

2 Peter 3:17-18

September 18, 2016; 150 Anniversary

Almost everything that lives grows from within. A tree grows from the inside of a seed. A bird grows from inside an egg. The human body grows from this tiny baby. When a child is born, most children have everything they need to grow. There is a heart, lungs, toes and fingers, etc. Yet, for all those little parts to grow, they need food. Without food, that child will slowly die.

So, what do we do as parents? We feed our children. We teach them to eat. Not only do we teach them how to eat, we teach them what is good to eat. God is our Father. We are his children. This morning, the Apostle Peter reminds us that God wants us to eat so that we may grow. Not only does he teach us how to eat, he teaches us what we need to eat as well. Peter teaches us that the Church is God's nursery for the care and feeding of Christians.

Yet, there are many dangers that face Christians today. **"Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position."** One of the TV shows that I liked to watch (and I realize that I am dating myself), was *"Lost in Space."* It was a TV show about the Robinson family, two other passengers and a friendly robot. Week after week, they moved through the universe trying to get back home to earth because they were lost in space. Remember the robot, though. He had this uncanny ability to always detect danger. His famous line was: *"Danger, danger, danger..."*

Peter tells us that there is danger for the believer. In his first letter, Peter warns believers about the threats that were facing Christians from outside the Church. This second letter he is warning of the dangers that can so easily arise from INSIDE the Church. **"Be on guard so that you may not be carried away..."**

A couple of times, I have driven on the highway that goes north from Las Vegas to Death Valley National Park. Along the way there are some exits on the highway that don't have much at them. However, in a couple of places there are these big signs that say: *No Trespassing (by orders of different branches of government)*. They are signs that warn us. There is all kinds of little print that describes what might happen to you if you trespass beyond that sign. As much as I would love to see all that is off in the desert, I don't think it would be a good idea. Like a parent who will keep their eyes on their small child as they go off exploring, Peter warns believers not to take their eyes off of God.

Why? He loves us. We love Him. Just as a parent and a child is bound to each other in love, we are bound to God with His love. God isn't just satisfied with us just knowing that love, he wants that love to grow deeper and deeper. **"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."** Growth in Grace can only grow from Grace. For 150 years the members of St. Paul's have been helping each other and others to grow in Grace.

What's the result? **"To him be glory both now and forever!"** It is so easy for us to take a look at all the accomplishments here and say: *"Look what we have done."* Even though God has worked through a lot of people over the years, we grow for one simple reason: **"To him be glory both now and forever!"** We read from Peter's second letter:

¹⁷ **Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.** ¹⁸ **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.**