

The Wait

Bobbie S. Bryant

April 11, 2020

Have you ever noticed how the drive to a location always seems longer than the drive home? Or how the days leading up to a special event seem like an eternity and when the day arrives, it goes by in a flash?

The wait can seem unbearable.

That may be where we find ourselves as we self-isolate in our homes during the coronavirus pandemic.

We may be impatient as we see the grass is now a verdant green and the redbuds and dogwoods have blossomed earlier than usual. Thankfully, for most of us in Kentucky, we are allowed to take walks and get outdoors, even if it is only to go to the mailbox.

For families with little ones at home, this year's Easter egg hunts are probably taking on a new form. Even so, I suspect that today's kids behave in a similar fashion to my own experience; Peter Cottontail can't show up too soon.

One of my favorite memories is of a girlie-girl dress made of soft pink cotton, decorated with bows and lace. It was made by Mrs. Dowdy, my Mamaw Chilcutt's neighbor. Mamaw paid her to sew for me and my cousin, Debbie, so we'd have a new dress every spring. I loved that dress and my shiny Mary Janes shoes that made me feel all grown up.

Beyond getting to wear the new dress, I was even more impatient to see what the Easter Bunny left for me on the morning of Easter. For weeks leading up to the big day, we'd read stories about Easter, draw and color pictures of rabbits and eggs and sing happy songs.

Growing up, I learned the full meaning of Easter and the symbolism that surrounds it. And, the wait leading up to Easter is still long. Forty days long. For those who fast during Lent, it seems Easter will never come when we start the process about six weeks prior to the holy day.

Now an adult, I continue to read stories about Easter and, while I don't draw or color, I do enjoy the full palette of color painted across our spring landscapes. Songs of Easter pouring from posts on Facebook have moved me to tears in recent days.

Most profound for me this year has been the correlation of this long wait as we are also awaiting the end of the pandemic. Days have stretched into weeks and there is no immediate plan for the situation to change. We wait in anticipation for what's next.

I've thought a lot this week about Jesus' family and friends and their experiences during the days before resurrection. They had to have been terrified and deeply saddened by the week's events. From his triumphant ride into Jerusalem to being tried before Pilate, beaten and brutally crucified – it was, in their minds – the end to everything. One of their own had betrayed them. It was the end of their teacher. Their three-year ministry was over. Perhaps even the end of their own lives was imminent. And yet, they waited. They remained in Jerusalem. Amidst unimaginable fear for their own lives, they stayed put.

Jesus had told them he would return, yet it was inconceivable how that was possible. They watched him die in agony. They could not envision what lay ahead; their outlook was grim.

As we await the end of this pandemic, our wait seems interminably long and our situation may seem dark. Many have lost jobs or seen their wages drastically reduced. Seniors are watching retirement accounts dwindle each day. It's a scary time. What will happen to us once we come through this time of waiting? The unknown is frightening to contemplate.

Or is it?

We Easter people have something exciting to look forward to while we wait. We know what is on the other side of the empty tomb. Certainly, things will be different when the pandemic ends, though we don't know in what ways.

What we do know is that Jesus lives. The light of His life shines in each of us.

On Easter, when we celebrate the risen Lord, let's remember to love one another as he taught us. As we wait until the pandemic subsides, let's turn our worries into prayers and look with confidence and hope toward what's next.

Easter is here – He is Risen!

For more of Bobbie's essays, visit her website at bobbiesmithbryant.com