

May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## To Our Dearest Family at Glory to Glory,

It's been sometime since we've taken a moment to sit and update you all on our life here in Lima, Perú. In fact, this may be our very first note sent out to the fellowship in the ten months that we have been apart. Well, in light of current world events, we thought it an appropriate time to bring you up to speed on what is happening south of the Equator.

On March 15th, 2020, with just under fifteen cases of the novel Corona-Virus confirmed, the government



of Perú made a drastic decision. A country of 32 million people was put into a state of emergency and mandatory immobilization took effect the very next day. National borders closed, all inter-provincial travel halted, and citizens were permitted only to leave their homes one at a time in order to frequent the closest grocery store, pharmacy, or bank. All other essential businesses were closed and it was determined that all children should be kept indoors. Within days, a strict

daily curfew was put into place from 6 pm to 5 am with Marshall Law instituted to maintain order. The use of all personal vehicles was banned under all circumstances and fines implemented for those who would not comply. Later, Sundays were also declared to be complete days of confinement to one's home, with only the exception of medical staff allowed to move back and forth to work.



For those who are unaware of the social and economic structure of this South American Nation, let us try to bring you up to speed. Seventy-three percent of the working-class population contribute to what we call the informal-sector. This basically means that they work for today without ever really planning for tomorrow. The daily wage that they earn is then used to purchase their immediate necessities such as food and transportation fare. Many portions of the population (referring to Lima) live without running water and



must also purchase a few gallons at a time in order to get them through the week. So, when the government declared that nobody is permitted to work, this caused a dire situation in the majority of homes. There have been small bonuses of about \$115.00 US Dollars issued to the very poorest of the poor, but of course, they are not reaching everyone. After more than 45 days, in the strictest of quarantine measures, some are just simply

returning to the streets to sell anything that will get them by for the day.

With the state of emergency order having been extended, for the fourth consecutive time, until May 10<sup>th</sup>, the desperation and uncertainty continues to grow.



No longer just for those who live daily, but even for those who had somewhat of a savings set aside. Many people, having originally migrated from the provinces to Lima for work, have now found themselves unemployed. Without an income continuing to come in they can no longer pay for their rented rooms and daily living expenses. Their only solution is to return back to the countryside where their families have homes and produce their

own food; in this way their most basic needs will be provided for. However, there is no transportation between the provinces and people are stranded with no place to live and nothing left to eat. Having reached this point, with no mode of transportation available to them, thousands have begun to walk toward home; with destinations of over one-thousand kilometers from Lima, their journey will be no easy feat. Those who stay behind have settled into make-shift camps across Lima in hopes that their regional governments will soon organize transportation for them to return to home.

Of Peru's twenty-four departments, or states, at least five or more are being ravished by the virus. With the provinces (states outside of the capital of Lima) being the hardest hit, due to their lack of supplies and infrastructure, regional governments are in no rush to receive those refugees heading their way. Their hospitals are overwhelmed, collapsed to be more precise, and the morgues are unable to keep up with the number of deaths. One pastor shared a heart-wrenching account of his brother-in-law who died in the pastor's car as they waited in the parking lot for a hospital bed to open up. There was, simply put, not enough personnel nor equipment to attend to him.

In Lima, we border on much of the same scenario. The doors are all closed at hospitals, and the lines to be attended to depend much so on the availability of a bed. The government has openly confessed that some will die in the hospitals, some in their homes, and some in the streets, much like our neighbors to the North in Ecuador where the deceased line the streets awaiting to be picked up.



With hospitals being understaffed, and grossly underprepared with personal protection equipment, doctors and nurses continue to be infected, only making an already dire situation spiral out of control.

This week we have personally begun to see the effects of the virus as it creeps ever nearer to us. We've been asked to pray for family members of friends, and pastors, who have not been able to be admitted, or even get a response from the emergency number. As their lives hang in limbo, we do all we can, we pray, and we ask you to do so along with us. Although we do not fear the virus so much, we worry about not being able to have adequate treatment available if, and when it is needed. It is a terrible thought to imagine one's self struggling to hang on and not be able to get an ambulance to come for you, or worse yet, arriving to the hospital only be told that you are one in a long line of many.

Pray for our country as it struggles to meet the demand for medical services for all of its citizens, and for those doctors now facing the decision of whom will they give the last ventilator to. For those who's

livelihoods have been washed away by the closing of businesses, and now have no idea what the future holds for them. For the many who hope and pray for each day's provision, and for those who's very lives hang between life and death.

It is our desire to leave Peru at the soonest possible opportunity, and although there are a few humanitarian flights scheduled in the near future, we are trying to hold out until the borders reopen and commercial flights resume. Our future is unsure, but all the more it causes us to cling to the One who holds time in His hands. We are learning to literally live for today and let tomorrow worry about itself. We trust our Heavenly Father to guide us and keep us in His perfect will.

Thank you for praying alongside us, and for us during these uncertain times. We have what we need physically for today and we are all well at the moment but we cannot deny that the uncertainty of the situation has had its effects on us. We love you all and hope to see you one day soon as the Lord wills.

Eddy, Lisa, Hadassah and Josiah... and Zylah too!

