



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.



The pace of life is slower on a canal boat – it was even more gentle before mobile phones became the norm! We were once travelling on the Shropshire Union Canal when our cooker packed up, so when we reached the next village we found a call box and phoned the boatyard we'd started out from 2½ days earlier. “Don't worry,” they said, “We'll send the engineer straight over. Should be with you in less than an hour” – and he was. So much for our 2½ days journey!

In human experience, time can do strange things, depending on what's happening around us. Happiness or misery can seem to affect it; if we're in pain, or have to do things we don't much like, time goes very slowly; whereas when we're happy and enjoying ourselves, how time flies! To my surprise this past coronavirus year has absolutely sped by and it's hard to believe that more than a year has passed since the first lockdown. Not that it has all been enjoyable – but it has passed surprisingly quickly.

The verse above expresses the fact that God experiences time differently to us. What for us may seem a very long time is very brief to God. God has lived for ever, he is from everlasting to everlasting. Farther back than our thoughts can travel, farther back than we can ever imagine, our God was there. There was never a time when he was not there. He is outside, beyond time as we know it. This truth means certain things to us, has certain consequences in our lives.

First of all, it can't help but deepen our awe and holy reverence. When we recognize and think

Psalm 90:4 'The Eternity of God'

For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past,
or like a watch in the night.

about the power and grandeur of God, the boundlessness of his empire both in time and space, the eternity of his being, it means that our minds and hearts are inevitably lifted in devotion and veneration.

Secondly, it loosens the power of this world over us. There is nothing that we can be given which compares in any way to the gifts that God gives us. Life itself is God's gift to us, as are his love, his forgiveness, and above all the gift of his only Son who died for us and who showed us God himself. The world can give us nothing like this.

Thirdly, this truth strengthens our patience, it can help us not to fret at the seemingly slow progress of the victory of good. However long delayed, the purposes of God will be accomplished, the promises of God will be fulfilled.

And finally, it gives us great consolation. As humans, we die, and leave our loved ones and our work; but God lives forever and through Jesus has given us, too, the gift of eternal life. Everything is safe in his hands.

Prayer

Loving heavenly Father,
you are not bound to time,
the brevity of our earthly lives is always in
contrast with your eternal being.
Teach us to live beyond the timeline
that frames our days,
help us remember
that the squares on the calendar
should not rule our lives;
help us always to live
with our hearts fixed on eternity.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.