

Bible Study 1st Corinthians
By Fr. John Brown

Setting: 1st century Corinth

Summary of the city of Corinth

- Acrocorinth, defense, water
- The Isthmus, Crossroads of commerce, great wealth, many visitors
- Greek, Roman, Asian, Egyptian, Jewish influences
- Center of multiculturalism, many pagan visitors and pilgrims
- Many pagan temples, largest were of Apollo and Aphrodite
- Widespread sexual immorality
- Isthmian games>Paul's athletic references, tent making.
- The Roman "Bema" place of public commendation and judgement

Question: How is 1st century similar or dissimilar to 21st century America?

Summary of the book of 1st Corinthians

Paul, as an apostle and founder of the Church at f?
, had received news that this church had fallen into a variety of internal problems.
In this book, Paul addresses these problems, one by one, and explains how
Christians should live instead.

¹ Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

Paul had founded the Church in Corinth and lived there for 18 months. He was addressing a known audience.

² To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, ⁵ that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, ⁶ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷ so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Question: What were the words Paul uses to describe the exalted position of the Corinthian Christians?

From the service of Holy Chrismation: “You are justified. You are illumined. You are sanctified; in the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Connection?

The first problem at Corinth: Division among the people over baptism

¹⁰ Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. ¹² Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. ¹⁶ Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

Divisions: “σχίσματα” – Also used in 11:18, 12:25. A recurring theme in this Epistle.

What “σχίσματα” means and does not mean.

Can you think of any cases of “σχίσματα” today?

The Creed: “I confess **one** baptism for the forgiveness of sins”

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”

Demonstrates the importance of Holy Tradition.

Paul’s solution to “σχίσματα:” The Cross

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” ²⁰ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks ²⁴ foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ

the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Contrasts: foolishness and stumblingblocks vs wisdom, salvation

“The message of the Cross” = “Logos of the Cross”

Hellenist/Philosophical background:

“According to Philo, God is the absolute Being. He calls God “that which is:” “the One and the All.” God alone exists for himself, without multiplicity and without mixture. No name can properly be ascribed to Him: He simply is. Hence, in His nature, He is unknowable.

Outside of God there exists eternal matter, without form and void, and essentially evil; but the perfect Being could not come into direct contact with the senseless and corruptible; so that the world could not have been created by His direct agency. Hence the doctrine of a mediating principle between God and matter — the divine Reason, the Logos, in whom are comprised all the ideas of finite things, and who created the sensible world by causing these ideas to penetrate into matter.”

Hebrew background:

Creation

The Word, as embodying the divine will, is personified in Hebrew poetry. Consequently divine attributes are predicated of it as being the continuous revelation of God in law and prophecy

The messenger of God who serves as His agent in the world

OT Prophets: *“The Word (Dabar) of the Lord came upon me...”*

²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.* ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— ³¹ that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”

Christianity is not so much a religion as it is a relationship.

To the Greek seekers of wisdom, the crucified Christ IS the Logos.

To the Jews awaiting the Messiah, the crucified Jesus IS the Ultimate agent of God

Job 9:

*Then Job answered and said: "Truly I know it is so,
But how can a man be righteous before God?*

³ *If one wished to contend with Him,
He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand.*

⁴ *God is wise in heart and mighty in strength.
Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?*

⁵ *He removes the mountains, and they do not know
When He overturns them in His anger;*

⁶ *He shakes the earth out of its place,
And its pillars tremble;*

⁷ *He commands the sun, and it does not rise;
He seals off the stars;*

⁸ *He alone spreads out the heavens,
And treads on the waves of the sea;*

⁹ *He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south;*

¹⁰ *He does great things past finding out,
Yes, wonders without number.*

¹¹ *If He goes by me, I do not see Him;
If He moves past, I do not perceive Him;*

¹² *If He takes away, who can hinder Him?
Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'*

¹³ *God will not withdraw His anger,
The allies of the proud^[a] lie prostrate beneath Him.*

¹⁴ *"How then can I answer Him,
And choose my words to reason with Him?*

¹⁵ *For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him;
I would beg mercy of my Judge.*

¹⁶ *If I called and He answered me,
I would not believe that He was listening to my voice.*

³² ***"For He is not a man, as I am,
That I may answer Him,
And that we should go to court together.***

³³ ***Nor is there any mediator between us,
Who may lay his hand on us both.***

³⁴ *Let Him take His rod away from me,
And do not let dread of Him terrify me.*

³⁵ *Then I would speak and not fear Him,
But it is not so with me.*

Ephesians 2 :14 *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is,*

the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace...”

2 And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.^[a] ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.

Psalm 111:9-10

He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

*¹⁰ **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:** a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endures for ever.*

Proverbs 9:9-11

⁹ Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

*¹⁰ **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:** and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*

¹¹ For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹ But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

“In a mystery” (ἐν μυστηρίῳ)

Not all that God had planned was revealed to the Greeks through philosophy, or to the Jews through the Old Testament:

Deuteronomy 29:29 *“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”*

Ephesians 3: 6 *“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

⁷ Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ"

⁹ And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

Not all that awaits us in the next world has been revealed to us.

1 Cor 15: *"⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

*⁵⁵ "O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?"*

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 13:12 *"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. "*

The Third Person of the Holy Trinity:

¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit makes us wise and gives us knowledge?

¹⁵ But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

"Spiritual" (πνευματικός)

Comes from the same root word as "spirit" as in the Holy Spirit (v. 10)

Knowledge, wisdom is an incarnation of the Holy Spirit in us.

What does the idea of “spiritual” mean to you?

¹⁶ For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?”

This is a quotation of Isaiah 40:13.

The Second Person of the Holy Trinity:

But we have the mind of Christ.

Knowledge, wisdom are Trinitarian gifts – from the Holy Spirit (v.10) and the Son (v.16).
“The mind of Christ and ”the Spirit given to us” are both incarnational.

“mind” = “nous” (νοῦς)

*“I hate the **double-minded**. But I love Your law.”* (Psalm 119:113)

*“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you **double-minded**.”* (James 4:8)

*“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of **a sound mind**.”* (2 Timothy 1:7)

The study of the mind in modern times

How do modern concepts of the mind compare to “the mind of Christ”?

Prayer before communion:

*“Tremble, O mortal, beholding the divine Blood, for it is to the unworthy as a live coal. The Body of God both deifies and nourishes me. Deifies my soul **and wondrously nourishes my mind**.”*

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7)

The second problem at Corinth: They were carnal and not spiritual; immature and not mature:

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere

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men? ⁴ For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal?

“Carnal” = “σαρκικῇ” is the opposite of “spiritual” and “the mind of Christ”

σαρκικός, σαρκικῇ, σαρκικόν (σάρξ), fleshly, carnal (Vulg. carnalis);

1. having the nature of flesh, i. e. under the control of the animal appetites (see σάρξ, 3), [Romans 7:14](#) Rec. (see σάρκινος, 3); governed by mere human nature (see σάρξ, 4) not by the Spirit of God, [1 Corinthians 3:1, 3](#), also 4 R G; having its seat in the animal nature or roused by the animal nature, αἱ σαρκικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι, [1 Peter 2:11](#); equivalent to human: with the included idea of weakness, ὅπλα, [2 Corinthians 10:4](#); with the included idea of depravity, σαρκικά σοφία (i. e. πανουργία, [2 Corinthians 4:2](#)), [2 Corinthians 1:12](#). ((Anthol. Pal. 1, 107; cf. ἀπέχου τῶν σαρκικῶν καὶ σωματικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, 'Teaching etc. 1, 4 [ET]). Cf. Trench, Synonyms, § lxxi.)

