

*For God alone my soul in silence waits;
truly, my hope is in God.*

What are you waiting for?

The vaccine? To “get back to normal”? To sit in these pews?

Even before the pandemic, many of us convinced ourselves that we’re waiting for . . . *something*.

To meet the right person. Get the right job or house. Lose ten pounds. Then, we can stop waiting. Then, we’ve finally arrived.

So what are you waiting for?

Here’s how today’s psalm answers that question (we heard it sung beautifully by Sam a few moments ago):

*For God alone my soul in silence waits;
truly, my hope is in God.*

Not the vaccine. Not being “normal”. But God. Alone.

Well, that’s a nice, ephemeral hope, you might say.

But we can’t just wait around like that.

We have real problems, real challenges, now.

And so we do.

And, so did the person who wrote the psalm.

This person, this psalmist, describes some of his (or, I suppose, her) problems in the verses that come just before what we read today.

I hope you’ll read Psalm 62 in its entirety for yourself.

You’ll see that the psalmist had someone who was spreading lies, trying to bring him down.

He felt that people were ganging up on him, crushing him, as if a “leaning fence or a toppling wall”.

He knew what it was to struggle with real life problems.

To want them to just go away.

But that's not what he was waiting for.
He says not once, but twice, that he waits for God alone.

This word "alone" is the Hebrew "ak".
It's used in this psalm (translated as alone, only or indeed)
more than anywhere else in Hebrew scripture.
So I guess this poet wants us to notice this word.
Wants us to catch this single-minded focus on waiting for God alone
and only God, indeed.

The truth is, getting vaccinated is good.
Getting on with our lives is good.
Sitting in these pews again, good.
But they're not what we as Christians would call Good News.
None of these things, alone, will ultimately bring us the resolution we seek.

As much as we may like to think otherwise,
our lives are not going to "get back to normal" with the flick of a switch –
or even the jab of a needle.
We won't be the same on the other side of this as we were before.
And, as I've said before, that's ok.
The issue is what are we doing now to brace ourselves
for *whatever* the future holds.

Although it feels like we've been in this pandemic forever,
this time last year – *if* we'd even yet heard of COVID9 –
we had no idea how quickly and dramatically it would impact us.
What makes us so sure we know what to expect after this?

I expect we're going to have our work cut out for us.
Healing the fall-out from this shared societal trauma.
Reckoning at last with the profound racial and economic injustices
that have been so baldly exposed.
Bringing peace and accountability to our nation.

For these and so many things which ail us, there is no vaccine.

I know I've said this before too, but God did not, not, not
visit this pandemic upon us.
And God surely did not visit the injustice and division upon us. We humans

are all too good at causing *that* by ourselves.

But God is with us in this mess, and can help us through it, forming us into the people and the community God needs us to be to meet this moment.

When he felt the walls closing in on him,
the author of Psalm 62 chose to wait for God alone.
When he didn't know what else he could count on,
he chose to trust God's steadfast love.

I don't know how this season of life is for you.
I don't know if you're lonely, scared, or bored out of your mind.
I don't know if you're angry that it got to this point and
that so many people are being hurt in so many different ways.
I don't know if you're exhausted from working hard to adapt,
then constantly disappointed by your efforts.
I'm not sure how I feel some of the time.

But from the witness of this psalmist, and so many others, I do know
that now of all times is for us to wait for God alone.
If we've learned nothing else from this past year,
it's once and for all that we don't know what the future holds or
what will be asked of us.
But we can trust God's steadfast love to go there with us.

So let's use this time – whatever it's like for you –
to fall in love with God who first loves us.
To fall in love with God all over again. Or for the first time.
To savor just how deeply you are loved by God --
just as is all of creation, including those you love
and those you find difficult to love.

Now, urgently now, is the time to wait for God alone who waits with you.

Dwelling in God's word, praying the psalms, are excellent ways to do this.
Perhaps you'll pray Psalm 62 with me now:

{Read Psalm 62:1-14}