

7 Truths to Hang on to During the COVID-19 Crisis

By [Rick Warren](#)

The last few weeks have been full of unprecedented changes in our lives and in our ministries. I know many pastors are trying to figure out how to minister in a period of social distancing, how to serve the most at-risk populations in our communities, and how to sustain ministries as tithes and offerings decline.

None of us have been trained to do this. We've never ministered through an epidemic like the COVID-19 before. Fear is everywhere. I'm sure you're wrestling with it, too.

At times like this, we need to hang on to truths that don't change. Pastor, you know these truths. You've probably even preached them multiple times before. But during times of crisis, it's really important to remember the fundamentals. The Bible emphasizes getting the facts before you take major actions in your life.

Here are seven facts to share with your congregation:

Not everything you hear is true. Not everyone with an opinion on the Internet, television, and social media knows what they're talking about. You need to be selective with who you listen to during this time. Many people in the coming days will have their own agendas—financial, political, etc.—for this crisis.

The Bible says in Proverbs 13:16, *"The prudent man always acts out of knowledge"* (NIV). In other words, act out of knowledge and not fear. Make it a priority to get your facts from people who are trustworthy.

Not everyone is at equal risk in this pandemic. The history of COVID-19 is very clear. People over the age of 60 and those who have preexisting conditions are most vulnerable. If you're in these categories, please be careful. I know, as a pastor, you want to be serving your congregation. You need to look for safe ways to do that. Be faithful but not foolish.

This will pass. The Bible tells us there will be trials. First Peter 4:12 says, *"Dear friends, don't be surprised or shocked that you are going through testing that is like walking through fire"* (CEV). These are tough times, but they won't last forever.

We need to do what the health professionals recommend. We need to take the common sense actions that will decrease the spread of this virus. We won't need to make these changes forever. Our churches will gather again.

Focus on what's unchanging not what is changing. There will be many changes to your world, your community, and your ministry in the coming weeks. It's safe to say you

don't even know all the changes this pandemic will have on you and your community. You'll do things to serve your community and your congregation you never dreamed of a year ago. Be flexible, but remember what hasn't changed.

The Bible says, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8 NIV). In the midst of all this change, you can count on that truth. You can also know that God's love for you and your community has never changed. God's call on your life hasn't changed. Don't let all the changes make you lose sight of everything that is still the same.

God will go through it with you. This virus didn't surprise God. He will walk through every bit of it with us. You may feel alone at times. You may feel like no one understands the demands of ministry that are upon you right now. But we will never be alone.

I encourage you to remind yourself of Isaiah 43:2 during this time: "*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze*" (NIV). Focus on that truth and not all the noise on the Internet right now. It will replace your worry with worship.

This is not the end of the story. The Bible says, "*In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again . . . because we know that God raised the Lord Jesus to life*" (2 Corinthians 4:8, 14 CEV). Easter reminds us that we win no matter what happens. Even if this virus takes our lives, we will go straight into the presence of God. On that day, all of our pain, sickness, and sorrow will be over. There won't be a COVID-19 virus in heaven.

We don't know what the future holds, but we do know who holds it.

God wants to use our churches to help others. I know your church is going through an incredible challenge right now. But God doesn't want to just take your church through this crisis. He doesn't just want your church to survive during this period. He wants it to thrive. This is the difference between how we deal with pain as believers and how the world does. The church sees every need in the world as an open door for ministry.

I'm praying your church will start many new ministries out of these difficult days. Today you don't even know the kinds of challenges your community will face, but God does. This will be an opportunity for churches to shine.

I'm praying for our churches. This virus didn't sneak up on God. It won't stop the church. Jesus himself reminds us that "*all the powers of hell will not conquer*" the church (Matthew 16:18 NIV).

Rest in that truth.