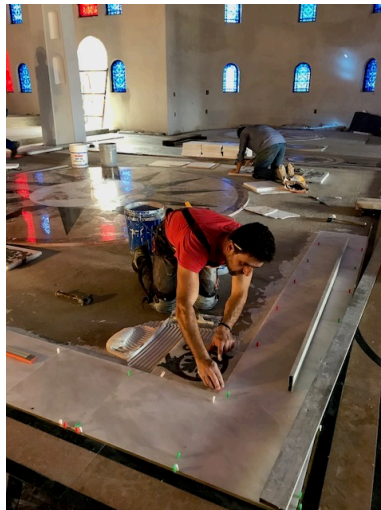
Ambrosiaster: “Those people were carnal because they were still slaves to the desires of the present age. Although they had been baptized and had received the Holy Spirit, they were carnal because, after their baptisms, they had returned to their old lives, which they had renounced. The Holy Spirit dwells in a person into whom He has poured Himself, if that person stays firm in the conviction of his new birth. Otherwise he departs, but only provisionally. If that person repents, the Spirit will return, for He is always ready for what is good, being a lover of repentance.”

Origen: “In spiritual matters, ‘solid food’ means the teaching of the Father and the Son.”

Chrysostom: “Here Paul talks about the particular problem which made the Corinthians carnal: there were other matters like fornication and uncleanness, which he would deal with later. But first he wants to tackle something which he had already been trying to put right for some time. If jealousy makes people carnal, every one of us ought to be crying out because of our sin and covering ourselves in sackcloth and ashes. Who is not tainted with this? I say this of others because I know it is true of me.”

“It was the factionalism of the Corinthians that produced jealousy, and that in turn made them carnal. Once they were carnal, they were no longer free to hear truths of a more spiritual kind.”

⁵ Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.



This is Paul's refutation of not only "Carnal" (σαρκικῇ) but also "divisions" (σχίσματα) in 1:11-13

Chrysostom: "Paul denigrates himself to show the Corinthians he is not mistreating them. It is a great thing to be a servant, used by God to bring others to faith, but compared with the source and the root of all good, it is nothing."

Paul says this in order to show that the Corinthians have no reason to think that some of them are superior to others. He did not allow those who worked hard to regard

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themselves as superior to those who did less, nor did he permit the latter to be jealous of the former. But in order to avoid the temptation to idleness which naturally results when everybody is treated equally, whether they have worked hard or not, Paul adds that the rewards are will be distributed to each according to the work accomplished.

The building does not belong to the workmen, but to the master. If you are a building, you must not be split in two, since then the building will collapse. If you are a farm, then you must not be divided, but rather surrounded by a single fence, the fence of unanimity.

¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The process of blacksmithing and metalwork: intense heat and skillful beating with a hammer purifies steel from its weak alloys, and transforms it into something strong and useful. Same with our souls, although we don't usually enjoy the heat and the beatings.

Chrysostom: *"Paul is not exalting himself by taking upon himself the example of a skilled master builder, because whatever skill he possesses comes entirely from the grace of God that has been given to him. Furthermore, because it is a grace, it is not divided, but rests securely on one foundation, which is Christ."*

Origen: *"This warning applies to you and me as well. If I do not build properly on the foundation already laid for me, then the fire will consume my work on the day of judgment."*

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

"The Temple of God" and the Holy Spirit in the form of smoke or a cloud

*Exodus 40: ³⁴ **The cloud covered the tent of meeting**, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

2 Chronicles 5 "So all the work that Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and all the furnishings. And he put them in the treasuries of the house of God. Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying:

*“For He is good,
For His mercy endures forever,”^[b]*

*that the house, the house of the LORD, was **filled with a cloud**,¹⁴ so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.*

Isaiah 6: In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.³ And one cried to another and said:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!”*

*⁴ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, **and the house was filled with smoke.***

*Revelation 15: Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete....⁸ **The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.***

Can you think of any other instances in the Bible of the Holy Spirit in the form of a cloud? (Transfiguration, Moses at Mt. Sinai, the cloud that led Israel through the wilderness)

¹⁷ If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

It is possible to defile the Temple, but when that happens, it can be cleansed by repentance:

¹⁰ Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king. Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes.¹² Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor^[a] the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying,¹³ “Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”

³ Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant.⁴ And the king commanded

Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, ^[a] and for all the host of heaven; ^[b] and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. ⁵ Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. ⁶ And he brought out the wooden image ^[c] from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people. ⁷ Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons ^[d] that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Concerning the words which you have heard—¹⁹ because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you,” says the LORD. ²⁰ “Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place.”’” So they brought back word to the king.

How do you think this might apply today?

¹⁸Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their own craftiness”; ^[a] ²⁰and again, “The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”

What are examples of “worldly wisdom” that appear to be true, and are believed by many, but are untrue and lead us away from God?

If we Christians reject these examples of “worldly wisdom,” will the world not consider us “foolish”?

Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours.

Paul is repeating what he wrote in 1:12 and 3:4-6: that the Corinthians should put their faith in Christ and not in individual human church leaders.



²³ *And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

The goal is union with Christ, not with leaders. At the Orthodox baptismal service we sing the hymn, “As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!”

⁴ *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.* ²

“Stewards” = οικονομους = “oikonomous”

The manager of household or of household affairs esp. a steward, manager, superintendent (whether free-born or as was usually the case, a freed-man or a slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age.

Steward vs the Head of the Household

²Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Mother Theresa: God does not expect that we be “successful.” He expects us to be faithful.

²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’” ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

St. Nicholas was judged by an unjust human authority, but did not care at all.

“Judge” = anakritho = ἀνακρίθω.

350 *anakrínō* (from **303** /aná, "up, completing a process," which intensifies **2919** /krínō, "to select by separating/judging") – properly, to distinguish by vigorously judging "down to up," i.e. closely examining (investigating) through "the process of careful study, evaluation and judgment" (L & N, 1, 27.44); "to examine, investigate, question (so J. B. Lightfoot, Notes, 181f).

[The prefix **303** /aná ("up") shows the process involved that takes *krinō* ("judging/separating") up to its needed conclusion. Accordingly, **350** (*anakrínō*) is often used in its forensic sense in the ancient world.

In short, this word has more of a meaning “to investigate leading up to a verdict.” The word for rendering final judgement is “krino” = κρινω.

What do you think is the difference?

⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.

The common phrase today, “Don’t judge me!”

We are not allowed to “krino,” but we should “anakrino.”

Later in chapter 6: “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?”

⁶ Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. ⁷ For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Here Paul returns again to the problem of boastfulness and devotion to personalities. He wants to use himself and his companion Apollos as role models against these problems.

