

Germ

PRESENT, BUT
NOT IN CONTROL



WHAT IS HAPPENING?
ZOOM, ZOOM, ZOOM!



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FAMILY



Germ

noun

- 1 a microorganism, especially when disease-producing; microbe.
- 2 a bud, offshoot, or seed.
- 3 something that serves as a source or initial stage for subsequent development

Germ is not something I normally think about. I can't see them. I DO know they exist. I even know that they can cause problems. But, I have to admit that I resonate with the theories that allergies are caused by environments kept too antiseptic, and I've always felt that my lack of strict cleanliness was actually a gift to my children. Ha ha! Well, it is not something to joke about now.

I've been fascinated by the effects on my psychology by both the spread and the response to COVID-19. Suddenly, a cough by someone nearby catches my full attention and my thoughts turn to chastising the person in my mind for even leaving their home and exposing the rest of us to their germs. As I reach for a bar to hold on the bus or a handle to open a door, I pull down my sleeve or try to push it with an elbow, or pull out a wipe to touch a surface - an action that weeks ago would not have even tickled my thoughts. Suddenly, germs seem everywhere. I worry about myself. And, I worry about others. I judge other people's interpretations of government recommendations for public health and their actions, which I deem to be flouting the rules and endangering all of us.

When I get past an initial reflexive response and engage my heart and mind, I can move to a place of trust in God's protection and a heart of compassion... perhaps the person out of the home and coughing has no one that can help them run this necessary errand? Can I be of assistance? Even so, I can't deny those other thoughts.

I've been blessed to see many people's hearts filled with the Spirit and respond with faith in Christ. In a majority of these cases, the precipitating event that caught their heart and mind was a

细菌
xìjūn

This word is most closely associated with "bacteria", but can also be used to refer to bacteria and viruses more generally. The first character means that it is small, fine, or detailed. Little, living things. In English we have a phrase, "it has a life of its own." Isn't it amazing how seemingly small things in our lives create oversized effects? Jesus teaches us that even a tiny bit of faith has so much power that it can move mountains (Matthew 17:20). Faith is a living thing. Sometimes we may feel like our faith is small, but don't let your perception of its size discourage you! Your faith has a life of its own, gifted by God, and sustaining you to overcome everything - even 细菌!

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recognition of the existence of sin in themselves. Prior to the event, they thought they were a good person living a good life and going along day-by-day. Or for some, they didn't think that, but, for these people, they didn't see that there was any place for hope in the fate they were dealt. In each of these cases, the awareness of sin in themselves became something they suddenly could see everywhere.

One of the things that I think has been particularly distressing about this pandemic situation is experiencing a loss of control over many characteristics of our life. Our scope of control has been reduced to a tiny square around ourselves. So too, have I seen in the response of people comprehending sin for the first time. Their scope of control suddenly shrinks, and they understand that they can not overcome this sin within their own power. If they've been blessed with the Gospel of love and redemption, they become overwhelmed by the presence and power of grace from the God of all creation.

As we struggle with our individual response to the impact of COVID-19 on ourselves, our families, our communities, I pray that God can keep our hearts fixed on Him and the power He has over all of Creation, even this germ, and that we can see how His power is sustaining us in His Word, the body of Christ, and the amazing resources of the world we are blessed to steward. *Isaiah 26:9 My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.*

Zoom Zoom Zoom

Worship, meetings, gatherings - these are all happening on Zoom. A few months ago I thought this was a verb meaning "to move quickly". Now, it is a verb meaning "connecting me with a bunch of people online". Many of my small group teaching sessions have been completely cancelled since parents are managing schooling needs for their children at home. My Friday Bible study group, however, is not to be deterred by anything. When gatherings of more than 4 people were prohibited by the government, this group shifted immediately to Zoom without missing a week. While I expected this social-distancing time to be one with few opportunities to connect with new people, God continues to surprise me. During this time I've met a mother who cares deeply for her family and is in a time of discernment for her family situation. She has learned to pray, and her expression of joy at this discovery is awesome.

Prayers

- For people worldwide struggling with loss- loss of life, loss of job, loss of social connections, and more. In the midst of loss may they experience the peaceful presence of Christ and hope in eternity.
- Please pray for the continued efforts of containment worldwide, effectiveness in medical responses, wisdom and discernment by those in authority.
- Thanksgiving for my friend's prayer life.
- For the body of Christ to be awoken to new ways to connect and support people and for these lessons to be sustained long after the worries of this current pandemic have passed.
- Thanksgiving for Eliada's education and her completion of high school this month.
- For people to be granted clarity regarding travel plans in the coming months.

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