

How to Think about Worship
Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic, Pt. 2
5 April 2020
Grace Covenant Church

- I. How to Think about Our Modified Worship in Spiritual Exile
 - A. A Virtual Gathering is Never a Substitute for a Physical Gathering, but it is an Accommodation (Heb 10:24, 25)
 - 1. Live Streaming Worship is not corporate worship (CHURCH IS NOT CHURCH UNLESS THE CHURCH IS GATHERED)
 - B. This Accommodation is Important and Necessary in these Trying Times (Rev 1:10)

- II. Is it ever legitimate for the Government to Ban the Public Gathering of Christians?
 - A. Social Distancing is a Legitimate Thing (Lev 13 & 14)
 - 1. What is the principle or precedent here? The protection of the physical lives of the people of God (Num 5:3)
 - 2. While it was only the leper who was quarantined to stop the spread, the difference between leprosy and COVID-19 is that leprosy is immediately detectable whereas COVID-19 symptoms are not.
 - B. Christian Citizens are the Best Citizens (Romans 13:1–7)
 - 1. Obey government because they are servants of God (vv. 4, 6; cf. Gen 41:34; Cf. Gen 50:20; Isa 45:1)
 - 2. Obey Government Because it is Instituted by God and to Resist it is to Resist God (vv. 1–2)
 - 3. Obey Government Because are there for your Good (v. 4)
 - a. Government is seeking to protect the health of the citizens under their watch.
 - b. They are NOT singling out religious organizations.
 - c. They are calling us to the second great commandment (Matt 22:36–40)

- III. What about the Command to Corporately Worship (Heb 10:24, 25)?
 - A. Like many commands in the bible, there are often exceptions
 - 1. Providentially hindered
 - 2. David and the showbread of priest (Matt 12:1–8; cf. 1 Sam 21:1–6; Exod 25:30; Lev 24:5–9)

Conclusion:

- A. Let this famine of corporate worship have its intended effect in our lives.
- B. Exhibit the strength of the Virtuous woman (Prov 31:25)

Questions for Discussion and Application:

1. *Why* did the Jews have to “modify” their worship while in exile?
2. Read Hosea 14:1–2. *How* did the Jews “modify” their worship while in exile?
3. How are the New Covenant people of God commanded to worship?
4. How do we “modify” our worship in spiritual exile?
5. Is a “streaming service” an adequate substitute for corporate worship? Why or why not?
6. Is it ever legitimate for the government to ban the public gatherings of Christians?
7. Read Romans 13:1–7. How is the government a “servant of God?”
8. Read Isaiah 45:1. In what way was Cyrus God’s anointed one (i.e., messiah)? What does this say about how God works in the secular realm?
9. In what way is the government ban on meetings of 10 or more people an application of the second great commandment (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself)?
10. Has this “famine of corporate worship” in any way changed how you view or appreciate corporate worship? How so?