⁸ You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you! ⁹ For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. ¹⁰ We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! ¹¹ To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. ¹² And we labor, working with our own hands.

Paul sets up a series of contrasts between the apostles’ status and the Corinthians:

The Apostles

“last”

“men condemned to death”

“spectacle”

“fools for Christ’s sake”

“weak”

“dishonored”

“hunger and thirst”

“poorly clothed”

“beaten”

“homeless”

“labor with our hands”

The Corinthians

“rich”

“reign like kings”

“wise in Christ”

“strong”

“distinguished”

Now the contrast moves from status to behavior:

Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; ¹³ being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

If Paul and the Apostles can follow Christ in their suffering, then the Corinthians should follow Christ all the more in their comfort. Like Paul and the Apostles, they should learn to “bless” instead of “revile”, “endure” instead of “persecute”, “entreat” instead of “defame”, and willing to become “filth and “offscouring” for Christ.

Can you think of any comparisons to today?

¹⁴ I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. ¹⁵ For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers;

Another contrast: “Instructors” are often respected people, which is why there are so many of them in Corinth. But “instructors” seldom care about their students. But “fathers” care deeply about the welfare of their children. Paul cares for the Corinthian Christians, and calls them his “beloved children.” He continues:

...for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Connection to the Bible verse, “Call no man ‘father’” (Matthew 23:9) Protestants often interpreted this to mean that Orthodox should not call their priests “father.” But here, Paul is calling for **more** spiritual fathers in the Church of Corinth, not less.

¹⁶ Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

I.e. Imitate the lifestyle of blessing, enduring, entreating of their rightful spiritual father Paul.

¹⁷ For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ...

Timothy will remind the Corinthians of Paul’s ways in Christ. Timothy will be a “role model of Paul who is a role model of Christ. This will be a benefit for those Corinthians who are willing to grow in Christ.

... as I teach everywhere in every church.

Paul’s role model is consistent everywhere he goes.

¹⁸ Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.

This is Paul’s warning for those who were unwilling to accept Paul as a role model of Christ and as spiritual father of the Church in Corinth.

The “power” Paul refers to are likely miracles, that prove the authenticity of those speaking for God. The history of the Orthodox Church is filled with saints who performed such miracles.

²¹ What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

Paul had repeatedly expressed his preference for “love and the spirit of gentleness.”

The third problem at Corinth: Sexual immorality

(5:1) It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife!

We have seen that the city of Corinth was known for sexual immorality. The worst aspects of this had found its way into the Church.

² And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

Ambrosiaster: “Those who supported him were not innocent either.”

³ For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

Theodoret of Cyr: “Paul is showing how important this matter was.”

“I have already judged” = “judged” = “kekrika” = “κεκρικα” = past tense. The “investigation” = “anakrino” is complete.

Paul is acting in his authority as Apostle and spiritual father of the Church.

“Ambrosiaster: The Corinthians were to eject this man not only by common consent among themselves, but also in the power of Christ, whose deputy Paul was.”

Today, Bishops have this authority to act as “deputies” of Christ, and make judgements in Church matters. We refer to this authority in the Liturgy, when we pray:

“Among the first remember, Lord, our Archbishop Alexios. Grant him to Your holy churches in peace, safety, honor, and health unto length of days, rightly dividing the Word of Your truth.”

⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh...

Several early Church commentators say “deliver over to Satan” means removing the offender from fellowship in the Church, and the spiritual protection against Satan that the Church provides.

It was the passions of the flesh that lured the offender into spiritual calamity. “Destruction of the flesh” can be understood as the “destruction of the passions of the flesh” – the passions that led to his downfall in the first place. The destructions of the passions lead the repentant person back to forgiveness, fellowship and communion.

...that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

³² *For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord GOD. “Therefore turn and live!” (Ezekiel 18:32)*

The aim of any church discipline is for God to use it to heal and restore the offender and heal his/her soul. It leads the sinner to say, like David did after he committed murder and adultery,

“Do not cast me from Your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11).

⁶ *Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*

“Leaven” = yeast. How yeast works in bread works...

⁷ *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened.*

Search for leaven in each house before Passover:

¹⁹ *For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land.*

http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/1742/jewish/What-Is-Chametz.htm

For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Passover as a foreshadowing of Christ

(Exodus 12:12) Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. ³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. ⁷ And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. ⁸ Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. ¹⁰ You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. ¹¹ And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.

¹² ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. ¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ ‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

The many similarities between the Passover and Christ:

The lamb – perfect, male, innocent: The Lamb of God

John the Baptist:

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Revelation:

“And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth... saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

Killed as a sacrifice for the sins of all the people.

Blood on the “2 doorposts and the lintel”

Forms a cross!

Requires action by the people; not passive.

Includes partaking of the sacrificed Lamb: *“Take, eat....”*

Saves those who obey Passover from destruction: Jew and gentile

Get ready to leave slavery, begin journey to the Promised Land

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Do you see any other connections between Old Testament Passover and Christ?

“For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast”

Paul says that confronting evil behavior by a member of the Church is not just the responsibility of the leaders:

⁹ I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰ Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

The early Christians were known for having very close-knit, loving, generous communities. This is from Letter to Diognetus, 2nd century:

“For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonoured, and yet in their very dishonour are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honour; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.”

Even the Romans recognized the close-knit and loving nature of the early Christians. Here is an excerpt of a letter from the Roman Governor Pliny to Emperor Trajan asking guidance on the persecution of Christians in the early 2nd century:

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“They [the Christians] asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food--but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.”

Because the early Christians were so close and loving, then being ostracized from their community would have been painful and a powerful disincentive from becoming a “sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner.”

...or what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? ¹³ But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”^[d]

The fourth problem at Corinth: taking church conflicts to secular courts

We can only avoid those in the Church who persist in living immoral lives. Only God can deal with everyone else.

(Chapter 6) Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ² Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? ⁴ If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?

Like modern Americans, Corinthians must have been litigious. Paul calls the dispute “smallest matters” so it should have been settled without going to court.

There were no Christians judges at the time. Corinth was under Roman occupation and Roman law was in force. Rome was actively persecuting Christians. The Emperor at the time was probably Nero, who blamed the Great Fire of Rome (which he likely started) on the Christians, and persecuted them severely.

Roman justice often settled disputes by pagan religious rituals, like auguring:

*The **augur** was a priest and official in the [classical Roman](#) world. His main role was the practice of [augury](#) - interpreting the will of the [gods](#) by studying the flight of [birds](#): whether they were flying in groups or alone, what noises they made as they flew, direction of flight and what kind of birds they were. This was known as "taking the*

auspices". The ceremony and function of the augur was central to any major undertaking in Roman society—public or private—including matters of war, commerce, and [religion](#).

This connection of Roman justice to pagan religion made it unthinkable for Christians to take their disputes to them.

Chrysostom: "Paul says that Christians should not submit their disputes to outside arbitration. For how can it be anything but absurd for a man who disagrees with his friend to choose their mutual enemy as their reconciler? How can you avoid feeling shame when a pagan sits in judgement on a Christian? And if it is not right to go to law before pagans, how can we submit other things of greater importance to them for a decision?"

