**Series: Imitate Their Faith**

**Title: John Calvin and the Plague**

**October 25, 2020**

1. **John Calvin’s Life**

The Student (1509-1529)

\*Luther nails 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517

The Convert (1529-1533)

The Fugitive (1533-1536)

The Pastor (1536-1541)

Geneva Reformer (1541-1549)

Discipline and Opposition (1546-1553)

Final Years (1553-1564)

Legacy

1. **The Plague in Geneva**

Geneva was struck with the Bubonic Plague in 1542.

Calvin visited the sick in their homes.

City Council established a hospital outside of the city for plague sufferers.

Pierre Blanchet volunteers to serve the sick and dying in the hospital. He dies in the spring of 1543.

Calvin strongly considers personally attending to all of the sick.

City Council forbade Calvin specifically from visiting the sick.

The other pastors cast lots. Then each man chosen refused to care for the sick in the hospital.

Mathieu de Geneston, volunteered to minister to the sick but his work lasted only a few weeks until he contracted plague and died.

A lottery system was established to determine which pastor would care for the sick in the subsequent 4 rounds of plague to hit Geneva in Calvin’s lifetime.

After Calvin’s death, Theodore Beza, Calvin’s protégé, put an end to the lottery and had the pastors visit the sick from their own parishes.

Calvin addresses plague in his 1543 expansion of his *Institutes* Book 4, chapter 12, Sections 14-19

1. **Teaching on Plague**
2. It is the job of pastors to call their congregations to prayer and fasting
3. Three goals of fasting:
	1. Subdue the flesh
	2. Prepare better for prayer and holy meditation
	3. Give evidence of humbling ourselves before God when we would confess our guilt before him
4. The public nature of fasting
5. The importance of fasting during disasters.
6. Definition of fasting
7. Fasting should not be viewed as superstitious or meritorious

Application: God has his sword drawn with the coronavirus and is ready to kill us, which we deserve because we are wicked. Perhaps, if we repent, humble ourselves, fast, and pray, God will be merciful and spare us from the death that we deserve. But, let us not merely fast as a hypocritical external expression. We must truly despise our sin and seek God’s mercy. We must not fast for fasting’s sake, but to turn our whole selves sincerely and earnestly to prayer. And we must not think that fasting will magically accomplish anything. But God can do anything, and perhaps, he will relent and put away his sword and save us from this disease.