



God & *the* Pandemic

Part Five: **Love & Sacrifice in the Time of a Pandemic**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37

Mercy Hill Church



God & *the* Pandemic

**Thinking deeply
& living hopefully
in our real world
of pain & suffering**

Mercy Hill Church



203,000+ U.S.
COVID-19 Deaths

999,000+
Worldwide

15,300+

Texas

How Should We Then Live?

ARGUMENT: Christianity Has Been Handling Epidemics for 2000 Years

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Practical theology says care, sacrifice, and community are as vital as ever.

BY **LYMAN STONE** | MARCH 13, 2020, 1:31 PM



ARGUMENT: Christianity Has Been Handling Epidemics for 2000 Years

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Christianity Has Been

Handling Epidemics for 2000

Years

Practical theology says care, sacrifice, and community are as vital as ever.

BY LYMAN S. DINE | MARCH 13, 2020, 1:11 PM

To find moral resources to tackle COVID-19, both its possible death toll and the fear that stalks our communities alongside the disease, we have to look at the resources built in from the past.

Christianity Has Been Handling Epidemics for 2000 Years

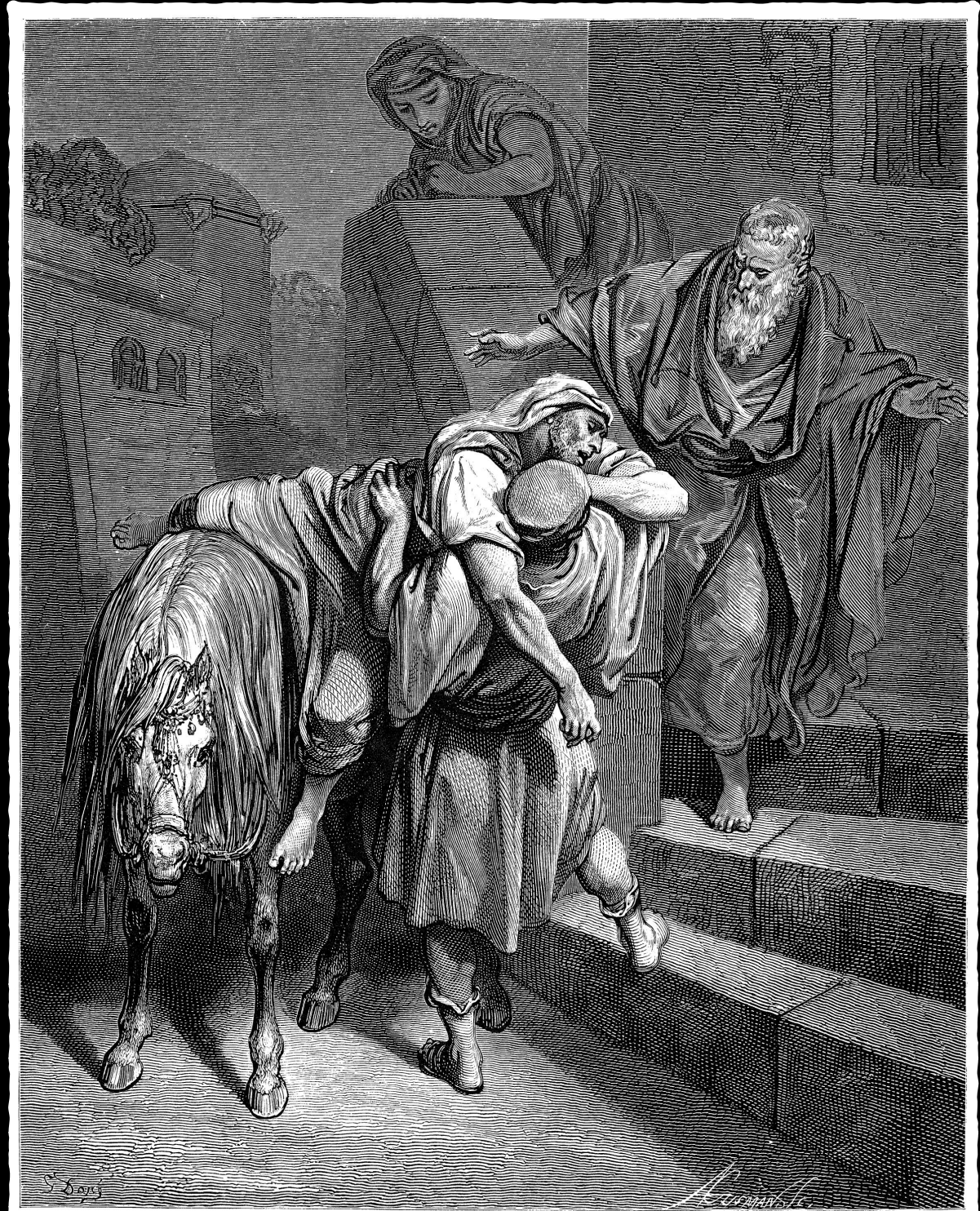
Practical theology says care, sacrifice and community are as vital as ever.

BY LYMAN STONE | MARCH 13, 2020, 1:31 PM

For me, this means examining how people of my tradition, Christians..., have handled plagues of the past.... The distinctive approach to epidemics Christians have adopted over time is worth dusting off. The Christian response to plagues begins with some of Jesus' most famous teachings....

