

Distance that damages

There are lots in the headlines about the wearing of face masks. People have different perspectives about the value of them. Perhaps you've been wearing them as part of your way of relating to people over the last few weeks and months or perhaps so far not at all.

There a range of views about all this but whatever our views we recognise the heart behind it - to want to protect the wearer, and to protect those around to avoid catching Covid-19. It's a barrier that is seeking to be about keeping people safer.

When may think of the idea of protection, of keeping distance, of creating safety barriers- but never do that with God, never barrier yourself off from the Lord.

God is a God who calls us openly in Jesus to himself with great love and welcome. When we see people in the Bible avoiding the Lord it is so often because they are very aware of their own sinfulness, of how they fall short of how they're meant to be and relate to God.

Sometimes we can get a real sense of our sin;
'did I really think that?'
'did I really feel that about that person?'
'did I really want to do that?'
'did I actually do that?!'

Some enjoy sin - and the very temporary satisfaction, power and sense of control it can give. But none of us are perfect by any means. All of us are messed up - what the Bible calls sinners. But the thing is to go to God find safety, forgiveness and reconciliation in his love.

That's why the Father sent His Son; for a people who are broken, messed up and sinful to bring them into peaceful relationship with Himself. Not because people are good and perfect but because He is good, perfect and welcoming – and so Jesus wonderfully is the way of forgiveness and reconciliation for those that come to Him.

When we see Jesus getting angry in the Gospels - and it's always a good godly anger - it's because He sees some of the rich and religious say that God is not into changing the life for the better of 'that kind of person'. Jesus is very indignant if we communicate that our Father God is a 'god' that wants to keep people at a distance from him.

The Christian God is stunningly relational, welcoming and perhaps to some people's views seemingly not very god-like - in how He rejoices and celebrates and welcomes people coming to Him and finding their lives transformed by Him.

So, whether you wear a mask today or not, don't try and put any spiritual masks between you and God. He knows you.

Two things: God knows you are far more messed up and sinful than you think and feels you are. You cannot shock or surprise God.

But he also loves you so much more than you think or feel.
You cannot remove his love for you.

But there is one thing that you can do - and that is put a barrier up between you and God.

See this verse from the Book of Revelation - and this is to a church who has become complacent, lukewarm, apathetic and trusting in their own wealth – they have lost warm-hearted intimacy with Jesus. Jesus says this:

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me” (Revelation 3:20)

Jesus longs to come in and having to a fellowship with us. Don't keep Him outside. Don't spiritually socially distance or put a spiritual mask on with God. We want to be utterly distanced from and protected from the Covid-19 virus but we should want to be open to and connected to the Lord.

We are always worse off leaving Jesus on the outside of our lives.

If you are not a Christian right now welcome Jesus to be your best friend. You will never regret it. He has your best interest at heart for this life and the next. Find out more of what he's done for you.

And if you are a Christian who has lost something of that warm intimacy - invite the Lord afresh – reconnect. Be open to God. It is always better when we do.

Amen