



THINK ON THESE THINGS..... (our contributor this morning is Brian)

**Reading:** Isaiah 53: vv 2, 3, 5, 10

It was the will of the Lord that his servant should grow like a plant taking root in dry ground.....We despised and rejected him: he endured suffering and pain. No one would even look at him- we ignored him as if he were nothing. But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain we should have borne.....But because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received.....The Lord says, "It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants: he will live a long life, and through him my purpose will succeed."

**Reflection:**

Patience is one of the nine fruits of the Spirit ( Galatians 5: 2 & 3) and it may seem obvious that in these Coronavirus days, weeks, and months we have all been forced to exercise patience: queueing to shop at a supermarket, waiting for things to be delivered, longing to have a real meeting with friends and our families, sometimes needing patience for living at close quarters with each other, and hoping there will soon be a vaccine that will return us to something like normality.

However, the Bible also teaches us that patience is not simply OUR long suffering and endurance. We ought also to think of God's patience looking forward. God did not have patience because he was suffering or because he was locked down. The prophet speaks of a suffering servant, one who was beaten disfigured and despised, but with the divine patience this suffering servant would be a source of healing. He would be 'a sacrifice to bring forgiveness '. Divine patience is a hope and expectation of better things.

**Breath-Prayer:** Gracious and Loving God, given us the patience we need to bear what cannot be changed and to wait for what seems a long time coming. And, Lord, also grant us the patience of those who look for a humbler, more compassionate and faithful world to come.