“Arrival of the Good Samaritan at the Inn”

by Gustave Doré





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Part Five: **Love & Sacrifice in the Time of a Pandemic**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37

Mercy Hill Church

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, **“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

26 He said to him, **“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

27 And he answered, **“You shall love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and **your neighbor as yourself.”**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

28 And he said to him, **“You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

29 But he, desiring to **justify** himself, said to Jesus, **“And who is my neighbor?”**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, leaving him half dead.”

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

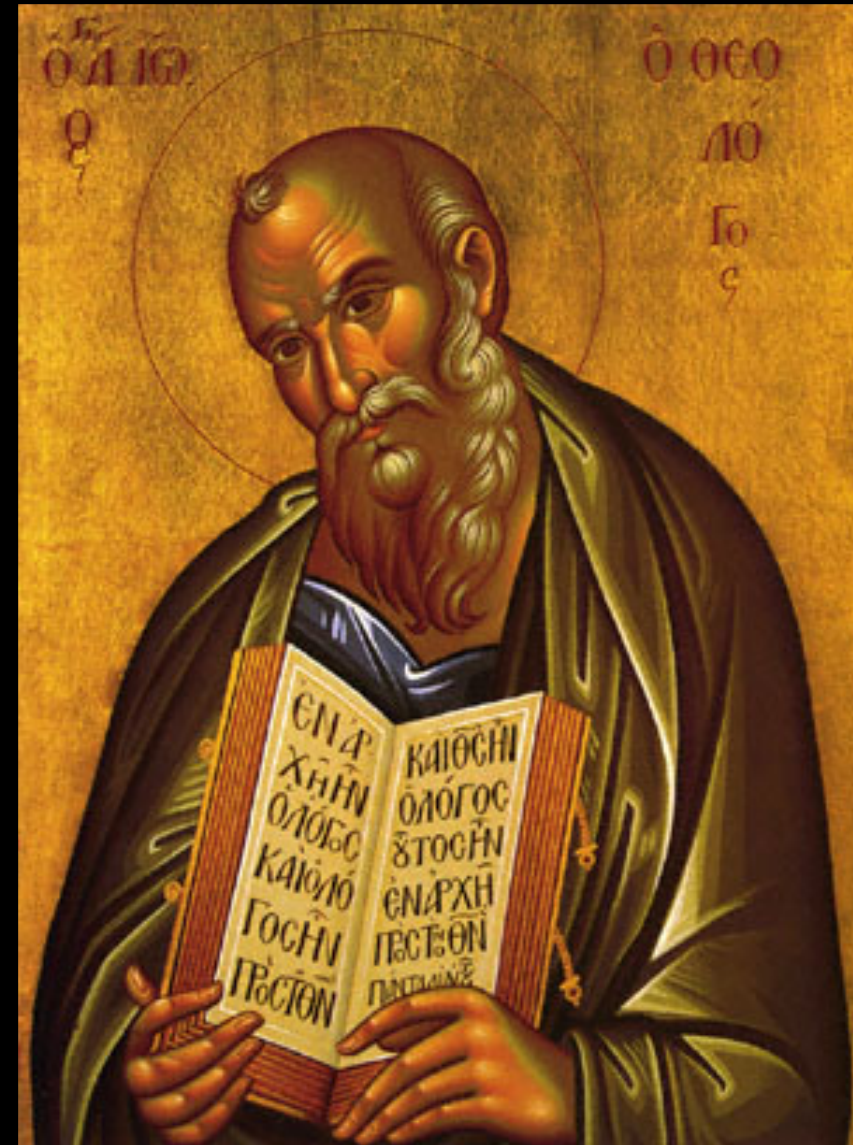
31 Now by chance a **priest** was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a **Levite**, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

33 But a **Samaritan**....

JEWS DID NOT HAVE DEALINGS WITH SAMARITANS.

