



Wayne's Words

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Fearless Common Sense

As you receive this we are on the cusp of re-emerging from our cocoons into the light of day. Some may be fearful of what this means as we venture out into a world where Covid continues to be a reality, despite the protective layer of vaccination.

We understand that those fully vaccinated can still contract the disease, though with far less likelihood of hospitalisation. They can also infect others, though are not infectious for as long a period or to the same degree.

How is a follower of Christ to re-engage in such a context?

I turn to Psalm 91 which is a powerful assurance of God's protection amid overwhelming dangers. While it cannot be used to guarantee immunity from what is common to human beings, it does underline the call for us to trust God and to reject fear.

'Those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust" Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence...You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness nor the plague that destroys at midday...For he will command his angels to guard you in all your ways.'

Ps 91:1-3, 5-6,11.

You will recognise this last phrase was put to Jesus in his wilderness temptations by Satan, tempting him to jump from the pinnacle of the temple. Jesus replied, "It is written, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.""

So, while we are given assurance to put our trust in the Lord and to resist the ever-present seduction of fear, we are not to be foolhardy and to place ourselves unnecessarily in danger. It is therefore consistent for the believer trusting in their God to be masked and distanced and to sanitise hands out of respect and care for others as much as for themselves. For those immune-compromised or unwell, it is sensible to stay isolated until recovered.

At the same time, resist the temptation to hide away. Recognise the possibility of the 'Stockdale Syndrome'. This describes the experience of a person who has become so conditioned to isolation that the very prospect of freedom and interaction is itself anxiety-producing and instinctively resisted. Invite the Spirit of Jesus to fill you with his love, confidence and wisdom as we re-engage with one another and with the world that love calls us to, and for which Jesus gave his life.

God bless you,

Wayne