



A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEKEND

14th July, 2023

"Wait for the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart."
Psalm 27:14

I have a scripture card which shows a young child in mid-air, having been thrown up by an adult, whose hands can be seen below waiting to catch her on the way down. The caption is Psalm 27:14 *"Wait for the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart."* (Translations vary.)

What attracts me to it is the expression on the child's face. It is a mixture of Fear, Fun and Faith! I don't imagine any of us are expecting to be thrown up in the air and caught (I don't understand why kids love such things!) but we can imagine what is going on in the child's mind, from her facial expression.

a) Fear: This is not safe; I might fall and be hurt. Will dad (or whoever it is) catch me? Does he really care about me? Is he strong enough?

b) Fun: This is a thrill; it's different from usual, I'm enjoying it! (How often do kids say, "Again!"?)

c) Faith: I trust this adult (assuming dad); he loves me, he won't let me fall, he's strong enough to catch me; I feel safe!

And behind all that, of course, are dynamics the child is not considering, to do with bonding, trusting, courage, pushing boundaries, experiencing danger-in-safety; expressions of love.

This weekend at Café Church we're considering 'Living with Limits'. It's a huge topic and could be taken in many ways, but let's think about living with the limits of not being able fully to know and understand God. He is, after all, God; and we are, after all, 'Only Human'.

What should be our response to the 'unknowns' of God?

a) There is a place for fear, -the holy fear of worshipping a being of unimaginable power, greatness and purity; that holy fear of knowing *"It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Hebrews 10:31), yet *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"* (Psalm 111:10). He is the Shepherd (Psalm 23); who watches over us with love (Psalm 121).

b) There is a place for fun, like parents with children, delighting to thrill, with surprise and mystery, the wrapped gifts, the journey to unknown destination. So perhaps God leads and calls, gives and blesses, even 'hints and winks', for our *delight*, -building trust in him through testing times.

c) And, of course, there is faith; faith in God *to be God*. *"Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."* (Hebrews 11:1) And hand in hand with that faith goes the phrase, perhaps uttered by the owner of the upheld hands in my postcard, *"Don't be afraid"...* -it's one of the key themes of God's words to us, some twenty times in scripture, half of them on the lips of Jesus.

So we live with the secret things of God. As U.S. politician Donald Rumsfeld said, *"There are things that we know we don't know"*, and that's OK! And of course, *"There are things we don't know we don't know."* That's OK too, because knowing what we know of God helps us trust him for what we don't -and cannot- know. We live with limits!