

Good morning, Everyone.

Yesterday, while picking up a few necessities, I engaged a clerk and a shelf-stocker in conversation.



Shelf-stocker: *What do you think of this virus?*

Me: *Well, I'm a pastor, and I'm sending letters to our church family every day to help them think about this just as the Bible says.*

Shelf-stocker: *Seems like God's trying to get people's attention, doesn't it?*

Me: *How you getting along with this virus crisis?*

Clerk: *Oh, alright, I guess. I just moved here.*

Me: *Oh, where'd you come from?*

Clerk: *From Seattle. But (quickly), that was **months** before the virus hit (i.e. it wasn't **me** who brought it to Greenville!).*

Me: *(As our conversation drew to a close). If you have a Bible you could start to read it. Try Psalms.*

Clerk: *Literally grimaced at me and didn't say another word.*

Those are pretty much the two reactions, aren't they? Either *God is dealing with us, or, I don't want to hear about it.*

I walked out to the car really swept by sadness. How great must be the darkness when anyone in America, that has been so blessed with the Light of God's Word, grimaces when it's even mentioned.

But, of course, our chief concern has to be that we aren't the ones grimacing. And we could be. Our spirits can duck just as uncomfortably at certain things scripture confronts us about in a crisis.

Just now, while writing this letter, I reached for a little, leather journal (in which I pen especially good quotations). I was thinking about an entry on suffering that I remembered was somewhere in the journal. I opened at random. Page 62 fell open first.

Here's the entry at the top of that page. It's not about suffering. It's from John Newton's 1st sermon at his new church in London (Dec. 19, 1779). And it's about what he was proposing *as a kind of motto* for his new ministry; *Speaking the truth in love* (Eph. 4:15).

Every attempt to disguise or soften any branch of this truth, in order to accommodate it to the prevailing taste around us, either to avoid the displeasure, or to court the favor, of our fellow mortals, must be an affront to the majesty of God, and an act of treachery to men.

Was that Providential? That the little journal opened to that very quotation? When I'm writing about *grimacing* at God's Word?

So! No grimacing at the Bible! Especially by us (smile). No matter what God speaks to us about.

Psalm 141:5 Let the righteous [especially God!] smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it.

Reassurance:

Now for some welcome comfort. It's from Charles Bridges' exposition of Psalm 119. See if you can take hold of it and ask the Lord to display it to you as we go forward through whatever lies ahead.

All [God's people] have been taught in one school. All have known the power of affliction in some of its varied forms of inward conflict or outward trouble. All have found a time of affliction a time of love (Bridges on v. 67).

A time of affliction a time of love. All God's people have found it so.

The Lord loves you. *What more can He say, than to you He has said,* about that? Trust Him to display it to you in a dozen ways today. And every new day to come (smile).

Praying for You Today,

Pastor Minnick