The Apostle John
in the Gospel of John 4:9

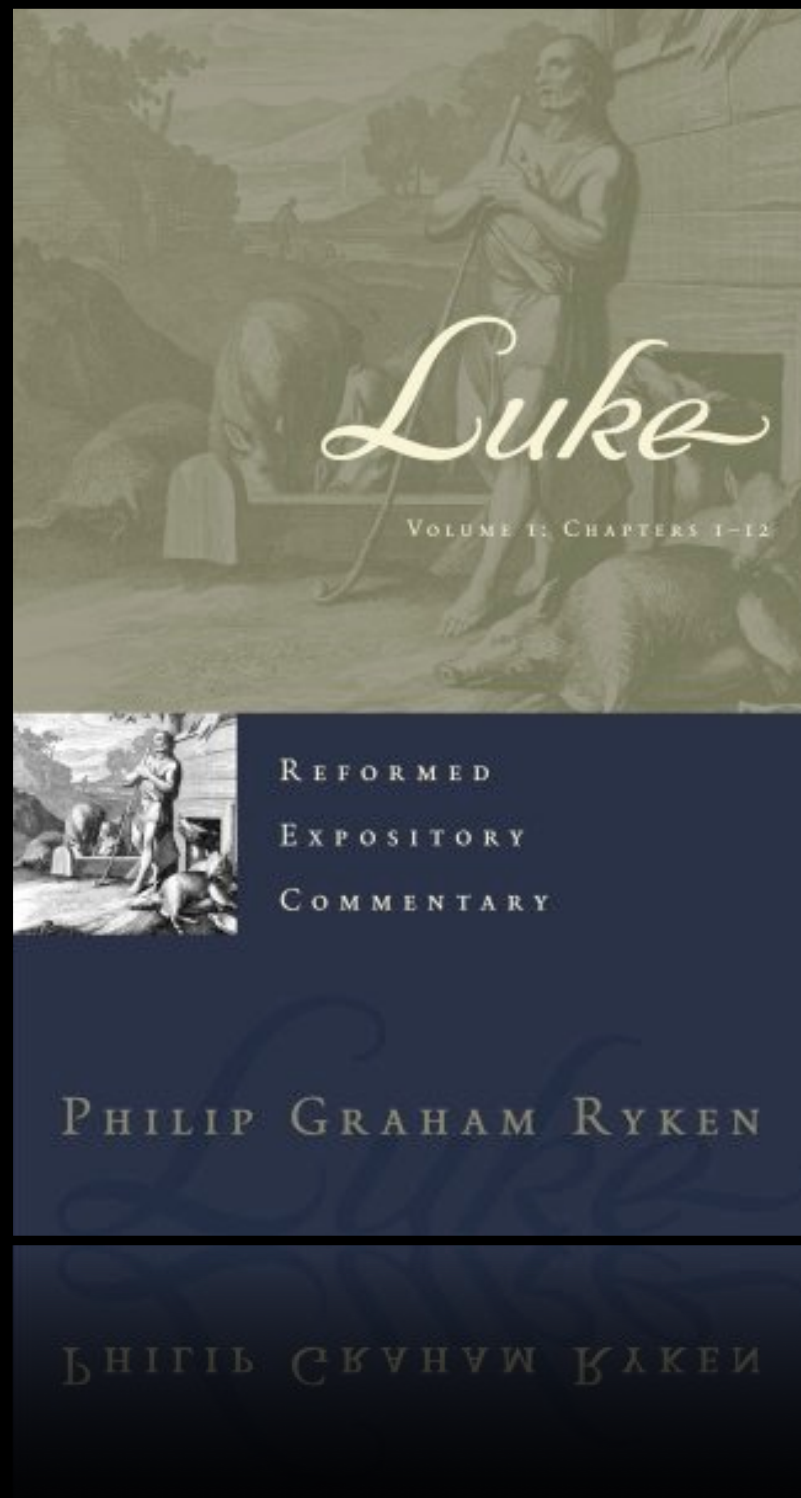


The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

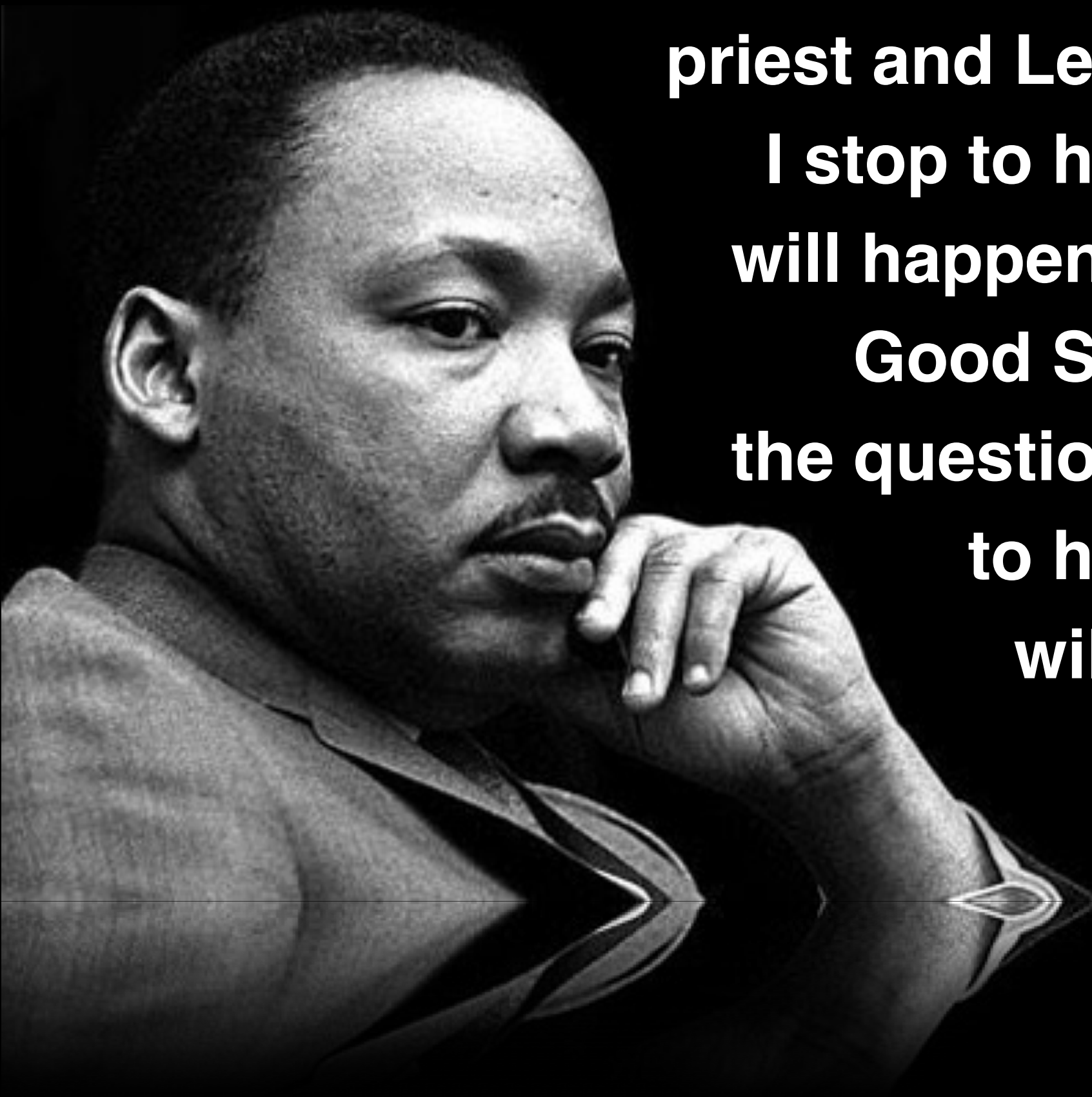
33 But a **Samaritan**, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, **he had compassion....**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to the inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'



Maybe it would be something like an Islamic fundamentalist helping an evangelical Christian who was injured in a terrorist attack. It was the last thing anyone would expect....



