

What The “Opening Of America” Really Involves

We live in interesting times. Historians, sociologists, and anthropologists will be studying 2020 for decades to come.

How we have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic will become the subject of many scholarly works, as people looking from the safe viewpoint of hindsight castigate the errors and decisions being made throughout this crisis. Conspiracy theories will abound.

All this has already started, with pundits and politicians pointing fingers and trying to blame the president for not doing what he's done and for not doing what he did soon enough. Much of this is nothing more than the ongoing attempts by the left to make the president look bad, but there's an element of it that goes beyond that. I sincerely believe that if we had a Democrat for president, the Republicans would be doing the same thing.

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Hindsight is still 20/20, or perhaps I should say it's 2020, for this is clearly the year of hindsight. Countless people, on both sides of the political aisle, are looking back and twisting the timing of actual events and their effect, to meet their particular vision of what has happened. It doesn't matter if they forget that the nationwide lockdown was ordered to flatten the curve because they are saying that it was unnecessary or because they think we should stay shut down until there is a vaccine. Either way, they're ignoring what actually happened.

One story that will need to be told is the story of the wise and the foolish. The Bible actually has a couple of stories like that. One is of the ten virgins, five of whom were foolish and five of whom were wise. The other is of two men, a wise one who built his house on the rock, while the foolish man built his on the sand. There may be others as well, as the Good Book seems to like contrasting the foolish and the wise.

But this story is the 2020 story of the foolish and the wise. I'm not sure how folklore will portray it, but I see it unfolding before my eyes.

The story has several chapters, but the one we're seeing today is perhaps the saddest. It's the one in which the foolish truly prove who they are. For you see, it's the chapter where they take opening up businesses to mean that they can do anything they want... and doing so costs them.

I haven't followed how the reopening of America has happened in every state; I just don't have enough time to track all that. But I have seen at least some, especially in Texas. Realizing that the parallel can only be taken so far, I see that example of being indicative of what's happening nationwide. It's perhaps significant because Texas is one of the first states to be opening its doors.

Enter the Fools

Friday, May the 1st marked the beginning of the opening of

Texas. As midnight rolled over from April to May, Governor Greg Abbot's stay at home order came to an end, allowing small businesses and restaurants to open. Open with restrictions, but open nevertheless. The people rejoiced, going out to eat, picking up their lattes, and frequenting their favorite local businesses. But few of those people were wise; few bothered to wear a mask.

It seems that many people have looked to the "opening of America" to mean that everything was okay and that we could get back to life as normal. But countless doctors, who are experts in dealing with disease, have come forth, stating that COVID-19 is going to be with us for a while; anywhere from 18 months to 2 years.

Clearly these people haven't heard those voices... or perhaps they didn't want to. My guess is that they were the same ones who were ignoring the advice to maintain social distancing, wash their hands, and wear masks all along. Perhaps there have been some additions of people who have been staying at home as much as possible, but I doubt that.

Here's the thing, these COVIDiots are making things worse for all of us. They're not only the ones who are going to get infected themselves but will end up infecting others. Because they won't wear masks, once they are infected, there's nothing to stop others from getting COVID-19 from them.

Statistically, who has the mask on is of utmost importance. If we take one infected person and one who is healthy, here's what masks do:

- If the infected person doesn't wear a mask, but the healthy one does, there's at 70% chance the healthy one will become infected

- If the infected person wears a mask, but the healthy one doesn't, there's only a 5% chance the healthy one will become infected
- But if both wear a mask, then there's only a 1.5% chance that the healthy one will become infected
- To put it another way, as a meme I saw does, if someone is trying to piss on your leg, but they have pants on, all they do is piss in their pants

I know there are lots of people out there who don't like wearing masks. I get it. I'm not real fond of them myself. But I like the idea of my family getting sick and some of them dying even less. If wearing a mask is the price I have to pay, in order to protect others, then that's a price I'm perfectly willing to pay. Unfortunately, not everyone sees it that way.

