

### 13 March 2022, The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent: Psalm 27:18

Today's Psalm ends with a verse which reveals the foundation for our conversion: *O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure; be strong, and He shall comfort your heart; wait patiently for the Lord.* The word "tarry" means to wait beyond the time planned or anticipated. Here are some thoughts on why waiting on God is the soil for growth into Christ.

In John 14, Jesus tells the disciples if they believe in him, He and the Father will come and *make our home with you* (v23). That is the home of the Father and Son will be your home. Do you trust God enough for God to dwell in you as God wishes? Our temptation is to take over when we think our needs and wants are not being met. However, our awareness of unmet needs is likely God's path for you today. Instead of wanting to control, we rely on Christ's presence and grace and not yourself. A spiritual guide of the early 20th century, John Chapman, wrote: *...we are always in touch with God; everything that happens is...a means of grace, a push on to heaven...God is always working outside you...and inside you...unless you resist. This is the way of pure love. It is very dark and painful on the surface; but there is something behind, which is really strength and peace...*

How different life is when we live with trust in whatever God gives. Again, from John Chapman: *...if we pray in order to give ourselves to God, then the prayer that we can do, whatever it is...is what God wants, though it is far from being what we want. Only we must try to want what God wants, and only that.* Patient prayer is the desire to learn from Christ how to desire God, to learn to want what God wants for you and others.

You have likely heard this well-known Offertory sentence: *All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee.* This is a Bible verse: I Chronicles 29:14. "All things...": our life, breath, mind, and thoughts; even our desire for God. This is a very old truth. The ancient monks of the desert taught and lived that *...the soul faces a fight...and is ill-equipped for the struggle...therefore the soul is always at the mercy of God...helpless without God's help.* (John Cassian). Paul wrote: *It does not depend on human desire or effort but on God's mercy* (Romans 9:16). A waiting, patient God-pointed life is the outward, visible sign of the inner conviction of our powerlessness without God. And it is the ground of and expression of strength: *O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure, be strong and He shall comfort your heart...* The person who waits on God—yearning for God's will, patiently awaiting God's power to work in one's life—is the person of unsurpassable strength; a strength predicated on the strength and passion of God at work in one's life.

We await "God's pleasure." Here is another wonderful truth. So often we think of God's will as burdensome: demanding rules, arduous tasks, a moral minefield. We are God's pleasure. Psalm 149:4: *...God takes pleasure in His people...* Do you think of yourself as God's pleasure? Begin today, because it is true, and will speed you along the path of conversion. Love converts you: God's eternal love for you, your responding love for God.

We are God's pleasure, and God means to give us joy. In Psalm 4 we pray, *You have put gladness in my heart, more than when grain and wine and oil increase* (v7). Psalm 16: *....in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore* (v11). In the Sunday confession we ask God's forgiveness so that *...we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways* (BCP, p 352). Again, patience is our desire-in-action to know more of God's delight in us, and our response of joy in God. We are God's pleasure regardless of our sins; we are to delight in God even when, by human standards, things appear awful or dull or useless.

Our conversion takes place, not as we receive from God what we think we need, but as we give ourselves to God's will and joyfully receive what God intends for us. The source of our joy is in accepting that we are the pleasure of God; we run the path of conversion as we delight in God's will for us especially when every human impulse might say, "forget God". We experience God's grace, mercy, strength, and presence in waiting on His will, praying "not my will, but Your will be done in me today." *O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure; be strong and He shall comfort your heart; wait patiently for the Lord.* Amen.