

This is now the 7th Reflections for Today – and the 3rd attempt at meeting together using Zoom technology! Have you considered that church might never be the same again?

Time sometimes feels to be dragging by and people are concerned and anxious that no one is able to give them a date when the lock-down and social distancing will be over. People are discussing whether or not they would be confident to go out into the world with no PPE - no protection against this perilous virus. Something like 40% wouldn't be happy to go back into crowded environments or onto the London underground without some kind of protection - they have lost faith and feel vulnerable in this "Not so very Brave New World".

When you join a CBC Zoom Meeting you arrive in the Waiting Room, I see you there and invite you into the meeting with the others. But what if nothing happened? What if you remained in the waiting room? How long would you wait there before you thought that something had gone wrong with the system, or with me, or with you or your phone, tablet or computer? How long would you be willing to wait and what would you be thinking while you were waiting there?

We're all waiting for something aren't we – waiting for the schools to be re-opened, waiting for churches to be re-opened, waiting for pubs and clubs, swimming pools, gymnasiums, non-essential shops etc. Waiting for a return to 'normality' (Whatever that was?!)

But it's only been about 7 weeks now – but it has had an amazing effect on people - people have been affected in different ways and react differently depending on their nature, their jobs, their financial situation, and of course their relationship with God.

Without a shadow of a doubt – the NHS is at the forefront of this crisis - being recognised and applauded as selfless, hardworking, risk-taking and tireless in it's work towards those unfortunate enough to suffer catching the Corona virus. But they can only do so much under the circumstances and let's face it – the figures suggest that going to A&E or being admitted for any other reason than suffering COVID 19 is to be avoided at all costs. That's one waiting room that most people would not want to wait in!

What you're waiting for and how long you're willing and prepared to wait for it - is a reflection of how much you value that thing and how much you're willing to suffer waiting for it.

So what is it for you? For my Mum and Dad, they wrote to each other for nearly 6 years during the Second World War, and although they had both changed significantly at the end of it, they ended up committing the rest of their lives to each other. Year after year they said to each other – 'the war will surely end this year!'

Does anyone really know when this current crisis will be over? And if it *is* over in a few weeks or months – does anyone know what follows it? We're all in GOD's *Waiting Room* and there's not many ways of getting out of it! It might in some way feel like a desert or wilderness, make us agitated or ill at ease – but remember this – GOD put us in here for a reason and we ought to make good use of it. My personal thoughts are that it includes God testing us; causing us to face the effects of being denied certain things, and to re-evaluate.

The world in general will soon give up on Biblical wisdom – in nature it will be aggressive, mocking and unbelieving – most of us have seen some of that that already.

2Peter 3:4-9 *They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. **But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.***

But for those of us that recognise that God is still preparing a place for us, has planned this down to the finest detail, and is totally in control – we also need to remember this – whilst we’re in ‘The Waiting Room’ we can be doing something useful as well as perhaps knitting, watching TV, compiling Jigsaws, and sleeping away a few more hours of the day!

Hebrews 3:7-13 *So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me - and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with **that** generation, and I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’ **So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’**” See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. **But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.***

There is a significant difference between sleeping and relaxing - and entering God’s Rest. **God’s rest** involves being at peace with God, and Him being at peace with us as a result of reconciliation. If we are fully reconciled to God by Faith in Jesus Christ – then we really ought to be at peace and be able to enjoy that **‘rest’** that God says some will never enter.

Hebrews 4:3-7 ***Now we who have believed enter that rest,** just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘**They** shall never enter my rest.’” And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “And on the seventh day God rested from all his work.” And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.” **It still remains that some will enter that rest,** and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: “**Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.**”*

If you value God’s Word and promises, and know that your life is hidden in Him. Then when He appears you will appear with Him. In the meantime, be at peace and enjoy the Sabbath Rest that he has brought your way – take a Sabbatical, and if He gives you the opportunity to share the Good News from your waiting room – take it!

Until we meet again, Keep Safe, Enjoy the Peace, and Trust that God is in Control!
God Bless, Rob