

Sermon Aug. 12, 2018

Rev. Mark Moline - My soul waits for the LORD

From our appointed Psalm:

I wait for the LORD;

My soul waits for the LORD, more than watchmen for the morning,

Isaiah prayed: “For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, - you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. Since ancient times, no one has heard, no ear perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who ‘wait’ for Him.”

Our God is unique in that, He is pleased when we simply wait for him. For some mysterious spiritual reason God wants us to wait. Although not commonly thought of as such, “waiting” can be a spiritual discipline.

We pray, we fast, we meditate, we go into all of the world to proclaim the gospel, We remember God in our sacraments, we try to obey God and we study God’s word. We do all of these different spiritual exercises for God (and for ourselves), and then we wonder why God doesn’t hear us when He fails to answer our prayers and petitions in what -we consider- a timely fashion.

We can watch televangelists and see an a prepackaged hour of God performing upon the demand and command of the celebrity preacher as though God was some trained animal. That hour is carefully crafted, produced and edited for television – and we are reminded by the absence of “waiting” - that we are not worshipping, we are being entertained by electronically graven images. But Waiting for God takes real flesh and blood people, not pixels. Waiting has great spiritual value – but no entertainment value – after all, who would want to tune in the TV just to watch people sitting around - waiting for God.

There is not a lot of waiting in televised Christianity, but Holy Scripture is chocked full of it -- God told Moses to go to the top of the mountain and wait. -- Job asks God, What is my strength, that I should just wait?; Of course we have that very familiar passage from Isaiah, “those who wait for the lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

The Baptist asked Jesus, are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another. Persecutors gather at the foot of the cross and mockingly scheme, “Wait – let us see if Elijah will come and save him.”

What is there about waiting that is so spiritually extraordinary?

First, I think waiting for God is an exercise in faith. We spend all of that time waiting in a Doctor’s Office because we believe in the Doctor. We wait at a restaurant believing in the chef. We have been told the food is great and so we believe and wait.

We wait because we believe. Waiting for God is more than just verbalizing our faith; Waiting is faith - physically acted out - faith made tangible.

Then too, waiting is even more than just faith - Waiting for God is also surrender - it is the surrender of our time to God's timing --- our will to God's will.

God expects us – to do our part, but the time inevitably comes when we must admit we have done all we can do – we must simply wait for God to do that which we can't. We must let God be God.

This parish now finds itself waiting for God. I suppose it would be nice for Wallace or Stephanie to get a call from the Bishop this afternoon saying, "Good news, I've found the perfect new Rector for you, and she or he starts on the first of September. But you know the system doesn't work that way.

It doesn't work that way because God usually doesn't work that way in our lives.

You must do your part, and You have done or are doing your part. You completed the survey, you pray, you are talking to the members of the selection committee, -- letting your feelings and opinions be known. And those of you on the selection committee or the vestry know how much you all have to do. But ultimately the time comes for all of you - when all that remains to be done is to wait for God.

But Know this – this time of waiting can be a blessing. It can be a time for your faith to grow stronger, it can be a time of growing closer together, better knowing and understanding one another.

It can be a time for the parish to grow closer to its Bishop and diocesan staff. It can even be a time when you begin to feel more like Episcopalians in the larger national church concept.

It can be a time of growth in so many different ways. It can become a time for net-mending, as some who have been away return to the fold. It can become a time for reconciliation. It can be a time of revival.

Whoa....there's is a word you don't often hear around an Episcopal Parish -REVIVAL- but then I'm not talking about renting a large tent and pitching it in the front yard.

Rather, by doing our meager part and then simply waiting for God, we may better realize Christ's real presence here among us.

"My soul waits for the Lord."