Note too how Paul speaks: He calls pagans not "unbelievers" but "unrighteous," and the Christians "saints," using the appropriate description in order to deter them from getting involved in secular courts."

Theodore of Mopsueta: "Paul did not want them to be judged by outsiders because he did not want the shortcomings of those who had been taught propriety and righteousness to become a scandal to those outside the church."

⁵ I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? ⁶ But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

Origen: "Although they are right in the middle of Greece, they have truly no wise people in their midst...."

⁷ Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?

The teaching and example of Christ and countless martyrs is the opposite of "demanding my rights."

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'^[i] ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. ⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor^[g] and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,^[h] ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven..." (Matthew 5:38-45)

"Father forgive them, they know not what they do..."

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“Then he [Stephen] knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

If Christ, Stephen and the martyrs could forgive their own murderers, why can't the Corinthians – or we – forgive and forbear instead of taking fellow-Christians to court?

“⁸ No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren! ⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”

“Do not be deceived”

It is possible even for Christians to be deceived about these serious sins. In Roman times, these activities were considered perfectly permissible. “Everybody does it.” Sound familiar to 21st century America?

“fornicators” = πόρνοι (pornoi). Where the English word “pornography” comes from. It is more accurately translated as “prostitutes.” This is clear from its uses elsewhere in the New Testament. For example,

1 Cor 6:16, *“Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot (porne) is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.”*

Hebrews 11:31, *“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”*

Stormy Daniels?

“idolators” = ειδωλολάτραι (eidololatrai). Literally, ειδωλο (idols) + λάτραι (worship). Idolatry is forbidden in the Second of the Ten Commandments:

³ *“You shall have no other gods before Me.”* ⁴ *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor ^[b]serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting^[c] the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

The Greek word used in this verse, λάτρία (latria) is important for Orthodox Christians and our relationship with icons. We are specifically forbidden from worshipping (*latria*) our icons.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council says the following concerning holy Icons: *"For the more frequently they are seen by means of pictorial representation the more are those who behold them aroused to remember and desire their prototypes and to give them greeting (aspasmos) and the veneration of honour (timetike, proskynesis): not indeed that true worship [latreia] which, according to our faith, is due to God alone."*

“adulterers” = μοιχοὶ (moichoi) plural for μοιχός (masculine) or μοιχαλὶς (feminine). Adultery is condemned in the Seventh of Ten Commandments, *“You shall not commit adultery.”*

#MeToo

“homosexuals” = μαλακοὶ (malakoi). The literal interpretation is “soft,” with the negative connotation for males of “effeminate” This is clear in Matthew 11:7-8,

*“As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in **soft** garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses.”*

Caitlin Jenner?

“sodomites” = ἀρσενοκοῖται (arsenokoῖtai). This is a combination of two Greek words ἄρσεν (arsen) “male,” and κοίτης (koîtes) “bed.” The word ἀρσενοκοῖται (arsenokoῖtai) does not appear anywhere else in the Bible or ancient writings. Paul was probably alluding to the Septuagint (Greek) text of Leviticus 18:22,

2532	3326	730	3756	2837
18:22	καὶ	μετὰ	ἀρσενος	οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ
	And	with	a man	you shall not go to bed
2845		1134	946	1063 1510.2.3
κοίτην		γυναικείαν	βδέλυγμα	γὰρ ἐστὶ
in a marriage-bed		in the feminine way;	[³ an abomination	¹ for ² it is].

... and Leviticus 20:13...

2532	3739	302	2837	3326	730
20:13	καὶ	ὅς	ἀν	κοιμηθῇ	μετὰ ἀρσενος
	And	who	ever	should have bedded	with a male
2845		1135	946	4160	
κοίτην		γυναικός	βδέλυγμα	εποίησαν	
as the marriage-bed		of a woman,	[³ an abomination	² did	
297	2288	2289	1777-1510.2.6		
ἀμφότεροι	θανάτῳ	θανατούσθωσαν	ἐνοχοὶ εἰσιν		
¹ both;	to death	let them be put to death!	they are liable.		

“thieves” = κλέπται (kleptai), where the English word “kleptomaniac” comes from. This repeats the Eighth of the Ten Commandments, *“You shall not steal.”*

“coveters” = πλεονέκται (pleonektai). Coveting is also forbidden in the Tenth of the Ten Commandments: *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”*

Interestingly, St. Paul also links the Second and Tenth Commandments in Colossians 3:5,

*“Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and **covetousness**, which is **idolatry**.”*

American consumerism?

“drunkards” = μέθυσοι (methysoi). Elsewhere, in Ephesians 5:18, Paul says,

*“And do not be **drunk** (μεθύσκεσθε, methyskesthe) with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit...”*

Proverbs 20:1 says,

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

The Church is not opposed to modest consumption of alcohol (Christ’s first miracle was turning water into wine), but the Church opposes drunkenness.

“revilers” = λοιδοροί (loidoroi), *“reproach (reviling); used of injuring another’s reputation by denigrating, abusive insults.”*

Bullying? Cyber bullying?

“swindlers” = ἄρπαγες (harpages) – properly, *seizing; a sudden snatching* (like in a robbery). A variant of harpages was used by Christ in Matthew 7:15, and related to wolves:

*‘Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are **ravenous** (ἄρπαγες) wolves.’*

All these forms of immoral behavior were common in first century Corinth, and were not even considered immoral in that city. But St. Paul was reminding the Corinthian Christians that they must totally separate themselves from the immoral behavior of the culture around them:

¹¹ <i>And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.</i>
--

Notice the connection with the Sacrament of Chrismation. After the face, ears, throat, shoulders, hands and feet have been anointed with the chrism, the priest takes a wet sponge and removes the chrism while saying,

“You are justified. You are illumined. You are sanctified. You are washed: in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.

You are baptized. You are illumined. You have been Chrismated. You are sanctified. You are washed: in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Christian Freedom and our physical appetites:

<i>¹² All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.</i>
--

God could have easily created us to be robots who have no free will and can only follow their programming, or slaves who can only choose out of fear of punishment. But instead, He equipped us with a free will - the mysterious ability to accept Him or to reject Him. He has demonstrated His love for us. He wants us to respond to His love by freely choosing to love Him back.

“We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

God gives us a fairly small number of commandments to keep:

There were originally just Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:

- 1. I am the Lord thy God, thou shall not have any gods before me.*
- 2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything.*
- 3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.*
- 4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*
- 5. Honor your father and your mother.*
- 6. You shall not murder.*
- 7. You shall not commit adultery.*
- 8. You shall not steal.*
- 9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, wife, or property.*

Christ reduced the list from 10 to 2:

³⁵ *Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,*

³⁶ *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”* ³⁷ *Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’* ³⁸ *This is the first and great commandment.* ³⁹ *And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’* ⁴⁰ *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22: 35-40)*

These are the things that we MUST do, but outside them we have tremendous freedom. God gives us many choices, but not every choice is a good choice. As St. Paul says,

¹² All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.

