

## SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED

As I write this, there is a breeze beyond my window, causing the drying leaves of the trees and shrubs outside to rustle. It reminds me of the old song that used to be a favourite of mine: 'I hear the sound of rustling in the leaves of the trees. The Spirit of the Lord has come down on the earth...' It goes on to burst into its refrain, 'My tongue will be the pen of a ready writer, and what the Father gives to me I'll [bring]'. My prayer is that what I bring today would be both a blessing and a nudge nearer His throne.

Given the choice, I think most of us would prefer a quiet life, with its wish-list of peace, both at our borders and within, health, strength, stability. My experience is that life is rarely so tidy! At some point, a breeze will blow up that can rattle us and threaten to knock us off our feet. I've certainly had that happen to me in recent months – and that's not even including Covid-19.

As an illustration, a few weeks ago, my apple tree fell over. It only had five fruits on it, but four fell off – a very disappointing harvest. But let me put this into context. This little tree is in a pot, ready for me to take with me when I move house. It has previously been in two different places in the garden, both equally disastrous for its growth – to say nothing of the yearly autumnal upheaval of the poor thing. The day the tree fell over, the soil within the pot was so dry that it had no weight. I'd been watering, certainly, but not enough. My tree was sort-of-rooted but not really. I wonder if our faith is like that, sometimes, too.

It was James Bond who famously wanted his Martini cocktails "shaken, not stirred," but it's not a bad motto for our lives. Events cause us to shake and yet the promise of Isaiah 26:3 is that 'You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You.'

- Perfect peace. Not just an improvement in our anxiety levels, but peace that comes despite the circumstances.
- A steadfast mind. When our resilience is tested so we feel we are unravelling, focussing on Jesus makes fear retreat to the shadows.
- Trusting in God. This is what everything else is based upon. When He is our bedrock, our foundation, we need have no fear of falling.

When those winds blow up around us, my prayer is that we be found rooted, steadfast, clear-headed and peaceful-hearted.

Have a blessed day.