I imagine the first question the priest and Levite asked was, “If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?” But...the Good Samaritan reversed the question: “If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

36 “Which of these, three do you think,
proved to be a neighbor to the man who
fell among the robbers?”

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)


37 He said, **“The one who showed him mercy.”**

The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

37 And Jesus said to him, “**You go, and do likewise.**”

**JESUS CALLS US TO LOVE OTHERS
BECAUSE A NEIGHBOR
IS SOMETHING WE ARE
NOT SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE.**

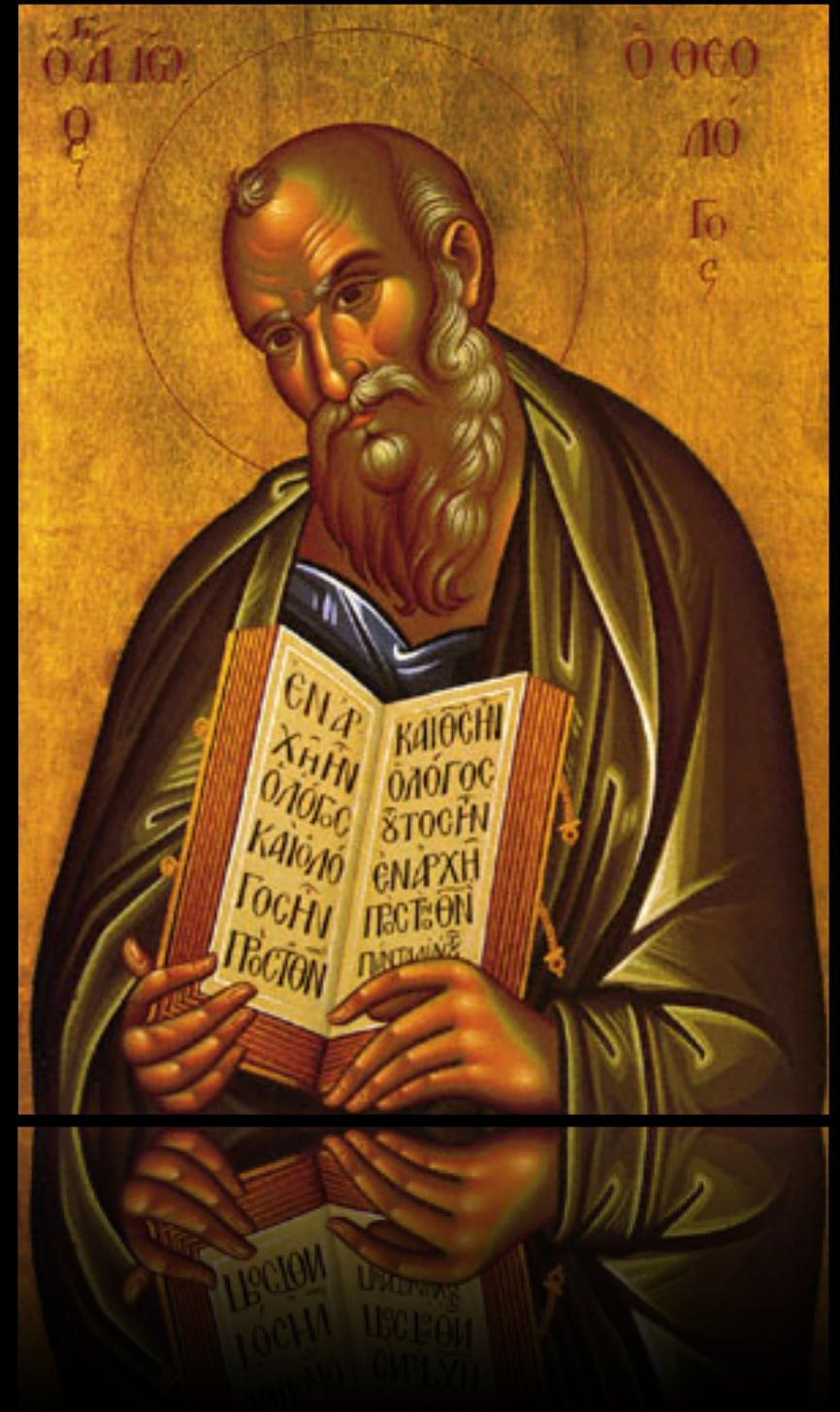
HT: Phillip Ryken



**For while we were still
weak, at the right time
Christ died for the ungodly.
For one will scarcely die for
a righteous person—
though perhaps for a good
person one would dare
even to die— but God
shows his love for us in
that while we were still
sinners, Christ died for us.**

**By this we know love,
that Christ laid down
his life for us, and
we ought to lay down
our lives for our
brothers and sisters.**

The Apostle John
in 1 John 3:16



Key Thought

The pandemic is not an excuse to avoid loving others, but the new context in which we are to express love to others.



