



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 11, 2022

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 3:22-30

22 After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. 23 John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized 24 — John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison. 25 Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. 26 They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him.” 27 John answered, “No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. 28 You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.’ 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.”

DEVOTIONAL

On the surface this scripture lesson seems straightforward. The Baptist's followers are concerned that more people are going to "the other guy" to be baptized instead of to John. Of course, looking at the text from our perspective we know who they are going to: the Messiah, known as Jesus. Throughout his mission, John proclaimed he was not the light, but he came to testify to that light (John 1:8). As the ministry of Jesus was growing, John knew his was going to diminish—and he was joyful about it.

I could not help thinking about this at a personal level. As Jesus becomes more central to our lives, we are made new, we are reformed. 1 John 2:17 tells us "the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever." For each of us that means as we allow the light of Christ to glow and grow within, that which keeps us from fully knowing Christ—sin—must decrease. In other words, the Jesus in us must increase, as the "I" within us must decrease.

The end of the poem *Thou Shalt Know Him When He Comes*, by Mark Sirett, reads

"But his coming known shall be,
By the holy harmony
Which his coming makes in thee."

As that Holy Harmony increases in each of us, how can we not be joyful?!

PRAYER

Oh, Holy Harmony! Thank you for your dramatic disruption to our lives. As we respond to the "you" abiding in us, we can not help but be joyous at the new persons we become. During this season of Advent, help us to focus on the ministry of the "you", and less on the desires of the "I". Amen.

ABOUT PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

BECOME A STUDENT

Master's

Doctor of Ministry

Non-Degree

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Graduate Certificate in Adaptive and Innovative Ministry

Graduate Certificate in Ministry

Graduate Certificate in Missional Leadership

Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry

Spiritual Formation Certificate

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Center for Adaptive and Innovative Ministry

Continuing Education

Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology

Miller Summer Youth Institute

Metro-Urban Institute

FACULTY

In addition to their on-campus duties, our faculty are experts in their fields and are available to preach and teach. Learn more about their [topics of research and writing](#) and invite them to present at your congregation or gathering.

EVENTS

The Seminary hosts a wide range of events—many of them free!—on topics of faith including church planting, mission, vocation, spiritual formation, pastoral care and counseling, archaeology, and many more. Visit our [calendar](#) often for a listing of upcoming events.

VISIT PTS

Interested in the Seminary? [Come visit us!](#)

STAY IN TOUCH WITH PTS

Sign-up to receive the Seminary's newsletters: Seminary News (monthly), Center for Adaptive and Innovative Ministry (monthly), Continuing Education (monthly), World Mission Initiative (monthly), Metro-Urban Institute (quarterly), and Kelso Museum. Alums, there's also one for you!

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610

[FIND YOUR PROGRAM](#)[REQUEST INFO](#)[APPLY ONLINE](#)[VISIT THE CAMPUS](#)[News & Events](#)[Contact](#)[Directions](#)[Employment](#) [Save Page As PDF](#)[Privacy Policy](#)[COVID-19](#)[Accessibility](#)[Anti-Discrimination](#)[Title IX And Anti-Harassment](#)