Food is an example of the choices that we are allowed to make. As St. Paul says,

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. ¹³ Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them.

We Americans have access to the most abundant food supply in the world, and we are free to eat as much as we want. But always eating as much as we want is usually not the best choice for us. Instead of being in control of our appetites for food, we often let our appetite for food to control us. When that happens, we are no longer free, but slaves to our appetites. God does not want us to be slaves, to Him, or anything else. He wants us to be free, just like He created us. That is why the Church teaches us to fast regularly. When we fast, we respond to God's love by acting on our love for God Him. We exercise our free wills in what we choose to eat. We regain control over our own appetites for food, recover our freedom, and restore the image of God in all of us.

Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

In its proper place, human sexuality is sacramental. Sacraments take common physical things (e.g. bread, wine, oil, water, rings) that are acted upon by the Holy Spirit to be a supernatural blessing to God's people. Man and woman become husband and wife in the wedding service, but the sacrament marriage is only completed ("consummated") with their physical union after the wedding. It is a beautiful and holy blessing from God.

The physical union of a person and a prostitute is a perversion of the beautiful sacrament and transforms it into a union with darkness.

¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

If a person sins against outside their body (e.g. by lying, stealing, etc.), that can be corrected by repentance and reconciliation. To those we offend, we can ask forgiveness. To those from whom we have stolen, we can return what we stolen. To those we have lied to, we can tell the truth.

But sexual sins involving our bodies are often different. By repentance and confession, we can **always** receive forgiveness from God for sexual sins, just like any other sins. But the earthly physical consequences of sexual sins against our own bodies – e.g., out of wedlock pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases - often remain.

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

In the early days of the Church, there was a heretical sect called “Gnosticism,” and its followers were called “Gnostics.” The word “Gnostic” comes from the Greek word “gnosis,” which means “knowledge,” especially secret, hidden knowledge. They were already around in Paul’s day; he mentions them in 1 Timothy 6:20,

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge (Gnosis) — ²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.”

One of the characteristics of the Gnostics was their radical dualism: To them, a good god created everything that is spiritual, and only that which is spiritual is good. Conversely, the whole material world (including the body) was created by a bad god named “Demiurge,” and that material world is bad. Orthodox Christianity has always rejected this dualism. Orthodoxy believes that God is good, and He created the material world and the human body. These creations are good, but corrupted, and will be renewed to perfection at the resurrection of mankind.

But because the Gnostics believed the body was destined for destruction, they often believed it was useless to restrain it. Gnostic Christians believed that it was okay to feed all the passions and lusts of the flesh. When Paul writes, “...*glorify God **in your body and in your spirit, which are God's,***” he is saying God is good, God created your bodies which are also good, our bodies are on loan to us from God, what we do sexually with our bodies does matter, therefore do not commit sexual sins.

Now that Paul has focused on misuse of sexuality, he turns his focus to the proper place of sexuality:

7:1 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:

It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

Here Paul is talking about men and women who are attracted to each other, but not yet married. Because if they were married, the man would certainly be okay to “touch” his wife! Also, note that Paul says it is “good” for a man not to touch a woman. He does not say a single man CANNOT touch a woman.

² Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

And there is a reason he says it is good for a man not to touch a woman: “...*because of sexual immorality...*” In the Roman Empire in general, and in ancient Corinth in particular, there was very little social restraint on a man who wanted to exercise his sexual passions. It was a very easy and “slippery slope” for a man to see, then touch a woman, which could very easily lead to worse sins. A Christian man may not always have control over what he sees, but he CAN control what he touches. It is the first and decisive step to prevent the “slippery slope.” It is a practical case of “*lead me not into temptation.*”

³ Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Marriage is far more than a measure to prevent fornication. Paul has already said in verse 19,

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

This is the vertical dimension of marriage and the ownership of our bodies. But in verses 7:3-4, Paul describes the horizontal dimension of the ownership of our bodies. The wife has authority over her husband's body, and the husband has authority over the wife's body. In ancient Rome, all husbands had authority over their wives' bodies. But Roman wives had no authority over their husbands' bodies. Even married Roman men were socially permitted to commit adultery. The idea that the wife had authority over her husband's body was very radical and very Christian.

More deeply, Paul says Christian marriage should not be characterized by a struggle over authority, but “*rendering due affection*” to one's spouse. Married people should be kind to one another, and not because they must, but because they choose to.

⁵ Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶ But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

Even married people must sometimes exercise sexual restraint. During strict fasting periods, Orthodox married couples are encouraged to refrain from marital relations. This is why, historically, Orthodox weddings took place on Sunday afternoons and not on Saturday afternoons – because the couples' wedding night would be on a night when fasting and abstinence would begin at midnight in preparation for receiving Holy Communion on Sunday morning. (In modern practice, the rule against Saturday weddings has been greatly relaxed.)

There are many circumstances when husbands and wives are not able to have marital relations – problem pregnancies, necessary separations like business trips, illness, injury, etc. Often anger and disputes between husbands and wives make the conjugal bond undesirable by either party.

“Where chastity is concerned, husbands and wife have equal rights.” – John Chrysostom.

When this happens, Paul suggests abstinence *“with consent for a time”* for married couples - especially if there has been strife. He suggests a time of fasting and prayer, where the couple can find a spiritual path to reconciliation. Once their hearts and minds are again one, then their bodies can also.

But Paul points out the risks to this. It must be only *“for a time”* and not prolonged. Long periods of time, where one of the partners do not agree, can lead to temptation and loss of self-control.

Great evils can spring from this form of continence if it overdone... Unless there is mutual consent, continence in this case is really a form of theft. - John Chrysostom.

Again, Paul does not command this approach, but merely suggests it.

<p>⁷ <i>For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.</i></p>

Paul was celibate, and called his celibacy *“a gift from God.”* In modern American culture, voluntary celibacy is inconceivable to most people. Our culture celebrates people who post on Facebook that they are *“in a relationship,”* and considers it a tragedy NOT to be *“in a relationship”* and sexually active. Our culture considers one must have a sexual partner or one is not complete.

But Orthodox Christianity honors celibacy, even more than the married life. Jesus was celibate. Monks and nuns are deeply respected for their choice to forgo spouses and children in order to pursue their relationship with God without distraction. All our Bishops are celibate. If a priest is widowed, he must remain celibate thereafter.

Christ said,

“For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it.” (Matthew 19:12)

Not everyone is called to a life of celibacy, but clearly some are. Paul says this in 7:7,

But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

Orthodoxy teaches that a person does not need a spouse or sexual partner in order to be a complete person. Having done extensive marriage counseling, I believe many people are unhappy in their marriages because they were actually called by God to be single. I have also observed that the many of the most unhappy people I have met are not single people, but married people who God created to be single.

7:8 But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; 9 but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

For some Christians, their sexual passions are so powerful that if they have no honorable release within marriage, then they are at risk of committing fornication or adultery. Paul says that for such people, marriage is a preferable option.

Such a person, who cannot exercise self-control, is not sinning against the covenant by marrying, but neither is he fulfilling the highest purpose of the Gospel ethic.” – Clement of Alexandria.

