

PANDEMIC

You hear about it on the news almost every day. What is a pandemic? According to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, the definition of a pandemic is: (a disease) occurring over a wide geographic area and affecting an exceptionally high proportion of the population.

What would you expect to happen during a pandemic?

- people buying hand sanitizer
- people buying dust masks
- people stocking up on medication
- isolation (people staying home from work and school)
- hospitals and clinics to be full

Breaking News!

- Pandemic responsible for 2,871 lives lost TODAY in the United States
- 20,149 lives lost in the LAST WEEK in the United States
- 87,312 lives lost in the LAST MONTH in the United States
- 1,047,745 lives lost in the LAST YEAR in the United States
- The current rate of lives lost is expected to continue with no end in sight!

What if I told you that these are numbers of a real pandemic?

A Pandemic of Sin is occurring right now in the United States!

Breaking News! This is REAL!

- Pandemic of Sin responsible for minimum of 2,871 souls lost TODAY in the United States
- Minimum of 20,149 souls lost in the LAST WEEK in the United States
- Minimum of 87,312 souls lost in the LAST MONTH in the United States
- Minimum of 1,047,745 souls lost in the LAST YEAR in the United States
- The current rate of souls lost is expected to continue with no end in sight!

- The day Jesus returns - a minimum of 125,029,190 souls will be lost that day in the United States alone!

I know what you are thinking. How could I know this? Let's look at the Bible.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

It is clear that Jesus is talking about many will be lost and go to Hell, and few will be saved and go to Heaven. Therefore, taking a minimum simple majority, at least 51% will be lost. It could be and probably will be a much larger percentage.

The current population of the United States is approximately 307,212,123 and 20.2% of these are age 14 and under. (The World Factbook) Since the data I obtained gave a breakout of those 14 and under, I will arbitrarily assume that those age 14 and under are below the age of accountability. Therefore, we have 245,155,274 "adults" of the age of accountability. The death rate in the United States is .838%. (The World Factbook) Therefore, 2,054,401 adults die in the United States each year. If just 51% of those that die are lost, 1,047,745 souls are lost every year in the United States. When Jesus returns, 51% of the 245,155,274 will be lost or 125,029,190 lost souls.

If this were a disease pandemic of this magnitude, I think we all know the panic that would be taking place. What about the real pandemic of sin?

What would you expect to happen?

- Bibles selling like crazy
- Churches overflowing
- People begging for personal Bible study
- People concerned about salvation
- People warning friends and family
- People denying the pandemic is real
- People saying it will not be that bad

The pandemic of sin is real. *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:"* (Romans 3:23). For the lost the pandemic of sin is worse than imaginable. *"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the*

Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:27-29)

What are you going to do?

- Make certain of your own salvation
- Warn friends, family, and loved ones
- Take advantage of opportunities to reach the lost
- Debate doctrine or do what the Bible says

Self examination is necessary. *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"* (II Corinthians 13:5). *"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."* (Hebrews 4:1)

Those in danger must be warned. *"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."* (Matthew 9:37-38). *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost."* (Matthew 28:19)

The only cure for the pandemic of sin is Jesus Christ. *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* (John 8:24). *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)

How does one obtain salvation in Jesus Christ? By following what is written in the Bible, which will judge all of us one day. Jesus said, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."* (John 12:48)

One must believe. *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* (John 8:24)

One must have faith. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he*

is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

One must confess Jesus. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:36-37). Not just once - but throughout our life. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32)

One must repent. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" (Acts 17:30)

One must be baptized. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16)

One must remain faithful. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13)

When we have done what the Lord requires of us in His Word, He adds us to the church.

"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47)

Many times we worry about the wrong things. Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)

A disease pandemic may or may not happen. As long as we are ready to meet Jesus Christ in judgment, it will not matter. However, the pandemic of sin is a reality that we cannot escape from. Are you prepared to meet our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in judgment? If not, why not make preparations today?

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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: How do we as Christians respond to people that are difficult?

ANSWER: Man was made to be a relational creature. This is due largely to the fact that we are made in the image of God, and God is a relational God. Before the world was, God existed in three persons. As three independent persons in the God head existed, we presuppose that there was a way in which each related to the other. We know by countless passages that the relationship that existed was one of complete harmony and cooperation. John tells us,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."(John 1:1)

It was a united relationship that was expressed by the concept of being one. Jesus in His prayer in the Garden referenced the relationship He had with the Father when He said,

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."
(John 17:20-21)

From this passage we find that our relationships are both vertical and horizontal. First we note that we are to be one with one another. This is what we refer to as a horizontal relationship. We also note that He asks that we be one in God, so the world may believe. This is the vertical relationship that we have as God's people. We also should make note of the fact that the vertical relationship began when God created man and the horizontal relationship began with the creation of Eve.

