

Advent Devotional December 2, 2021

Scripture

2 Peter 3:11-18

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, beware that you are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Devotional

The Rev. Alice L. Phillips '94

Waiting is usually pretty difficult for most of us. Whether we are waiting in line in a crowded grocery store or a traffic jam, or waiting for a special event like Christmas, a new baby, or a wedding, often our very best doesn't shine through. Unfortunately, waiting—even in joyful anticipation—can sometimes cause us to be impatient, anxious, fearful, on edge, short-tempered... just to name a few descriptors! In this passage of Scripture, Peter instructs us as we await the most important event in life: the coming of the Lord. What sort of people ought we to be? He tells us we should be leading lives of holiness, godliness, and peace, without spot or blemish.

When we think about being holy and godly, without spot or blemish, it may conjure all kinds of thoughts in our heads, like a "holier than thou" attitude, or maybe something that is reserved for a saintly Mother-Teresa-type person. But the Scriptures tell us to be holy because God is holy. Only our Lord God is fully holy. The Lord is the one who has called us to be more and more like Jesus. Being holy means being different, living by a different standard than the world around us; it means being set apart for a unique purpose.

Author Stuart Briscoe recalls how unprepared he was more than fifty years ago on the day he was married to his wife Jill. He says, "I had been set apart from the old life . . . there had been a cut. I was in a new environment. I had a new status. I had been set apart uniquely to my wife. There was only one problem. I never had been married before, and I didn't know how to be married. Fortunately, God in his wisdom had prepared all of this."

Stuart goes on to describe how all these years he has been learning how to be married. He then equates that to how we are to live holy lives. He says, "When I came to Jesus, I was made holy. And since I was a little boy, I've been learning only too slowly how to be what I became. Or if you like, he set me apart to himself and now he says, 'Get on with it . . . and be what you became.'"

I love how he describes this! So how do we "be what we became" when we said yes to Jesus in our lives? Peter describes it best when he says, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." As we grow each day in our relationship with Jesus by spending time with Him, meditating upon his

word, and worshiping him, we more fully understand. As we grow in Jesus, we become more and more like him. As we become more and more like him, then we are able to live holy and godly lives, experiencing his peace without spot or blemish.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, we thank you and praise you for being the Lord of our lives. We thank you for your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father, as we remember his coming into this world, we also anticipate his coming again! As we wait, help us to be good learners as we draw close to Jesus, seeking to grow in his grace and knowledge each day. Lord, help us to get on with it each day to be what we became when we welcomed your great invitation of the Savior into our lives. With joyful anticipation we wait! In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.