The Christians of Corinth were all converts, and many of them were married before they converted to Christianity. Their spouses did not always convert with them, and this was causing problems. Paul addresses what the Christian should do in this case. (Note that these commandments apply to converts to Christianity who were already married; they do not give permission for a Christian to marry a non-Christian.)

7:10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. 12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

The Christian should not leave his or her spouse merely because his or her spouse does not convert. The goal is to try and preserve the marriage if possible. Paul states this commandment to try to preserve the marriage is from the Lord, and are therefore imperative, unlike the previous suggestions in this chapter.

7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

It has been the consistent experience of the Church that non-believing spouses often choose to believe as the result of the virtue of their believing spouse. The good behavior of the Christian spouse often draws the non-believing spouse to Christ. (The opposite behavior has the opposite results.) Also, a result of one virtuous Christian parent, children often also become “holy” – possibly a reference to infant baptism.

If a non-believing spouse abandons the believing spouse, the believer is “not under bondage in such cases.” This is usually understood to mean free to remarry.

All of us are born into circumstances which we cannot control. At the same time, all of us are now living with the consequences of decisions we made in our past. This is the great debate among psychologists and philosophers between determinism vs. Free will.

<https://youtu.be/hSIDXNvMWCU>

7:17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches. ¹⁸ Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. ²⁰ Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. ²¹ Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. ²² For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.

In the above passage, St. Paul touches on the principles of the free will vs determinism debate. Slaves had no choice to be slaves. A Jewish male was circumcised 8 days after his birth, so he had no choice to but to be circumcised, and to be raised in Judaism. So there is certainly some determinism.

In what ways do you think our lives are predetermined?

In our modern culture, it is very popular for people to feel bound by their race, sex, income level, etc...

In what ways do you think our lives are governed by our own free will?

But Paul is saying that our lives are not entirely predetermined. We are not totally bound by the circumstances in which we are born. We do have choices. “... *keeping the commandments of God is what matters.*” Keeping the commandments of God makes a slave on the outside become free on the inside. And a freedman is still “*Christ's slave.*”

Theodore of Mopsueta: “*It is wrong to think that circumstances which prevailed when a person was converted stand in the way of becoming holy.*”

John Chrysostom: “A slave is free because he has been set from the passions and diseases of the mind. Legal freedom is unimportant by comparison.”

7:25 Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy.

As before, St. Paul is distinguishing between divine commandments and his own personal advice. What follows is advice:

26 I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is: 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

He mentions “the present distress” is a good reason to remain in one’s current marital status. This may mean some crisis going on at the time in Corinth, or in the Roman world. Or it may refer to the permanent state of our fallen world.

Both being married, and being celibate, have advantages and disadvantages.

What advantages and disadvantages do you see in marriage and celibacy?

For those who believe that marriage is easier than celibacy, St. Paul says:

7:28 But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless, such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

In other words, married life does not guarantee escape from, “trouble in the flesh.”

7:29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, 31 and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.

St. Paul reminds us that our present life is transient and unpredictable: “the time is short” and “this world is passing away.” We should not allow ourselves to become excessively attached to it.

Of course those rescue workers have emotions, ambitions, hopes, dreams, frustrations and sorrows while doing their jobs. But in order to do their jobs best, they lay aside their personal concerns and focus on saving those around them. We should have a similar mindset, “...even as those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess...”

7:32 But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. ³³ But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife. ³⁴ There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. ³⁵ And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

Paul is again pointing out the spiritual advantages of being single. He specifically applies this to both men and women.

³⁶ But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry. ³⁷ Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. ³⁸ So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better.

“Paul makes his case for celibacy, but in the end he leaves it up to the free choice of the individual. If after all this, he were to resort to compulsion, it would look as if he did not believe his own statements.” John Chrysostom

³⁹ A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

It has always been the belief of the Church that widows and widowers are free to remarry.

“Happy is the woman who has a husband. Happier is the widow who can remain chaste with little effort on her part. Happiest of all is the virgin who can attain the highest prize without struggling.” -Pelagius

Discussion?

8 Now concerning things offered to idols...

Paul now shifts the topic from marriage and virginity to things offered to idols. This is not a pressing issue in our day, but it was a major issue the early Christians. We do not live in a culture that is dominated by pagan gods and goddesses, but the early Christians did. They were surrounded by pagan temples, idols, sacrifices, and social practices.

τό εἶδωλόθυτον and τὰ εἶδωλόθυσια denote the flesh left over from the heathen sacrifices; it was either eaten at feasts, or sold (by the poor and the miserly) in the market

The food they purchased had likely already been offered to some pagan deity. The same applied to many other items they bought or used – tools, houses, fields, etc. Like the Jews before them, the early Christians were intensely committed to following the First Commandment:

“You shall have no other gods before Me.

This presented them with a moral dilemma: Since so many items they needed had been offered to pagan gods and goddesses, did using those items constitute practicing idolatry? Or, since they knew that there were no such thing as false gods and goddesses, therefore items that had been offered to false gods had been offered to nothing, and therefore there using items that had been offered to nothing was no problem?

Paul begins his instruction in an unexpected way – with a call for humility:

We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. ² And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

Why do you think Paul mentions knowledge vs love to begin a discussion of food sacrificed to idols?

³ But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

Reminder that “Christianity is a relationship, not a religion.”

“We do not know God, but He knows us. This is why Christ said, ‘You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you’ (John 15:16) This is the fruit of love and the death of pride.”
-John Chrysostom

⁴ Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), ⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

Paul reaffirms the Oneness of God and says no other gods exist. And because no other gods exist, sacrifices to non-existent gods are also non-existent. Christians have considerable liberty to make decisions where right and wrong are unclear. As St. Paul said previously, *“All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. ¹³ Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them.”* So Paul is saying that Christians who choose to eat food that had been sacrificed to pagan gods are free to do so.

However, there is one exception. Paul already said, ¹² *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.*” In other words, some of the choices we are free to make are better than others.

⁷ *However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.*

Some Christians had already decided that eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols is wrong, according to their conscience. Those whose conscience permit them to eat meat sacrificed to idols should respect the conscientious decision of those who do not. Those with differing beliefs should not judge or lecture each other. This should be motivated by love, as Paul said at the very beginning of this topic in verse 1, “*Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*”

⁹ *But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?*

A person whose conscience says eating meat sacrificed to idols is okay does so without fault. But a person whose conscience says eating meat sacrificed to idols IS at fault when he does so because he is violating his conscience when he does so.

¹¹ *And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹² But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.*

Causing a fellow Christian to violate his conscience is a serious matter to be avoided.

What are some examples where these principles apply to us Orthodox Christians today?

Now Paul moves on to another subject: defense of his apostleship, which was apparently disputed by some in Corinth:

⁹ *Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ² If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.*

“*Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*” – Being an eyewitness to the risen Christ was one of the qualifications of a true Apostle (ἀπόστολος which means “sent one”). That is why “Apostle” is not a title in the Orthodox Church.

Another characteristic of a true Apostle was fruitful ministry. Paul points to the existence of the Church at Corinth as proof of his spiritual fruitfulness.

³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? ⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit?

