Waiting

I came across this quote the other day (attributed to the theologian, John Piper): “Waiting on the Lord is the opposite of running ahead of the Lord, and it’s the opposite of bailing out on the Lord. It’s staying at your appointed place while he says ***stay***, or it’s going at his appointed pace while he says ***go***. It’s not impetuous, and it’s not despairing.”

Winston Churchill had something profound to say about waiting, too (he was, in fact, quoting John Milton’s “*Sonnet 19*”), when he said “*They also serve who stand and wait*”. Churchill was referring to people on the British home front - giving them due credit for standing fast while troops fought on the battle lines: he was complimenting millions of men, women, and even children, working long hours in industry and farming; he was also acknowledging the love of, and letters from, wives and sweethearts, giving “their menfolk” something to fight-for and return home-to.

We’re living in uncertain and potentially dangerous times; in such circumstances, we have the choice to either get angry and frustrated, or to take a deep breath, release our clenched hands when we realise (and hopefully forgive ourselves whenever we feel helpless) that we can’t “do anything at the front line”.

We also serve when we let God be God, and do what He needs us to do at the right time (for Him)… And if this means “wait”, so be it. So, whilst we wait, we still believe in His ability to give purpose to that waiting. Let’s ponder, then, the need for humility and trust:

- **Humility comes** when we remember that God is the one who put us here, and yet we find ourselves getting fearful, impatient and frustrated. Our lives belong to Him, and “humility” is coming to the realisation that He owes us nothing, yet wants us to experience **everything** we enjoy-and-appreciate the most.

- **Trust is about** being aware of at least two things about God;

- *Awareness of His Power, which* means that we accept that He cares about what's happening; things are not arbitrary or out of His control. He is capable of both helping us and changing things for the better, even 'the worst' things.
- Awareness that His *Love for us* means that there is care and purpose behind everything that happens - good and bad. True, he owes us nothing, yet he has promises to give us **everything we need**.

Thought for the Week: Even though there is no immediate end in sight to the crises we see in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, for example, we have to continue to not only desire peace, but to actively pray for change; and to wait and see. With trust and humility, we live in the certain knowledge that Jesus cares deeply for us, just as He cared deeply when He told the first Apostles they'd have to wait a while.

There were many unknowns for them, too; the only word they had from Jesus about a future without him (in human form, that is) was *WAIT*. And that was precisely what they did; the fact that they didn't know for how long would have make things even tougher for them. They simply obeyed, and waited for as long as it took for the promise (of the Holy Spirit) to be fulfilled.

Waiting may well be counter-intuitive for us today - especially when we might "want to get busy" and "do something constructive". Maybe we might expect God to intervene and do something as well. But **He's already doing something**; we need to "follow-by-waiting".

Maybe current events, globally and within our own society, are a preparation to live our lives in a different way - closer to God's way. He is helping us do this by saying "Wait"; and so, we pray (this is the full version):

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;

Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make things right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.

Amen.