**...THIS HABIT OF
SACRIFICIAL LOVE...**

— Lyman Stone —

“Christians Have Been Handling Plagues for 2000 Years”



The Antonine Plague of 156-180 AD

The Christian response to the plague helps explain the rapid spread of Christianity, “as Christians cared for the sick and offered a spiritual model whereby the plagues were not the work of angry and capricious deities but the product of a broken Creation in revolt against a loving God.”

— Lyman Stone —

“Christians Have Been Handling Plagues for 2000 Years”



The Plague of Cyprian (AD 249-262)



**...many of us are
dying from this plague
and pestilence.**

Cyprian of Carthage
d. Sept 14, 258 AD



**How suitable, how
necessary it is that this
plague and pestilence
searches out the justice of
each and every one and
examines the minds of the
human race;**

Cyprian of Carthage
d. Sept 14, 258 AD



Cyprian of Carthage
d. Sept 14, 258 AD

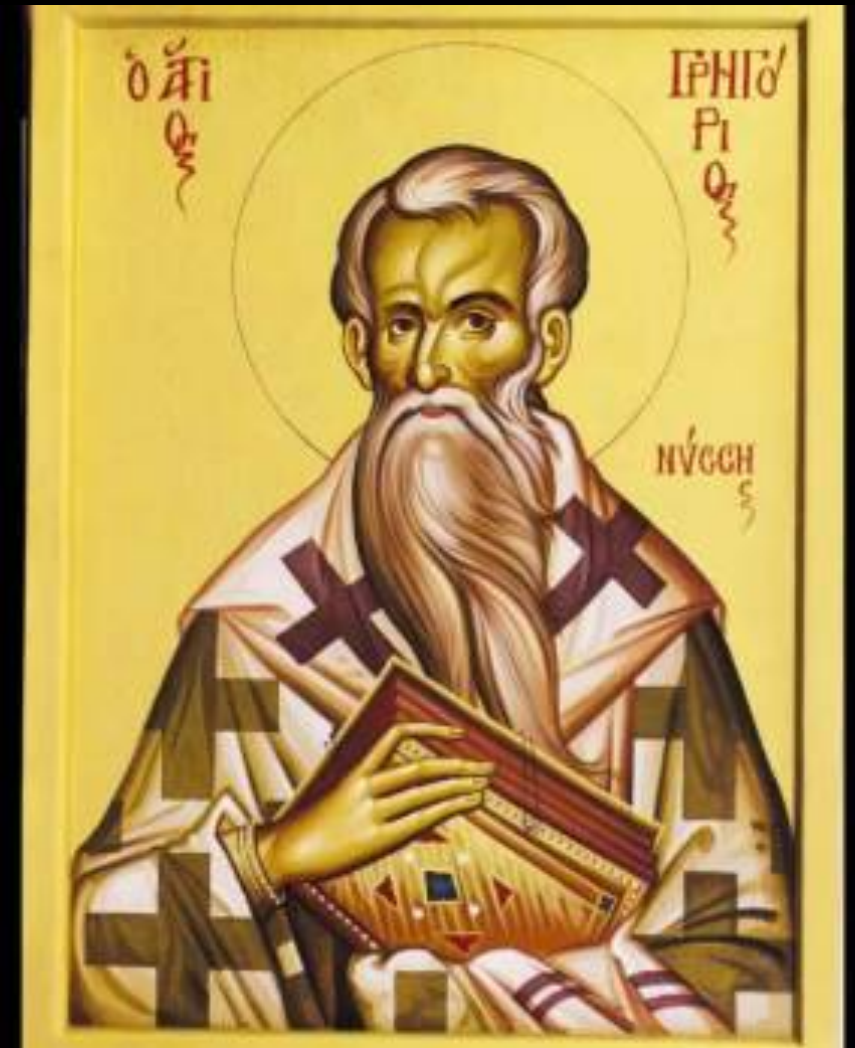
**...whether the well care for
the sick, whether relatives
dutifully love their kinsmen
as they should, whether
masters show compassion
for their ailing slaves,
whether physicians
do not desert the afflicted....**