This indicates that the Apostles other than Paul were married. Celibacy of the hierarchs came later.

More significantly, these verses indicate the important principle of financial support of the clergy. If Apostles performed secular jobs to support themselves and their families, they would have little time left to attend to their spiritual duties (prayer, leading services, preparing sermons and lesson plans, counseling, tending to the needy, etc.). The other Apostles were being financially supported by the faithful, but the Corinthians were apparently not financially supporting Paul.

⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? ⁸ Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more?

Even though Paul defends the principle of clergy compensation, he established the Church in Corinth while laboring for his own support. Luke writes in the Book of Acts,

"After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. ³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers." (Acts 18:1-3)

Clergy support in various situations: Full time vs part time

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

Paul wanted to establish the Church at Corinth so much that he would not allow their lack of financial support stop him.

¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

When God allocated the Promised Land to the 12 tribes of Israel, He did not give any land to the Tribe of Levi – the priestly tribe:

⁸ At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day.

⁹ Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him. (Deuteronomy 10:8-9)

In Judaism, the people brought various items to the priests to be offered to God as a sacrifice.



The Sacrifices

The sacrificial system was ordained by God and placed at the very center and heart of Jewish national life. Whatever the Jews may have thought of it at the time, the unceasing sacrifice of animals, and the never-ending glow of fire at the altar of sacrifice, there is no doubt that God was burning into the hearts of every man, an awareness of their own sin.

There are many instructions for sacrifice throughout the Pentateuch, but [Leviticus](#) chapters 1-7 is completely dedicated to the 5 Levitical offerings which were the main sacrifices used in the rituals. They describe 5 kinds of sacrifices: The [burnt offering](#), the [meal offering](#), the [peace offering](#), the [sin offering](#), and the [trespass offering](#). Each of the sacrifices were uniquely fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The Meal Offerings

The Israelites offered meal (cereals) or vegetables in addition to the animals. Leviticus chapter 2 mentions 4 kinds of cereal offerings and gives cooking instructions for each. The sinner could offer dough from wheat flour baked in an oven, cooked on a griddle, fried in a pan, or roasted to make bread (as in the offering of the first fruits). All meal offerings were made with oil and salt and no honey and leaven were to be used (oil and salt preserved while honey and leaven would spoil). The worshipper was also to bring a portion of incense (frankincense).

The meal offerings were brought to one of the priests, who took it to the altar and cast a "memorial portion" on the fire and he did this also with the incense. The priest ate the remainder unless he was bringing the meal offering for himself where he would burn the whole thing.

The purpose of the meal offering was an offering of gifts and speaks of a life that is dedicated to generosity and giving.

The Peace Offerings

The peace offering was a meal that was shared with the Lord, the priests, and sometimes the common Israelites. The worshipper was to bring a male or female oxen, sheep, or a goat. The ritual was closely compared to the burnt offering up to the point of the actual burning where the animals blood was poured around the edges of the altar. The fat and entrails were burned and the remainder was eaten by the priests and (if it was a free-will offering) by the worshippers themselves. This sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving was most of the time a voluntary act.

The Peace offerings included unleavened cakes. The priests ate all except the memorial portion of the cakes and certain parts of the animal on the same day the sacrifice was made, and when the worshipper joined in and the offering was free-will the worshipper could eat for 2 days of the whole animal except the breast and the right thigh which were eaten by the priests.

Showbread



*([Hebrew](#): לחם הפנים lechem haPānīm, literally: "**Bread of the Presence**"), in the [King James Version](#): **shewbread**, in a [biblical](#) or [Jewish](#) context, refers to the cakes or loaves of [bread](#) which were always present on a specially dedicated two crowned table, in the [Temple in Jerusalem](#) as an offering to [HaShem](#). An alternative, and more appropriate, translation would be presence bread,^[1] since the Bible requires that the bread be constantly in the presence of God ([Exodus 25:30](#)). It is also mentioned in ([Matthew 12:4](#)) (τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως).*

The cakes were to be left on the table for a week, and then be replaced with new ones on the [Sabbath](#), so that there were always fresh loaves on the table, and those that had started going stale were removed; the Biblical text states that the Jewish priests were entitled to eat the cakes that had been removed, as long as they did so in a holy place, as it considered the bread to be holy.

The Jewish cycle of animal sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem were still going on when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Jewish Christians in Corinth would have been very familiar with these sacrifices and the priests who consumed them. That is what Paul was referring to when he wrote,

¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

“The case of the Apostles was much stronger than that of the priests. The priesthood was an honor, but the apostles were exposed to dangers, slaughter and violent deaths.” John Chrysostom

Even the Christians in Corinth who had formerly been pagans would have been familiar with this practice. Pagan priests often consumed their sacrifices, as well as selling them in their temples.

“In the Roman Empire, it had become the custom for some temples to sell the meat of sacrificed animal. A portion was burned, a portion was reserved for the priests, and the rest either given to the poor or sold to help support the temple.

Since priests would not accept obviously diseased or infirm animals for sacrifice, buying meat from the temples was a way for urban dwellers to get better cuts of meat. For that reason, eating “temple meat” was prized.”

Just as priests depended on sacrifices to eat, Paul is saying that the clergy are dependent on the tithes of the people:

¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. ¹⁵ But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. ¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

“The servant by the Lord does what he is told to do, even if he is not willing, because if he does not he will suffer for it. Moses preached to Pharaoh even though he did not want to, and Jonah was forced to preach to the Ninevites.” - Ambrosiaster

Luke 12:48: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

Those with spiritual gifts are obligated to use those gifts.

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Examples?

¹⁷ For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. ¹⁸ What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

“stewardship”

οἰκονομία, οἰκονομίας, ἡ (οἰκονομέω), from Xenophon, and Plato down, "the management of a household or of household affairs; specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of others' property; the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship": [Luke 16:2-4](#); hence, the word is transferred by Paul in a theocratic sense to the office (duty) entrusted to him by God (the lord and master) of proclaiming to men the blessings of the gospel, [1 Corinthians 9:17](#); ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ Θεοῦ, the office of administrator (stewardship) entrusted by God.

¹⁹ For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all...

Our world exalts those who are prideful, and feel superior to others. But as Christians, we are all called to be humble, as Christ was humble. Christ said,

“And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” (Mark 9:35)

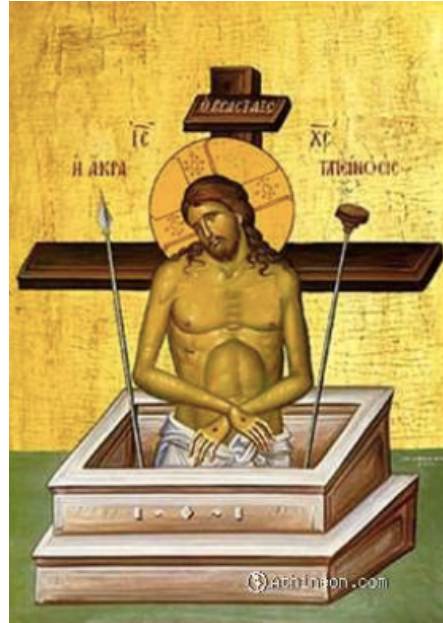
...and...

