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COVID-19 Statement 3/15/2020

The topic that has dominated both the news and conversation has been the COVID-19 pandemic that has swept the nation. Throughout the night Wednesday I both heard and participated in conversations about all that has been going on. Reports updates yesterday have the total count of COVID-19 cases in Michigan at 25 with 26 still pending test results.

How should we respond to this situation as believers? Currently there are two primary responses to the pandemic. The first response is to deny that there is a real situation at all. Generally, these are the responses that state that this is nothing more than a flu, or the regular virus scares that seem to line up with election years. The other is to panic. These are the responses that act as though this is the end of the world and that God has left his throne.

To those in the first category let me encourage you to practice humility. Do not pretend that you are an expert. The reality is that none of us are. For this we must rely on the authority that God himself has placed over us and honor them. They are taking this very seriously, and as a result, so should we. Further, in communication with missionaries around the world (in countries that don't care about our elections) COVID-19 is a very real issue. So, there is something to this.

To those in the second category, let me encourage you to look to God. He has not left his throne. He still controls every molecule in existence, even seemingly rogue molecules like this virus. Don't act like an unbeliever. See God's sovereign hand.

To all I would recommend that this is a good time to take a break from social media and the news. Spend time in the Word and prayer, read a book, take time with your family. Don't participate in the foolishness of social media.

As you no doubt know, on Thursday, Governor Whitmer Ordered all K-12 schools to be closed for three weeks beginning on Monday. On Friday, she ordered all events of 250 people or more be cancelled. While neither of those directly impacts us as a church, they are indicators of the seriousness with which our government is taking the situation. As a result, I will be meeting with the deacon's following the morning service to determine our response to this crisis. We will inform you through the website, social media, email, text, and phone, of the decisions that are made. We have already postponed the BRIDGE activity that was to take place this afternoon to April 26.



At this time there are some important things I would like to encourage you to do:

First, the greatest danger appears to be to those who are 60 years old and older and/or those who have diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, kidney failure, or other chronic medical conditions. I would ask that you please pray for our senior adults and anyone who has immune deficiencies. Look for ways to encourage them. Look for ways to serve them. And please consider them as you speak about this virus.

Second, if you are part of these groups and feel that for your protection you need to stay home, please do so. You are not forsaking the assembling of the believers if for a time, for your own health and safety you decide to self-quarantine. Please call or email me or the church so that we can care for you in this time. Please let us know of any needs that you have. This is the time for our body to come together and care for those in need.

Third, please pray for all the heroic healthcare workers who are among the most vulnerable as they care for the sick.

Fourth, please stay home if you are sick (meaning any symptoms of from the flu, cold, or other illnesses) or have generally compromised health in any way. Please do not feel guilty about doing so. You can listen to the sermons on our website or via podcast. There are posted by 10 am on Monday mornings.

Fifth, please practice good hygiene habits. Wash your hands regularly. We have hand sanitizer placed throughout our buildings. Please make use of them.

Sixth, we encourage fellowship. However, as the better part of wisdom, we would ask that you not shake hands or hug for the time being and honor each other's personal space. Instead of shaking hands, perhaps smile, wave, give a little bow or head nod, or air high-5.

Seventh, please be assured that we make every effort to keep our facilities clean and disinfected. Debbie spends hours every week preparing our buildings for the next gathering. This will not stop and we are in a good place.

Eighth, the cancellations and economics of this will cause several challenges to our members. Let us seek to be sensitive to how we can help one another out in this time. With school cancellations, some will be in need of people to watch their children. If you are available to watch children, or if you are in need of someone to watch your children, please call the church office so we can help coordinate. With the economic ramifications of this pandemic, some may find themselves in financial trouble. Please let the church know if you find yourself in need.

Ninth, during this time, please do not forget to give towards the great commission. If you are unable to attend the service, there are still three ways to give. You can mail your check to the church, you can arrange to



drop it off to myself or Justin, or you can set it aside and bring it with you the next time you come.

Tenth, use this time as an opportunity to share the gospel. Criticizing this event is not helpful to the gospel. Panic over this event is not helpful to the gospel. Sharing the sovereignty of God is helpful to the gospel.

During this time, common sense precautions are wise, God-honoring, and others preferring. Panic or ignoring the realities are foolish, God-ignoring, and selfish. Let us be wise in our responses and interactions. Let us remember who God is and what he does.

In Christ Alone,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave', written in a cursive style.

Pastor Dave