Cyprian of Carthage
d. Sept 14, 258 AD

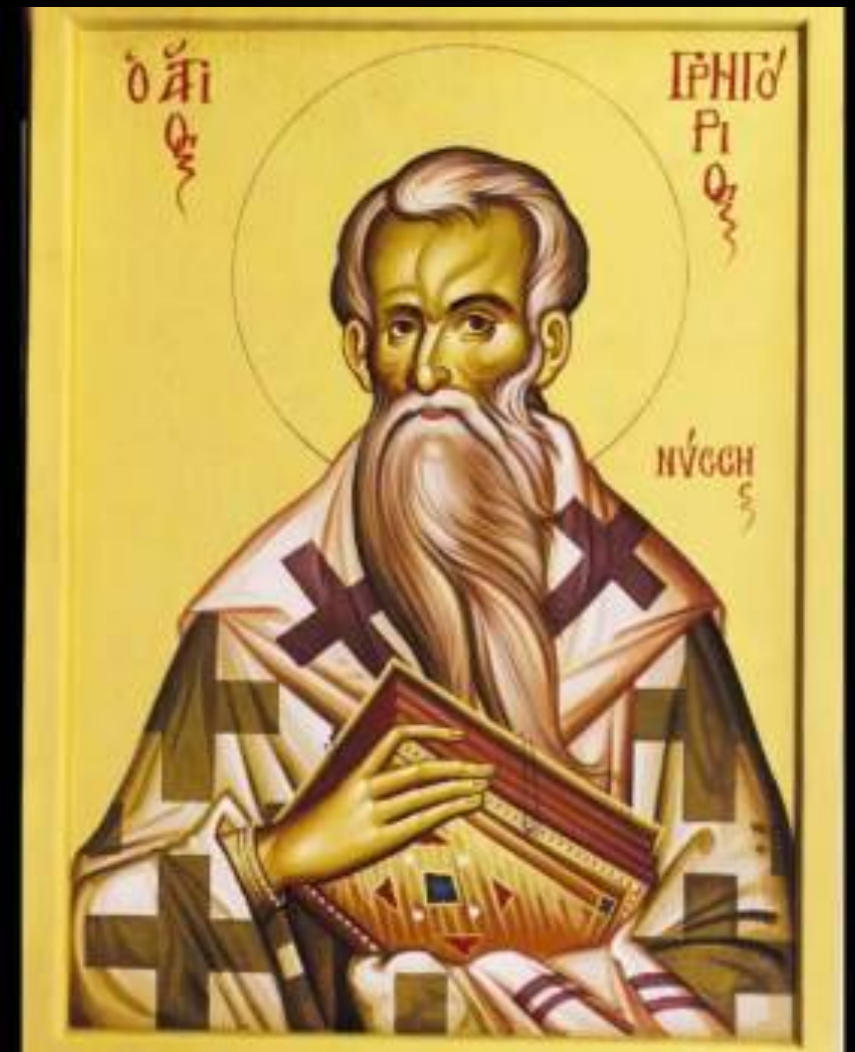
Although this mortality has contributed to nothing else, it has especially accomplished this for Christians and servants of God, that we have begun gladly to seek martyrdom while we are learning not to fear death.

**Most of our brother Christians
showed unbounded love and
loyalty, never sparing them-
selves and thinking only of
one another.**



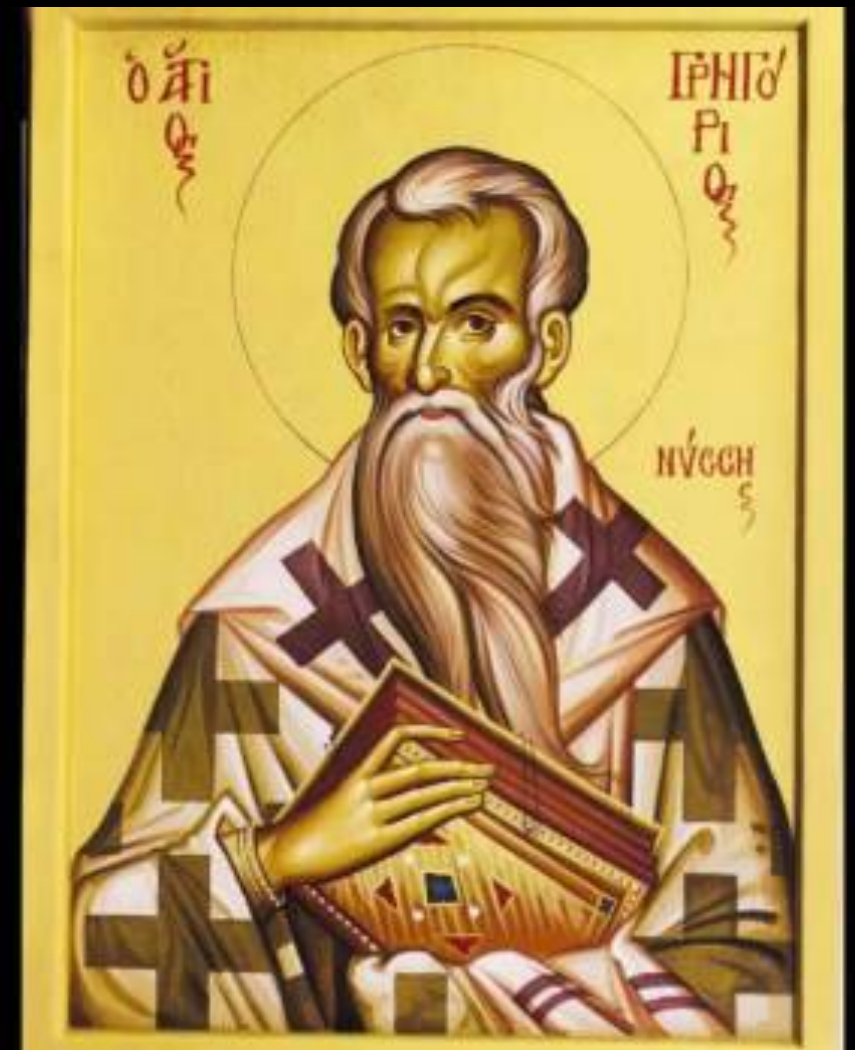
Dionysius of Alexandria
(d. Nov. 17, 265 AD)

Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains.

