

Spiritual Virus

I'm certainly not the first to note or make comparisons and applications from the "physical" virus we are currently fighting to the "spiritual" virus of sin. I'm sure many of my preaching brethren have spoken or written using similar (or even some of the same) comparisons. In fact, it's hard *not to notice* them. We'll consider a few of these comparisons from 2Corinthians 6 in a moment, but first, let's back up a bit to set the stage so to speak...

The church at Corinth had been "infected" with the *spiritual* virus of sin. It's symptoms were readily apparent from the first (recorded) letter Paul sent them: *division*, 1:10; an apparent predilection to *worldly over divine wisdom*, 1:18 – 2:16; 3:18-23; *spiritual immaturity*, 3:1-2; *carnal or fleshly-mindedness*, 3:2-17; a willingness to *go beyond the limits of revealed truth*, 4:6; *arrogant acceptance of or fellowship with sin*, 5:1-13; *going to (civil) law with one another*, 6:1-11; and, *sexual immorality*, 6:12-20.

It's fairly clear that the Corinthians "got it" for the most part in his second letter, "*just as you also partially did understand us*," 1:14. But, it is also obvious that neither their understanding nor obedience was complete, "*I hope you will understand until the end*," 1:13. Hence, we have 2Corinthians generally, and to the point of this article, 2Corinthians 6:14-18 specifically. So, please note the following:

- "*Do not be **bound together** with unbelievers*," v.14a;
- "*for what **partnership** have righteousness and lawlessness*," v.14b;
- "*or what **fellowship** has light with darkness?*" v.14c;
- "*Or what **harmony** has Christ with Belial*," v.15a;
- "*what has a believer **in common** with an unbeliever?*" v.15b;
- "*Or what **agreement** has the temple of God with idols?*" v.16a.

It is easy to see the dangers of being "*bound together*" with, in "*partnership*" with, in "*fellowship*" with, in "*harmony*" with, having "*commonality*" with, and in being in "*agreement*" with someone who is infected with a **physical** virus. We're washing our hands constantly, isolating ourselves as much as possible, being careful about what we touch and where we go, and maintaining safe distances through social distancing from this potentially dangerous **physical** virus. But, the point the Holy Spirit is making through Paul to the Corinthians is not about a potentially dangerous physical virus, but the certainly *deadly* (cf. Romans 6:23) **spiritual** virus of "sin"!

What if we took this **spiritual** virus, and protections from it, as seriously as we have and do this current physical virus? Would such make us more cautious regarding with whom we are "*bound together with unbelievers*"? Would it make us more careful about our "*partnerships with lawlessness*"? Would it make us more particular about "*fellowshipping darkness*" and how much we "*harmonize with Belial*"? Would it cause us to re-examine what we have "*in common with unbelievers*"? I think it not only would, but also should.

Now, let's continue to look at our text for some application solutions. Remember that because God says He will *dwell in, walk among, be their God* (and *they shall be His people*), v.16, **they/we** therefore should:

- "*Come out from their midst and be separate*," v.17a;
- "*And do not touch what is unclean*," v.17b.

The result of this *becoming* and *maintaining* purity is: being *welcomed by God*, v.17c; as *His children*, v.18. Of course, the opposite is also true when we don't *become* and *maintain* purity. As with many things, the "physical" teaches us much about the "spiritual." If we can understand contagions, contamination, and dangers of a "physical" virus, surely we can also see the same for the "spiritual" virus of sin. Do this: think about all you are doing to keep you and those you love safe from Covid-19. Now apply those same types of precautions to the "spiritual" virus sin. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)