

Daily Devotional, April 20, 2021 We are Not of This World

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. 1 John 3:1 (NIV)

There are so many ways in which we have been disoriented from the world this past year. It's a bit hard to think about, but we have now been dealing with this pandemic for more than a year, and for nearly half of that year, we were not able to gather in person for worship. However, church is not the only way we have been displaced. For many, every aspect of life has changed, whether displaced from work, from family, from most everything. I think it's safe to say that the world doesn't look quite the same, and it may never again. I'm still trying to come to terms with that idea.

However, we are reminded in the epistles, letters written by those who were forming the early church, in the days and early years following Jesus' resurrection, that those who hold on to the hope of an eternal life in Jesus, are no longer a part of this world that continues to keep on turning. It reminds me of something I began to understand as a teenager, that as Christians we were to be considered resident aliens (a phrase that became the title of a book written by Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon some years ago). This idea is much older, however. It comes from understanding that we can no longer call this place our home. We don't belong here on earth, we belong to a kingdom that is eternal. Yet, we continue to live in this place, and as we do, the words of the prayer taught to us as children ring more true than ever: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We begin to understand that we are here on earth as aliens, citizens of a heaven so far away that we long for, yet, while we are here, we are heaven's representatives, God's ambassadors. We are the ones who will share the message, so that others might know the glory of heaven. Furthermore, John reminds us that the Father loves us so much, that we are not just ambassadors of heaven, but we are children of heaven. We are those who have an inheritance that is far greater than we deserve or could ever imagine. The world has changed, and we have become disoriented in it, but that matters not, because we never belonged in the world in the first place.

This world can keep on changing, and we will adapt to it, and we will continue to share the glory of the place we know is greater than this world can ever be this side of the new creation. Even greater, is that we know the new creation is started already, in us.

May the world look at us and be reminded of the love of God that desires to make it a better place each and every day.

Prayer: My Gracious Father, I submit myself to you as the ruler of my life. Help me to live according to your will. Establish your kingdom here on earth, Lord, so others may know you. May your kingdom spread throughout our land and bring more of you to this world that is so in need of Your loving care. Help me to be faithful in helping advance your kingdom here, by following in your ways. May Your kingdom come. Amen.