So what do the numbers say about opening up America, or at least Texas? On May 6th, there were 14 new cases of COVID-19 in just one county and 10 new cases May 7th. Before that, the highest number of new cases in one day was 9, when they first got the testing program off the ground and besides that, there were a couple of days where it was 5. That's quite a difference.

To put that in perspective, the incubation period for COVID-19 is 2 to 14 days (a few have gone as long as 28 days), with an average of 5 days. I doubt it is a coincidence that there was a jump in cases exactly five days after businesses started opening their

doors.

The thing is, if all those COVIDiots out there would just put a mask on and join the wise, those numbers probably wouldn't have happened.

Hey, I get it; this is America, the land of the free and the home of the brave. So people have a Constitutional right to do what they want, as long as it's not against the law. I believe in those rights, even there are plenty of people who take that as permission to be fools (and I'm not just talking about not wearing masks); but what about our responsibility to our fellow man? Doesn't that play in here somewhere?

But What About "Herd Immunity?"

There are a lot of people, including some medical doctors, talking about herd immunity these days. I get it. The idea is that enough people develop an immunity to the disease, that it can't spread. This is what has happened in the past with other pandemics. Some people died, while others lived; and those who lived developed an immunity to the disease (especially with viral diseases), preventing them from catching it again and infecting others.

Evolutionary theory has a name for this, it's called: "natural selection." The strong, by whatever sense of the word, get to survive, while the weak die out. This supposedly makes

a species

stronger. So are we just interfering with nature by trying to curb this disease?

But what if we do go for herd immunity; what will that mean?

To start with, there are 328 million people in the United States. To reach herd immunity, 60 to 70 percent of them have to get infected by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19; that's a minimum of 196.8 million people (at 60%). Of those, how many people will die?

We actually don't know that number. But for argument's sake, let's go with the figure that people who are anti-lockdown are saying. That is that there's a 98% chance people will survive. So, 2 percent of the 60% of people who have to get infected works out to 3,936,000 people. Almost 4 million people in the United States, or 936 million worldwide, will have to die, in order to reach herd immunity (world population is 7.8 billion).

Am I the only one that's done this math?

I don't know about you, but I'm not prepared to let that many people die, just so I'm not inconvenienced. Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying we shouldn't open up. What I am saying though, is that we should use wisdom in how we open up.

You see, the wise take everything into consideration, before taking action. Then they do what's best for everyone,

not just themselves. So I have to wonder about the wisdom, or lack thereof, of those who are running around without masks on and not practice social distancing.

On the other hand, there are doctors who are camped out in tents that they've set up in their garages so that they don't inadvertently give COVID-19 to their kids. Considering that they know more than we do about the disease, I have a hard time believing those who are calling this all a conspiracy theory or saying that the government has been lying to us all along. Maybe there are things the government is lying to us about, but I don't think the fact that we're dealing with a dangerous disease is one of them.

Let's be the Wise

From everything I've seen, and I've been studying this disease's progression, devouring every bit of information I can find out about it for almost three months, if we would all just apply a few simple measures, we could all go back to living our lives more or less normally, without a whole lot of danger. Yes, those measures are an inconvenience; but being without a paycheck or spending a month in the hospital is a whole lot more inconvenience.

Are those measures a perfect solution? No, I'm sure they're not. But I know this; my wife and I have been practicing social distancing, decontaminating things before we bring them in the house, using hand sanitizer whenever we come into contact with anything outside our home and wearing masks every time we go anywhere. We're both considered "at-risk" in a

number of different ways and yet we haven't gotten sick yet. Maybe, just maybe, that's because we're doing the right things.

I know this, I'm doing the best I can to avoid catching the disease and keeping from spreading it on to others. My wife, who has just gone back to her office after having spent the last six weeks working from home, is doing the same. While we know there are no guarantees in this life, we are using the best wisdom we can; not out of fear, but out of a reasonable sense of caution.

What if this disease was worse? What if we hadn't had the lockdown and we were looking at hundreds of thousands dead by now; would that make a difference? Would people be practicing those precautions? It seems like an awfully high price to pay, in order to find that out.



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