**Daily Prayer & Encouragement Monday 28th December –** Vera Waters

2 Peter 3 v8

‘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.‘

Well, here we are, approaching the end of another year, and a very strange one at that. I wonder, have you noticed that something strange seems to have happened - apart from Covid? Time itself seemed to have slowed down. Stripped of many of the patterns, routines and demands of ‘normal’ life, people started noticing the small things around them. We heard the birds singing loud and clear, noticed the beauty contained within a single flower, enjoyed the song of the ocean. We made time to clap and chat with our neighbours, and people actually acknowledged one another as they passed in the street by exchanging a friendly greeting. Best of all, we had more time to talk to God and consequently enjoyed more of His presence.

On the home front, many discovered long hidden and forgotten items. We found lost treasures in the garage/shed and attic. (I tidied my sock drawer). We caught up on jobs we had neglected. Supermarkets ran out of flour and eggs as people started to bake their own cakes and biscuits. We scratch-cooked all our own meals, the dishwasher filled up much more quickly, and we made every coffee at home, saving a small fortune.

Conversely, at the same time, everything seems to have speeded up. We find that fixed points in our week, Church, small group, food shopping, cleaning, come round very quickly indeed. ‘It can’t be shopping/cleaning/Sunday again already!’ It only seems five minutes since we...’. or, more sadly, ....’Do you realise it’s nearly ten months since we had all the family together?’ And the impact on families has been even greater on those with children and grandchildren living abroad.

World events are also moving apace. The wild weather programmes show dramatic changes in the climate. The ice cap is melting on our screens as we watch. Political systems are shifting rapidly; U-turns, fake news and lack of stability have become the norm.

But there is hope! Always. Our Everlasting Father stands outside time as we know it. He is the author of the Big Picture. He wrote the story, beginning to end, it is all in His Book. He was there already at the beginning; before creation began. He is the Producer, His Hand is on every detail, and He is the Director and sees the whole picture; what was, what is, and what is to come.

On the very last page of my Bible Jesus speaks, “Behold I am coming SOON, My reward is with Me and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

Our Mighty God, the Everlasting Father will return in power, as Judge and He will set everything right again, creating a new heaven and a new earth. Paradise is to be restored. ‘The wolf will lie with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them ... They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the

knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.’ Isaiah 11.

***Father, it’s one of your children again, wishing that You would hear I’ve only a few simple words to speak, I guess you might call it a prayer. First, I want to thank You for this day, for the sun that shines that way, for the green against the blue. I wonder what all the people do, who are grateful for all this. But don’t know how to thank You?***

***Father, before I go to sleep, I have just one request, that I may be forever be where You are, and forget the rest. Father, I want to thank You for Your Son, for the beautiful things He is, for the marvellous things He’s done. It takes all my faith to understand that He who guides the stars cares to guide me by the hand.***

*(From an old song, author unknown)*