

## **Advent Devotional December 17, 2018**

### **Scripture**

2 Peter 1:1-11

<sup>1</sup>Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup>May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. <sup>3</sup>His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup>Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature. <sup>5</sup>For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup>and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. <sup>8</sup>For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>For anyone who lacks these things is nearsighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble. <sup>11</sup>For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

### **Devotional**

**Dr. Stephanie Boddie, Assistant Professor of Church and Community Ministries, Baylor University, Waco, Texas / Chairperson, Metro-Urban Institute Advisory Council**

A few years ago, I was worshipping at Tindley Temple United Methodist Church in Philadelphia and heard the song *Heaven's Christmas Tree*. I later learned the pastor that penned the song also wrote a sermon with the same title. In the sermon, the Rev. Charles Albert Tindley (1851-1933) asked, is "Christ really a tree? . . . And if so, are there packages in this tree?" He answered, "Yes, a package with your name on it is hanging on the limb of Heaven's great Christmas Tree." Tindley suggested that Christ bears a package of rare blessings for every human being throughout the world.

According to these verses from 2 Peter, through Christ we have been given a precious faith and the precious promises of God. Our needs have already been anticipated and met. We have been given all we need for life and godliness. The gift of faith help us to claim these other gifts—moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and above all, love. Having received these gifts, we will live into our new life and our new identity. We will become partakers in the very nature of God.

Like the expectant child on Christmas morning, we must come and receive these gifts. We must not toss them aside after the excitement of Christmas is over.

Keep reaching up with all your heart, soul, and strength to receive from Heaven's Christmas Tree!

### **Prayer**

Loving God through your goodness and glory you have given us rare blessings in your son, Jesus Christ, and everything we need for life and godliness. Fill our hearts with peace as we share in your divine nature and grow in faith, adding courage, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, kindness, and above all, love.