

Shalom all.

I believe the Lord has put on my heart to send a second update on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first stage of the coronavirus outbreak was marked by **FEAR**, not only as significantly shown by the toilet paper fiasco but also by the hoarding of foodstuff by many. Being one of the seniors with shopping privileges between 7 and 8 in the morning, I see “non-senior” people coming out of supermarkets with nothing but a packet of toilet paper. This is what I shared in the first update nine days ago.

But now I sense the spiritual atmosphere is shifting.

The key word I am getting about this virus outbreak now in my spirit is **OFFENCE**, especially by those who have enjoyed the “freedom” offered by modern democratic societies for 70 years since WW2.

People, including, unfortunately, many Christians, have taken offence with the draconian measures taken by the government to encourage and now enforce social distancing. The Bondi Beach incident just a few days ago is a clear example.

Why is this? Because social distancing is too **DIFFICULT** to adhere to. We are by habit (that is, in the flesh) sociable beings. Many find comfort and security in their daily habits and routines. God has never called us to become creatures of habits walking according to the desires of the flesh, but to walk in the spirit. This, according to Matthew 24:10, surely must be one of the first of the signs the end-times.

“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.”

This scripture refers not only to offence with the gospel of the kingdom of God, but also to offence to government decrees to the general population, and even to opinions and statements by individuals.

COVID-19 is not a major disease compared with, say, smallpox, which can spread very rapidly and has caused significant mortalities and left many with horribly scarred faces. Fortunately, mass vaccination has prevented infection, and helped to eradicate it. However, coronavirus spreads very easily, with devastating consequences in the aged population and in some others.

We have seen over the past few years how people of the world have taken offence with Christians, claiming



that anything a Christian says is hate speech. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is an offence to them.

However, even more alarming are certain aspects of the Gospel being an offence to those who call themselves believers, born-again Christians, because “it is too difficult” or “it is not for today”. Just as Jesus warned us in Matthew 7:13-14.

*“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and **difficult is the way which leads to life**, and there are few who find it.*

and in John 6:60-66.

*“Therefore, many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?” When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, “**Does this offend you?** What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.” **From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.***

Many Christians find faith activities such as repenting and praying every day or even fasting as being unnecessary. They do not believe this to be a necessary feature of their walk with Christ, mainly because it is too difficult to do, what with the pressures of work and families. And now they take offence when church leaders preach on such topics, encouraging them to do these things. And they end up walking away from their church, and the Lord.

There have been many sermons and teaching on dealing with fear in our lives, but I cannot recall any sermons or teaching on dealing with offence against us or even our own offence against God. What born again believers must realise, the path that leads to life is

fraught with difficulties. Yet, there is a purpose to this, as explained in 1 Peter 1:6-9:

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

So how do we pray effective prayers against any offence hidden in our hearts? Our cry, our response should be one of daily repentance (already a great offence amongst many Christians), of daily taking up the cross and following Jesus (Luke 9:23), for our hearts and mind to be renewed daily and pure, our hands cleansed. Sanctification and holiness are words we should be embracing, even pursuing, not ignoring, and not being offended by.

It is also worthwhile to even have daily communion with the Lord using bread and wine, reflecting on John 6:22-66, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 11:23-34. Apparently, Smith Wigglesworth practised this to great effect.

The key to enduring is DISCIPLINE, self-discipline, which is what is needed these days, as today we see lack of discipline by many, especially amongst the millennial generation.

I believe the Lord is allowing the virus outbreak as a warning to get our lives right, have intimacy with Him, in preparation for the great awakening.

Remember, although difficult is the way which leads to life, we are to "rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Now, may the Lord himself, the Lord of peace, pour into you his peace in every circumstance and in every possible way. The Lord's tangible presence be with you all (2 Thess 3:16 TPT).

With brotherly love and blessings,

George

GEORGE PERRY

National Chairman

Full Gospel Business Australia