



A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEKEND

6 January 2023

... 'Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you...' 1 Chronicles 28:20

'Put your hand into the hand of God'

On Christmas Day 1939, at a time of grim foreboding and uncertainty in Europe, King George VI, in his Christmas broadcast, quoted part of the poem, *'The Gate of the Year'*, by Minnie Louise Haskins. *'I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."* (George VI, by the way, as you may know, had great difficulty with a speech impediment, and the broadcast itself took much work and courage!)

Scripture has many examples of those who, when God called them, *and* along their journey with Him, felt unworthy, unqualified, inexperienced, clumsy of speech, fearful... (add your own feeling about yourself!). Many who faced unknown -or *all-too-well-known*- enemies were conscious of their vulnerability and weakness. In scripture we read frequently that God assures those He has called with words like, *"Do not be afraid"; "I will be with you" "I will give you the words", "I will fight for you"*. Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, Jeremiah... Peter, Paul, -no doubt you can think of others. The promises are for anyone called by the Lord into His service, -like you or me, -or those we love and are concerned for. Perhaps almost all of us have felt an assuring *'peace that passes human understanding'* that comes surprisingly at certain times.

The combination of feeling inadequate within ourselves and feeling fearful about the future or the present circumstances is very much part of human experience, and God's children are no exception. Like Peter, we may respond with joy and confidence to Christ's call or guidance, but then, a step or two in, we realise we are 'walking on water', and our resolution falters, our faith fails.

It is especially true with so-called 'New Year resolutions', when along comes our first 'failure', or when we fall for the age-old tricks of the evil one: telling us we're no good, comparing us with others, urging us to give up! As in God's firm but loving words to Elijah at a time of lonely despair, He may call us to go back, to continue the work to which He called us. He forgives and restores, *"seventy times seven"*, and the promise of His ever-presence abides with us still (Psalm 46:1!).

That poem King George quoted 84 years ago continues, *"So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day ..."*.

May that be our experience as we place our hand in His! Happy New Year!