



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 2, 2021

The Company of the Abiding

by Mr. Daniel H. Wilcox

1 John 4:7-21

4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

4:9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

4:11 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

4:13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.

4:15 God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God.

4:16 So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

4:17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.

4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.

4:19 We love because he first loved us.

4:20 Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.

4:21 The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

As we approach Pentecost, the object of our pursuit should be the abiding presence of God. To abide with God, we should strive for divine favor and forgiveness through penitent prayer and fervid fasting. Our spiritual journey is fraught with the dangers of human fragility and infidelity. Yet, the hope of sharing the beloved company of the Almighty urges us to determinedly seek God's face and grace.

This writer in 1 John reminds us that we should first be connected to God through Christ Jesus, who died an atoning death on Calvary. His propitiation ransoms our transgressing souls from certain divine punishment. To abide in God, we must be connected. Second, we should be rightly related to God through faith in Christ Jesus. His resurrection from death affirms trust in His righteousness. To abide in God, we must be rightly related. Third, we should remain in the love of God and in love with God through Christ Jesus' gift of the Holy Ghost. This Holy Ghost baptizes us, imbuing love that enables a life of obedience and faithfulness. To abide in God, we must remain in the love and knowledge of God.

Therefore, let us love God and God's creation as adoring worship, affirming witness, and awesome work that we join the company of those abiding with and in God, now and forevermore.

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)—Reflecting on the scripture, share a time/instance when you experienced a theophany (a visible manifestation of God) of the abiding presence of God? How did this experience make you feel or direct you?

PRAY:

Lord Jesus, thank you for the fullness of your blessing. I want to know and understand more of what it means to simply rest in You. May I abide in sweet union with You, my Savior and remain in blessed communion with You in ever closer intimacy. Teach me, Lord, and train me to rest in Your love. Guard me and guide under the shelter of Your canopy, and reveal more and more of Yourself to me, I pray. Amen.

ACT: During the Easter season, meditate and pray for 9 minutes and 29 seconds (the length of time the now convicted former police officer had his knee on the neck of the Late George Floyd) once each day for the next seven days to abide in the presence of God. Use the hymn below or "Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary" as a mantra. Journal your experience and reflect on your journey through Eastertide and toward Pentecost. In this Eastertide Season, do what you can to protect the health of others and yourself by practicing social distancing as much as possible, washing your hands often, wearing face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and prayerfully considering getting the vaccine when it is available—See: <http://www.amehealth.org>.

2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.

Song:

Abide with Me
AMEC Hymnal, #495

1. Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.
2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.
3. I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.
4. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.
5. Hold Thou Thy cross, before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me. Amen.

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.