sin. Satan's power to control and manipulate is broken, because the Spirit of the Lord lives in the believers and shares His strength to rebuke him. James 4:7 says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." One little word can fell him. Vs. 9 says, "Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the

world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” All over the world, the family of believers will suffer as we wait for the coming of the Lord.

Stay close to Jesus and His Word. The longest Gospel of our Lord is Matthew, 28 chapters. Let us read one every day. Try to do it the first thing each morning. There are 150 Psalms. Read one every night before you go to bed. Pray – for the Lord’s strength to live and grow in us. Pray for the safety of your loved ones. Pray for those infected with coronavirus. Pray for those who may not know their Savior and whose time of grace may be drawing to a close. Find ways to engage yourself in meaningful activity and find ways to help others who have needs during this trying time. Let us humble ourselves under God’s mighty hand and be His servants now more than ever. Amen.

Hymn - “Be Still My Soul”

We pray:

Dear Heavenly Father, Loving Savior, and Holy Spirit of grace, we pray for our souls to be strong during this time of testing. Direct us to do those things which will increase our faith, diminish our fears, and take away our worries. Give us the right words at the right time when people reach out to us. Help our medical people to find a solution to Covid - 19. If coronavirus infects those who are not ready for eternity, do not have faith, and have no hope for heaven, wake them up to the shortness of time and give them more grace to come to faith. We pray for those who attend the needs of the sick and for those who work in areas where the chance of infection is greater. We pray for doctors, nurses, hospital workers, police, fire fighters, first responders, and workers in stores who serve an unknown public. We pray for those who have lost employment to find ways to support their families and provide basic needs during this difficult time. Let families see the opportunity to strengthen their family bonds among themselves and draw closer to the Lord for comfort. Give our families with children of school age a spirit of cooperation to do their part to continue the education of their children under these unusual circumstances. As we see some bad examples of hoarding, let us use our blessings to share and help others. And finally dear Lord let us talk to You often in prayer for Your will to be done to bring us safely through this virus and somehow, somehow, work all for good. In Your saving name we pray. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you,
The Lord look on you with His favor and give you peace. Amen.

Hymn - “Go. My Children, with My Blessing”