

I speak as one who knows what it is to be defeated by fear. Fear has won when it persuades you that God will not help. Fear persuades you that hope is ill founded and your fate rests in your own hands. The thought that has driven me to my most regretted acts is the very thought 'I must act'.

Not to act in forthright effectiveness would be a dereliction or cowardice.

In the Psalm, God says 'Be Still and know'. This is not knowing in the scientific sense but knowing a religious sense. Acknowledging emotionally that underneath are the everlasting arms. 'Be still and just trust' is a weaker way of saying 'be still and know'. Be still and know that I am God. We can let go of control because our keeper, our manager is God. We can enjoy a sense of being kept. Everyone relaxing in a deck chair on a cruise can enjoy a sense of being kept. The sense of being kept that God wants for us is one founded in something more secure than earth's circumstances. You can buy a good cruise for around £1000. The peace God longs to impart is priceless. (I am not having a go about Cruises and if anyone feels that God is calling to buy me a cruise, see me as soon as may be.)

The passage of scripture with the confession comes from the same book as our New Testament reading. 1 John 3

John says 'This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence'. The first part of that sentence I understand. I see how it fits into his teaching about truly belonging to Christ. The second bit of that sentence comes as a surprise. ' how we set our hearts at rest in His presence' Knowing that we belong to the truth is important but equally as important is setting our hearts at rest in His presence. Both John and the psalmist appear to be pulling in the same direction.

If we come together on a Sunday morning and find a moment in which to be still and feel God's loving care, we are doing something profound. There seems to be something special about this for believers. And not just on a Sunday morning. Anytime.

The peace of God may pave the way to something very special: Inaction. Sometimes called patience. Sometimes, 'taking a long view'. Sometimes wisdom.