

Dear Friends,

Today was the day of my bi-weekly prison visit with Bill. We have had these visits regularly for the past 13 years, the last 8 of which have been at a Correctional Facility some 80 miles from my home. The routine of getting to see Bill is always the same. Drive the 80 miles; rid myself of any electronic devices before walking into the guard house, empty my pockets, etc. of anything metal and pass through the metal detector. Gone are the days when you could hide a hacksaw in a cake and sneak it inside. Then you present your completed visitor form and driver's license while the guard on duty checks in the computer to see if you are an approved visitor. Then he stamps your visitor form and you pass through two doors with electric locks on them and you are now inside the barbed wire compound. Into another building, you present your visitor form to another guard who tears off a part while returning another part to you. That guard calls the part of the prison where your visitee is while you sit down and wait. That's right - wait.

For the past 8 years, 26 times a year - over 200 times in all, I sit and wait. Most times I'll pull a New Testament out of my back pocket and read. Invariably though, I spend some time looking at the first of the last two doors through which I must pass to visit Bill. There on the door, written in both English and Spanish are instructions not to stand there, but to sit and wait for your visit to be announced. Today I noticed for the first time that the Spanish word for wait is "espera." I'm not much of a linguist, but in French class I learned that the French word for hope is "esperer." Wait and hope come from the same root word. "J'espere pour Jesus." I "wait" for Jesus; I "hope" for Jesus.

I found that quite interesting, especially after just having spent the last four weeks preaching about the Second Coming of Christ. This is something that every true believer "esperes" for. We wait, but it's not a hang-around-and-twiddle-your-thumb waiting; it's waiting with an expectant hope. It's a hope in which we can and should invest our faith, and if we do, then Jesus will find faith (in action) in the earth when (not if) He comes.

I hope you have a wonderful day in the Lord, and I hope to hear some good reports from you about your "espera." My life is in you Lord; My hope is in you Lord.....oops! Now I'm singing and that's a sure sign for me to close. God bless you all.

Yours for His Purposes,

Pastor Les