

Better Days Ahead

It was March 6th, 2020. I was in my sophomore year of high school. My school was having its science fair. Around that time, it was on the news and circulating the school that this virus was rapidly spreading worldwide. I did not overthink it because I heard about it from one of my classmates who tended to make a big deal out of everything. A few days earlier he had mentioned the foreign virus and its seriousness, but the rest of my classmates and I laughed it off. Enjoying the science fair and making fun of each other we were blind-sided by the impending damage COVID-19 would have on our lives and the world around us.

The next day, Saturday was like any other. That day was my great aunt's birthday and we celebrated with her in Brooklyn. What my family and I did not expect was to receive an email from the Headmaster of my school telling us school was canceled for a few days due to the newness of this virus and to take precautions. Hearing about this new development, my classmates and I were so relieved to have off from school and were excited for a premature spring break. Thinking it would only last a week, a week turned into a month, and a month turned into three, and online school would become the norm.

At the beginning of all of this, I was 15 and did not have a care in the world about the crisis until I took a hit. I am a fairly independent person. I like working on my own and figuring out my problems on my own, and I thrive off of it. If I know a person well and I am surrounded by friends I'm talkative but I can be introverted in a crowded room full of people I don't know. I'd describe myself as an ambivert, slightly more introverted than extroverted. I am a leader when I have to be, but mostly a follower. I hate silence and prefer the noisy, fast-paced life of New York. I can enjoy time by myself or with other people such as family and friends. Those three months my world shut down. Everything slowed down, school was online, so I did work

when I wanted, I did not have to go anywhere or be on time, and it all seemed quite nice. But three months of it was too much. I finally understood the phrase “having too much of a good thing”. As a 15-year-old, figuring out the world and growing up is hard enough, and privacy is an important freedom a teenager could have, but I did not have that. I grew up in a large family. At the time it was my parents, me, and my five other siblings in a cramped house where we had to share rooms. It seemed like privacy did not exist. Those three months were the worst but at the same time, it was a learning experience for me.

I learned that family is always going to be around no matter what. My parents aren't out to get me as a lot of TV shows portray, they were placed in my life to guide me in the informative years of my life. A lot of the things I feel or experience, my parents have probably gone through themselves. I couldn't run away from that, because of the quarantine restrictions and because they would always be there for me. As a Christian family, we understand and believe that love is an action, not a feeling. An attribute that is contrary to love is selfishness. Through the long days of quarantine, I learned how selfish of a person I am. My motivation for doing things was always, what can I get from this, and I was not showing kindness in simple ways. I would always neglect my family because I truthfully did not want to be around them. I found that school was my escape from them. I slowly realized that I needed to change my attitude and that my circumstances should not dictate the truth of what I believe. As much as I wanted to be with my friends and out of the house, I needed to change my selfish ways and show love to my siblings and parents no matter how I felt towards them and ultimately it would translate into the way I treated other people as well.

The last important lesson I learned from being cooped up in my house for three months is that the Lord is always in control no matter what kind of situation I find myself in. This is

something millions of people don't understand and it is the hope that you can have in Jesus Christ. The hope is that a man sent from God was born of a virgin, and grew up as we do only He lived a perfect life, a life void of sin, was hated by most and admired by those who loved Him and understood His mission, ministered to thousands for three years, and was sent to die a death He did not deserve, to save people from the wrath of God. Though Jesus died, He rose again after three days and conquered death, so that those who believe and trust in Him will see Him in paradise and glorify Him for eternity. What this has to do with COVID-19 and quarantine and everything else, is that we do not have to fear viruses or death because of the goodness and love of Christ. We can be delivered from any sort of threat because Jesus lives. He overcame death so that we can overcome any obstacle that may come our way. Many won't believe it and will brush this off as a fable, however, this is what I learned and I hold fast to it when trouble and hard times come.

Mentally, during COVID, I struggled with coming to terms with the circumstances of the world and where I was in life. I was sad most days and could not see the good in all of it. From the quarantine restrictions and mask policies, it all was a lot. But I remember the day in June, when I got to see my best friend for the first time in three months, and it was pure joy. Adversity can weigh a person down and cause them to be so depressed they can not see the good in anything, however, when I look to Christ I know that better days are ahead.