

Advent Devotional December 16, 2024

Weekly theme: Joy

Scripture

2 Peter 1:1-11

1 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:

2 May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

3 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. 4 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. 5 For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. 8 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. 9 For anyone who lacks these things is nearsighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. 10 Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble. 11 For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

Devotion

The Rev. Mary Catherine (Kay) Day '97

The Advent season brings a bustle of activities, especially finding the right gift for each person on our list. Some start to shop early while others rush at the last minute. We try to give according to the interest and desire of the recipient. Most of the gifts we give, while appreciated, are soon or eventually discarded. If we are honest, the same thing happens with the gifts we receive.

This is not the case with the gifts that God gives us. Peter says that God's divine power has given us everything we need. These are gifts that grow with time and use. With them come His promises, His guarantee, that these will lead us closer to Christ and to eternal life. These include faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, and kindness (fruits of the Spirit). As we grow in our faith, these gifts grow in value. They become a part of our lives, treasured and preserved.

God's gifts can't be bought for any price. They can't be wrapped and put under a tree. They can't be held in our hands. They won't go out of style or break and be cast away. They are more costly than anything we could ever purchase. They are the perfect size, fitted just for us. They multiply in value as we use them. More than that, they prepare us for God's use here on earth and for His glory in all eternity. These are the only gifts we can take with us into eternity. Everything else will be left behind.

This season, I invite you to make use of the gifts God has given you as you search for the gifts you will give to others. Where can you give goodness, knowledge, self-control, and all the rest of God's magnificent gifts?

Prayer

Gracious God, you have given us all we need to love you and serve you. You are the most generous gift-giver. Help us this season to give gifts that will last beyond the season, that will be gifts that share the divine perspective of the perfect gifts for those in our lives. Amen.