

A Study of
Whether One May Flee From a Deadly Plague

by Martin Luther

Part 2 of 5

Review of Part One

- “The plague” – what disease was it? It’s mortality rate? (p.115, ¶12)
- What was Martin Luther’s personal experience with the plague? (p.115, ¶13)
- Why did Martin Luther write this pamphlet? (p.116, ¶12)
- The people who wrote to Luther seemed to have been divided about the right way for a Christian to react to the plague. The two options they were considering were a) stay in the city and trust God to help; b) flee from the city “if one holds no public office.” (p.120, ¶12)
- Just before today’s reading, Luther commended those who were strong enough to stay in the city and trust God. But he also said that such a heavy burden could not be borne by all people. (p.120, ¶14)

121 ¶2

Now Luther begins to get specific. He first addresses the clergy.
Sum up his words about what the clergy should do.

Why should they do it?

121 ¶3

What does he mean when he says, “mayors, judges, and the like are under obligation to remain.”

Do you think public officials of Luther’s time did this? Would those of our time?

So, what are the implications of taking a public office?

Imagine getting into a discussion with someone about this point (or similar things like a foreign invasion, or a shipwreck, or a building fire). How would you *briefly* sum up when a person *should* stay behind, even if it involves danger?

122 ¶2&3 *You may skip reading these two paragraphs.*

What Biblical principle do you see at work in all of his advice, whether to clergy, public officials, servants, masters, employees? (Matthew 25:41-46; 1 Timothy 5:8)

For whom would you stay put in the face of a deadly plague? For spouse, parents, children, employer, neighbor?

122 ¶4 (and onto the following page)

What is Luther's judgment on the self-preservation impulse?

123 ¶2&3 *You may skip these paragraphs.*

124 ¶2&3 (and onto the following page)

What does Luther prove about people who say, "You should not flee from danger. Instead, you must stay and trust God!" Ever met people like that?

125 ¶2

What should every Christian remember, whether fleeing from the plague or staying put?

Summary

Remember Martin Luther's actions when the plague struck Wittenberg.

How do the very bold and brave often look at the timid and weak in times of difficulty and danger? How does Martin Luther look at them?

Do you think he is too merciful? In what way?

In what part of your life could you be more understanding of people's weaknesses?