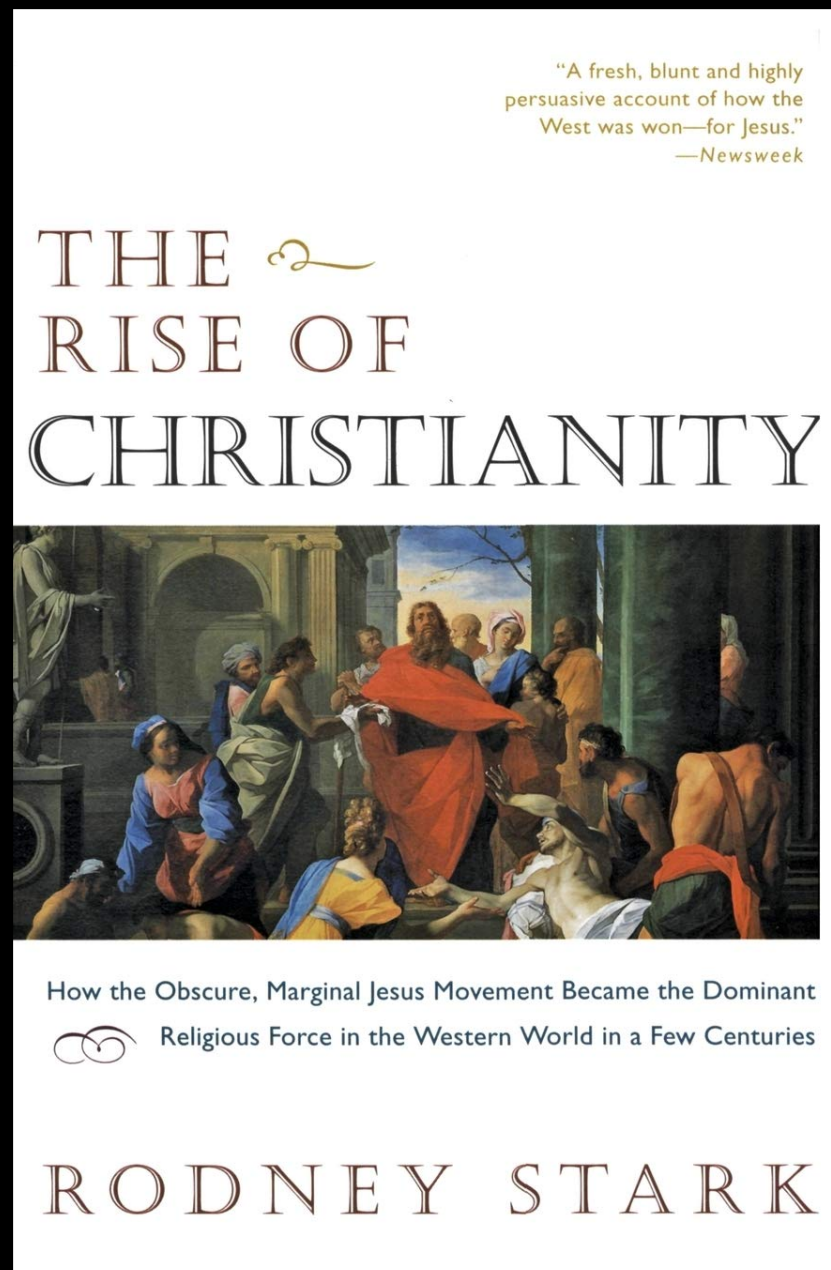


Dionysius of Alexandria
(d. Nov. 17, 265 AD)

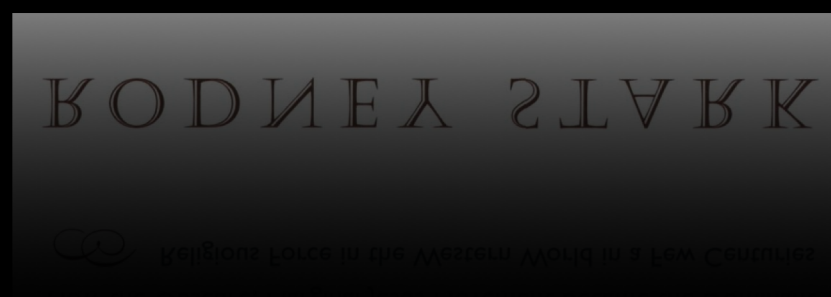
Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead... The best of our brothers lost their lives in this manner, a number of presbyters, deacons, and laymen winning high commendation so that death in this form, the result of great piety and strong faith, seems in every way equal to martyrdom.



Dionysius of Alexandria
(d. Nov. 17, 265 AD)



Acknowledging the huge death rate, Dionysius noted that though this terrified the pagans, Christians greeted the epidemic as merely 'schooling and testing.'



"A fresh, blunt and highly
persuasive account of how the
West was won—for Jesus."
—Newsweek

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY



How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant
 Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries

RODNEY STARK

RODNEY STARK

 Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries

Thus, at a time when all other faiths were called into question, Christianity offered explanation and comfort. Even more important, Christian doctrine provided a *prescription for action.*

**The “impious Galileans...
devoted themselves to
benevolence.... The
impious Galileans support
not only their poor, but
ours as well. Everyone
can see that our people
lack aid from us.”**



**The Roman Emperor Julian
(331-363 AD)**



Tertullian, *Apology* 39
b. 160 AD Carthage

**It is our care of the
helpless, our practice
of loving kindness
that brands us in the
eyes of many of our
opponents. “Only
look,” they say,
“look how they
love one another.”**

"A fresh, blunt and highly
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**...had classical society
not been disrupted and
demoralized by these
catastrophes,
Christianity might
never have become
so dominant a faith.**



The Bubonic Plague in Germany 1527



Whether One May Flee From A Deadly Plague

by Martin Luther



**We die at our posts.
Christian doctors
cannot abandon
their hospitals,
Christian governors
cannot flee their
districts, Christian
pastors cannot
abandon their
congregations.**



