My Freedom Is In Your Hands
by Jacques Verduin

What if this virus had a hidden agenda other than spreading fear about how it might compromise our health? What if, hidden in its drive to be contagious there was another message, urging to be heard?

Whether we come running or are being dragged, this virus teaches us to consider each other in a whole new way. Much like prisoners, we are being asked to give up our personal freedom to protect society from ourselves. We get a brief taste, with these temporary ‘shelter in place’ orders, what it might be like to be confined for decades on end. Please consider what it is like, to be elderly or in bad health—and trapped inside prison? How does it feel to be punished for being sick?

What if, after this virus is gone, we learned it had changed our DNA in such a way that it forever altered our ability to consider each other? Consider each other no longer just as strangers, but in a new way, as in closer to our hearts?

I wash my hands for you.
Every time I wash my hands, I think of you, the other, as myself And I smile. My freedom is in your hands and yours is in mine. Every bit of care I bring to this gesture, I dedicate to the mystery of you, the other, who invites me to connect with you.

I reach out to hold you and rejoice in how the water blesses both of us in this practice. I can no longer disregard you. I can no longer wash my hands of you, and your fate. I wash my hands for your fate;

My freedom is in your hands, exactly where it belongs.

We don’t control circumstance. That’s one thing we’re learning right now, for sure. But we do get to take our stance in the midst of circumstance, in the midst of everything that begs us to be considered, and reconsidered, in these rapidly changing times. May that be a calm, grounded and loving stance and may it help people find their stance, including those folks you have never even touched or met.

My willingness to consider your fate announces my ability to mature as a human being. It frees me. Perhaps redemption is not a process that happens after everything is painstakingly measured and the final tally is made up. Maybe it’s a quality of consideration that we enter into every moment, by choice and by choice alone. Every moment that offends me has in it the grace of redemption. All it requires is my willingness to find it.

We are all human beings, you and I. We are all human beings, searching to be safe and to
come home to each other, and be forgiven now, already, for every trespass made and every pending failure yet to come.