

God is calling us to a renewed commitment to declare His uncompromised Gospel to this dying world. He is calling us to reaffirm that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and the only Way to God the Father, as Jesus Himself told us in John 14:6.

Some have predicted that the COVID-19 pandemic will spark a revival in the church. Well, revival *might* come to the church—but only if God’s people remove the idols from their lives and get serious about obeying Jesus and staying true to God’s Word.

There will be no revival in the church so long as we remain obsessed with entertaining ourselves, chasing wealth and seeking sinful gratification. There will be no revival in the church so long as we remain focused on worldly political and social agendas instead of the Kingdom agenda of the Lord Jesus Christ. There will be no revival in the church until we begin praying with and for our children while preparing them to stand firm in the troubled days ahead.

In Old Testament times, revival came when the people of Israel destroyed their idols and turned back to God. If we truly want revival, let us confess our sins and ask God to topple the idols in our lives.

#### A VIRAL GOSPEL

For 13 years, from A.D. 249 to 262, the Roman Empire was terrorized by a pandemic known as the Plague of Cyprian. The unknown disease was probably spread by the movement of the Roman army throughout the empire. The plague was named for St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who encouraged the faithful during the pandemic. At its height, the disease was killing 5,000 people a day in the city of Rome alone.

The plague triggered the so-called “Decian Persecution,” named for the Roman Emperor Decius. He required every citizen to make a sacrifice to the Roman gods. Those who refused would be imprisoned or executed.

Many Christians refused to make the pagan sacrifices—and they were blamed for the spread of the plague.

Yes, some Christians yielded to persecution and defected from the faith. But many others remained faithful unto death. The church in that day impacted the world for Christ. Many were driven far from home by persecution—and they shared the Gospel wherever they went. When they encountered sick and dying plague victims, they offered care and the Good News. The Plague of Cyprian spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and expanded the church into previously unreached corners of the empire.

In our own era, we Christians must find ways to redeem the sufferings caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Let’s ask God to use this event for His glory and for the spread of the Gospel. Let’s boldly share the Good News of Jesus Christ with everyone we meet.

While wearing our masks to prevent the spread of the virus, we can talk to our neighbors, doctors and grocery store clerks about Christ. We can share God’s truth with people on Instagram and Facebook and Zoom. We can speak peace to their fears, and we can love them into the Kingdom of God.

We face difficult times ahead, but we know that our faith shines brightest in the darkness. Be alert to opportunities. Remain faithful to God’s Word. Remove sin and idolatry from your heart.

Then prepare to see God do amazing things through the faithfulness of your life.

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THE SCRIPTURE QUOTATION IS TAKEN FROM THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.

MICHAEL YOUSSEF IS THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF LEADING THE WAY AND THE FOUNDING PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES IN ATLANTA. HIS LATEST BOOK IS “SAVING CHRISTIANITY?: THE DANGER IN UNDERMINING OUR FAITH—AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.”