Proper relationships in both areas are designed to give God glory. By this we mean drawing attention to the greatness, power, love, and all of the attributes that make Him God. However, the beauty of relationships has been seriously tainted.

When we think of sin we must make the connection between sin and its negative impact upon our relationships. Sin severed the relationship man had with Holy God, for God cannot tolerate sin. It also impacted the relationship between Adam and Eve. As we read the Genesis account we see the immediate consequence of sin in these relationships.

We find Adam and Eve hiding from the presence of God. We find that they had a need to hide from one another. Where transparency existed now a tremendous desire to "cover up" replaced it. In addition they began to shift blame and accuse one another of the problems they were facing. Relationship problems had begun.

However, we know that God had a plan to deal with sin and its fallout. Through Jesus Christ we can be reconciled with God and by our growth improve our relationship with others. While all experience relationship problems from time to time, we do sometimes find ourselves dealing with people who present for us chronic problems. Often we think only of the difficult people in our lives but we must humbly remember that we can also be another person's difficulty!

Much has been written on difficult people and the type of difficulties they create. One article I read recently identified some common types. Note the following types:

The Tank- This is someone who runs all over you if you let them.

The Talker- They talk you to death usually about themselves.

The Pin- They deflate everyone's enthusiasm.

The Volcano- Explosive temper.

The Baby- Chronically complains.

The Nit Picker- Always finding problems with something.

The Know it all- Wisdom will perish with them.

While there are other types, these should suffice to give an example of the types we have. At this point it would do us all well to stop and examine ourselves. Do any of these descriptions describe me?

As with all things that sin has wrought, God has a way to deal with them. So it is with difficult people. All throughout scripture we are given directions for ways to deal with relationship problems. We must remember that dealing with difficult people depends on us. We are unable

to change them. We can help them change if it is their desire to do so. But the emphasis must be placed on us and our response to them. As we have noted in previous articles, God does not hold us responsible for another person's actions, but we are accountable to Him for our response to them.

The first principle for dealing with difficult people is love. We are not talking about love the way our culture defines it. Biblical love is not some warm fuzzy feeling or attraction toward someone. Rather Biblical love is an action done toward someone. Consider for example the command to love your enemies. In Matthew 5:43-45, we read,

"You have heard it said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven..."

As we examine this passage, Jesus did not command us to feel a certain way. Rather He commanded us to treat our enemies a certain way. Notice that we love by blessing those who curse us, doing good to those who hate us, and praying for those who trouble us. All of these are actions that are actions of love. Compare these actions to the actions of love as described in I Corinthians 13:4-7.

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

The second principle in dealing with difficult people is to practice forgiveness. Paul writes,

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

The third principle we mention is that of seeking the way of peace. We are admonished in Romans 12:18,

"If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

Note the focus here is your response. As for your part of the situation, that which is under your control, you live peaceably with all.

Because of the importance of this subject we will continue our thoughts in the next article. At that time we will look at the life of Jesus and examine His method of dealing with the difficult people in His life.

SAM DICK
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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
September 3 – 6	Fourth Avenue Algood, TN	Tony Whiddon (Roanoke, AL)
September 4 – 6	Valley Valley, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
September 11 – 13	Fayetteville Fairburn, GA	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
September 13 – 16	Antioch Livingston, TN	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
September 14 – 18	Chestnut Grove Parksville, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
September 27 – 30	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	Various Speakers

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. God gave the Israelites a deliverer named Ehud. What fact was mentioned about him?
2. In describing God's greatness, what three constellations did Job mention?

3. Who was spared from slaughter by the six men with battle-axes according to Ezekiel's vision?
4. Who became upset when Jesus healed a woman on the Sabbath who had been bent over for eighteen years?
5. In Paul's writings to Timothy, Paul said some will appear in the latter times forbidding what two things?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How old was Joshua at his death? 110 YEARS OLD
(Josh. 24:29)
2. Ezra left Babylon to travel to Jerusalem, a distance of about nine hundred miles. How long did this journey take? FOUR MONTHS (Ezra 7:9)
3. Jeremiah said that in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, cakes were being baked for whom? THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN (Jer. 7:18)
4. In the book of Mark, what did the disciples think Jesus was when He walked across the water to their boat? A GHOST (Mark 6:49)
5. According to the Law, there is no remission of sin without what? SHEDDING OF BLOOD (Heb. 9:22)