

Matthew's weekly musing, 9th October 2020

I've just been bowled over by the epistle for this weekend. It's in the box below.

I was almost moved to tears by the sense of peace it evoked. I found myself thinking, "This passage feels the same to me as an impressionist painting."



If you go to Google Images and search for 'Impressionist Paintings' you'll find yourself in a cascade of gentle, colourful, soft, almost vague pictures. Perhaps the attraction the Impressionists hold for many of us is that they produce dreamy pieces of art that help us relax and feel that all is well with the world.

Philippians 4

- 1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.
- 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.
- 5 Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.
- 6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
- 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- 8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

So now I am musing on why these familiar poetic verses from Paul had such an impact on me today.

The passage begins with an extraordinary suggestion! "Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say rejoice." *Always!* So what if I receive a cross email, or indignant letter, or am in a demanding relationship?

Paul says, "Let your gentleness be known to everyone." And in case we wonder where this gentleness is going to come from, he reminds us, "The Lord is near." Note to self: "Oh yes, if Jesus was visibly standing next to me I would try to avoid the embarrassment of being cross and would instead be gentle."

At this point I find I am beginning to float as if in warm buoyant water, as I enjoy the thought of universal gentleness, and gently drift through the verses which follow.... don't worry about anything .. pray .. ask .. give thanks .. discover peace beyond understanding ... know your heart is guided and your mind ...

Now the concluding verses (8) look realisable. A kind of anticipation of heaven but here on earth.

Here are a few more dreamy moments:

