

Living well through Advent

Week Four

Wednesday 21 December 2022

Faith is our Compass

*And when we find ourselves in the
place just right,*

*'Twill be in the valley of love and de-
light.*

Joseph Brackett, Simple Gifts

Faith and simplicity, our focus for this week, are both powerful resources for the journey to the valley of love and delight. Prominent Quaker Rufus Jones wrote, “Faith is an inward attitude based on first-hand experience. It is an active powerful thing, a deliberate confidence in the grace of God which makes a man joyous and intrepid.” As we grow our confidence in the grace of God, at first we may have more questions than answers. How do we partner with God in order to journey to the “valley of love and delight”? How do we cultivate a practice of love and delight, which is how we will know we are in the place just right? Rufus gives us a hint: faith. The faith he describes makes us unafraid, and allows us to believe before we can see exactly where we are headed.

“Find ourselves,” from the line above, suggests we don’t get there on our own. God is guiding us to the “place just right” to be like the delightful surprise we want to share with someone we love. We might cover their eyes and lead them joyfully to the surprise, and then tell them they can open their eyes. And we hope that our gift will fill them with delight and love. This could be what God is up to in our lives: gently inviting us toward that which will fill us with love and delight. Even though we may not be able to see where we’re going, we can trust that God is leading us every step of the way.

When we open our eyes, may we be filled with love and delight at the place just right that God has so lovingly prepared for us.

And now take a moment to reflect on the following questions:

- ◆ Reflect on your own relationship with faith. What if anything has shifted for you recently?
- ◆ Have you noticed any distractions or resistance getting in the way of receiving these gifts?
- ◆ In what ways has the focus this Advent supported you in experiencing the gifts of simplicity?

SIMPLE GIFTS

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.*