**The plague does not
dissolve our duties:
It turns them to
crosses, on which
we must be
prepared to die.**

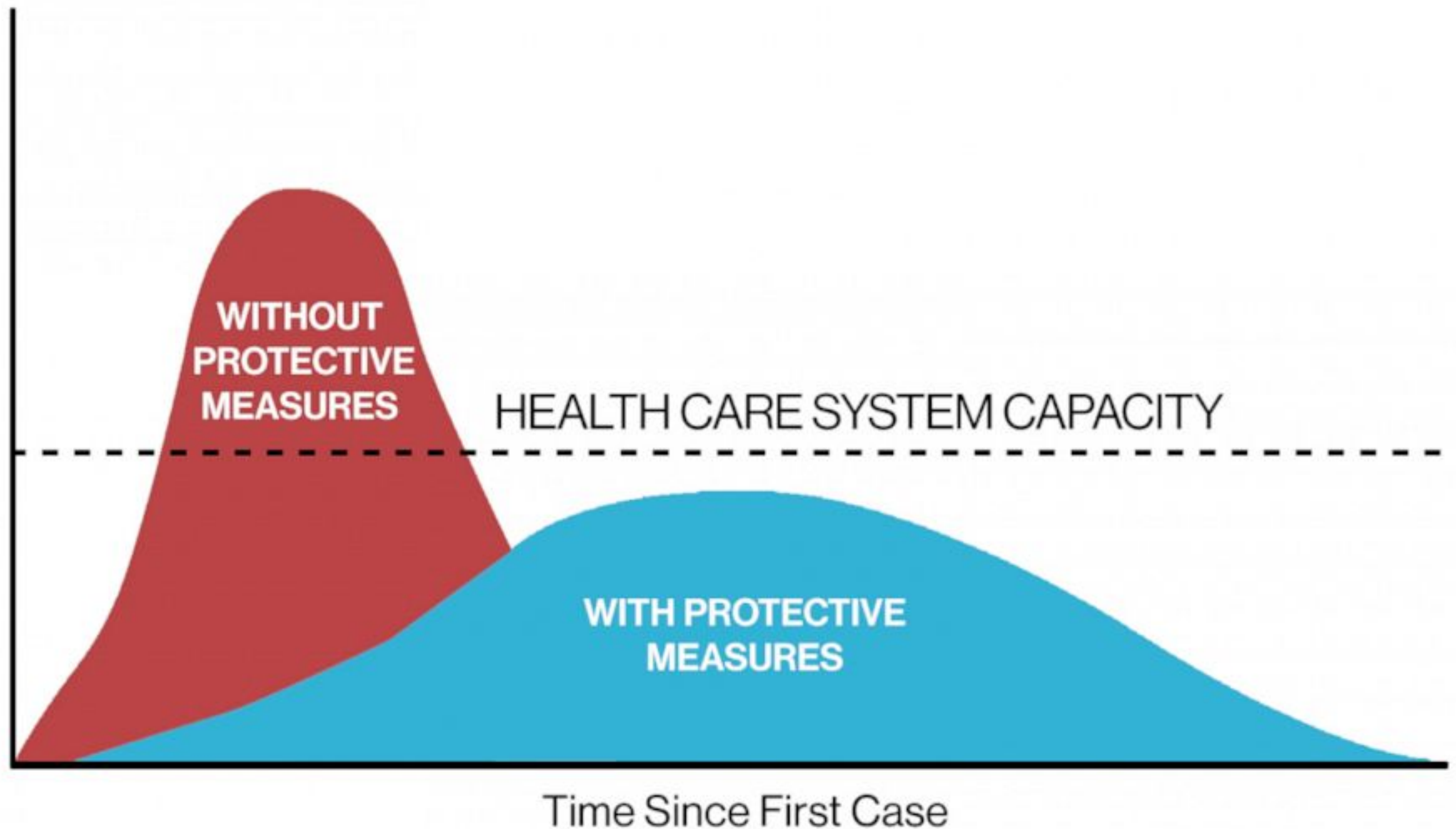
Lyman Stone's Summary
of Luther's Tract



**This all sounds nice
and maybe even heroic
(if not a bit foolish), but
we have hospitals today
to take care of people.**

Flattening the COVID-19 Curve

Number of
Cases



SOURCE: Adapted from CDC/The Economist

**Would we be
M.I.A.
(missing in action)**



— “ ” —

**DON'T ABANDON
YOUR POST, BUT ALSO
DON'T BE AN IDIOT.**

— Lyman Stone —



**The Fifth Commandment
(Thou shalt not murder)
means that we must not
endanger others through
our own negligence and
recklessness.**

Lyman Stone's Summary
of Luther's Tract



In fact, Luther encouraged believers to obey quarantine orders, fumigate their houses, and take precautions to avoid spreading sickness.

Lyman Stone's Summary
of Luther's Tract



Lyman Stone's Summary
of Luther's Tract

The Christian motive for hygiene and sanitation does not arise in self-preservation but in an ethic of service to our neighbor. We wish to care for the afflicted, which first and foremost means not infecting the healthy.



Lyman Stone's Summary
of Luther's Tract

**Early Christians created
the first hospitals in
Europe as hygienic
places to provide care
during times of plague,
on the understanding
that negligence that
spreads disease further
was, in fact, murder.**

Key Thought

The pandemic is not an excuse to avoid loving others, but the new context in which we are to express love to others.

**THE QUESTION IS NOT,
"SHOULD I ENGAGE?"
BUT RATHER,
"HOW SHOULD I ENGAGE?"**



**How can I best love
(even sacrificially)
in these times?**



**What about those
of us that are at
the higher risk?**

**Our Mission:
Love-in-Action**

Go & Do Likewise!