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29)

Christ’s humility is beautifully described in St. Paul in the Epistle to the Philippians:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

The extreme humility of Christ is depicted in this icon, “*akratapakeinosis*”



What are some ways where we can apply Christ-like humility in our own lives?

I have made myself a servant to all that I might win the more; ²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; ²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak.

The content of the Gospel never changes, but how the Gospel is presented can vary to an infinite variety of audiences. This has been the case since the earliest days of the Church. We see this in the Gospels; when Christ was speaking to fishermen, he used the language of fishermen:

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. (Matthew 4:18-20)

To farmers, he taught the Parable of the Sower:

⁴ *And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: ⁵ "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶ Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. ⁸ But others*

fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Luke 8:4-8)

To Jewish religious scholars, he spoke the language of religious scholars:

Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.’³⁰ And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.³¹ And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:28-31).

St. Paul was very skilled at tailoring the Gospel to specific audiences. In the Book of Acts, we see him addressing Greek philosophers on the Areopagus in Athens. Note how respectfully he addresses the philosophers with their own religious terms, and even quotes one of their own poets:

²² Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³ for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. ²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ (Acts 17:22-28)

What are some examples today of the Church teaching the Gospel to particular audiences?

<i>...when I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.</i>
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When St. Paul writes, “*That I might by all means save some,*” he is obviously not claiming that he is personally saving others. He clearly knows that only God can save anyone. But he is acknowledging that God is using him as a human instrument through which HE saves others. This is easily understood and accepted by nearly all Christians.

We Orthodox put this concept into routine practice. We constantly ask the saints to intercede to God for our salvation. Particularly, we pray to Mary, “Most holy Theotokos, save us.” We understand this as being exactly the same as Paul does when he wrote, “...that I might by all means save some.” We do not believe that Mary can save us on her own. We are asking that Mary may be used by God as an instrument through which God saves us.

9:23 Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25

The Isthmian games in Corinth

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection...

The life of a competitive athlete is a life of discipline and sacrifice in order to achieve a prize

“Discipline my body and bring it into subjection” and the passions

What forms of “discipline my body and bring it into subjection” does the Church still prescribe?

...lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Famous athletes who were disqualified:

Ussain Bolt



Lance Armstrong:



St. Paul says it is very possible for a person to be “disqualified” instead of, “winning the prize” often portrayed his own salvation as conditional, not guaranteed based on a single moment of faith.

¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

This is how Orthodoxy views salvation – a race to be run, a prize to be achieved, not complete until our earthly race is over.

The book of Hebrews says,

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us... (Hebrews 12:1)

In his last epistle, St. Paul writes:

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:12-14)

10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea...

Here, St. Paul points to two of our sacraments, and says they were foretold in the Old Testament. *“All our father were under the cloud, all passed through the sea... all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”*

Baptism

Before the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they were a nation of slaves, helpless and doomed to death at the hands of Egyptian cavalry. After they crossed the water of the Red Sea, they were a free nation, delivered from certain death, united under the Prophet Moses, and set upon a journey to ultimate blessing. This theme of going from death through water unto life is continued in baptism:

But do You, O Master of All, declare this water to be water of redemption, water of sanctification, a cleansing of flesh and spirit, a loosing of bonds, a forgiveness of sins, an illumination of soul, a laver of regeneration, a renewal of the spirit, a gift of sonship, a garment of incorruption, a fountain of life. For You have said, O Lord: "Wash, and be clean; put away evil from your souls."

You have bestowed upon us regeneration from on high by water and the spirit. Manifest Yourself, O Lord, in this water, and grant that he (she) that is to be baptized may be transformed therein to the putting away of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to the putting on of the new, which is renewed according to the Image of Him that created him (her).

That, being planted in the likeness of Your death through Baptism, he (she) may become a sharer of Your Resurrection; and, preserving the Gift of Your Holy Spirit, and increasing the deposit of Grace, he (she) may attain unto prize of his (her) high calling, and accounted among the number of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven, in You our God and Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be all Glory and Might, together with Your Eternal Father and with Your All; Holy, Good, and Life; creating Spirit, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages. – The blessing of the water in the Orthodox Baptismal service

Note St. Paul says the Israelites were also “under the cloud” when they were “baptized into Moses.” This is no doubt a reference to the Holy Spirit, who was present with them throughout the Old Testament, and often represented as a cloud: a cloud led them through the wilderness, a cloud surrounded Moses at Mt. Sinai, a cloud sometimes filled the Temple. A cloud also surrounded Christ at the Transfiguration. The Holy Spirit is the divine Agent that accomplishes Holy Baptism.

As Christ told Nicodemus in John 3, *“Unless a man is born of water **and of the Spirit**, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.”*

<i>... ³ all ate the same spiritual food...</i>
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The Supernatural Food of God’s Old Testament People – Manna

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² Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

¹³ So it was that quail came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. ¹⁴ And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was.... And Moses said to them, “This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: ‘Let every man gather it according to each one’s need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.’ ” (Exodus 16)

The Supernatural Food of God’s New Testament People – Communion



³² Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life...⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” (John 6)

⁴ ...and all drank the same spiritual drink...

Supernatural Water for God’s Old Testament People –



Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. ² Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, “Give us water, that we may drink.” ... ⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.”

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?” (Exodus 17)

Supernatural Water for God’s New Testament People – Living by the Spirit



⁷ A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” ⁸ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. ⁹ Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” ¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” ¹⁵ The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw...” ²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ **God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**”

...For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

As Christ told Nicodemus in John 3, “Unless a man is **born of water and of the Spirit**, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.”

The Water = the Holy Spirit; The Rock = Christ; the “Two Hands of the Father”

Now St. Paul continues to his references to the Israelites in the Old Testament, but uses them as examples of how New Testament Christians should **not** live:

⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ And do not **become idolaters** as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” ⁸ Nor let us **commit sexual immorality**, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; ⁹ **nor let us tempt Christ**, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by

serpents; ¹⁰ **nor complain**, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

“Lusted after evil things”

“Became idolators”

“Committed sexual immorality”

Now the king [Josiah] sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him. ² The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD...

⁴ And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. ⁵ Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. ⁶ And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people. ⁷ Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

¹³ Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. (2 Kings 23)

As St. Paul wrote elsewhere, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (Colossians 3:5)

“neither let us tempt Christ”

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² being tempted for forty days by the devil... ¹² And Jesus answered and said to him, “It has been said, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’ ” (Luke 4)

“Complained”

¹⁰ *And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.*

¹¹ *Then the LORD said to Moses: “How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the ^[e]signs which I have performed among them? ¹² **I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they....**”*

¹⁷ [Moses:] *And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, ¹⁸ ‘The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.’ ¹⁹ Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.” ²⁰ Then the LORD said: “I have pardoned, according to your word...”*

Are these bad behaviors of the Israelites still a problem for us today?

¹² *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

Paul is reminding us of the dangers of thinking we are immune to temptation. Even if we think we are strong against a particular form of temptation, we might be wrong. We should not expose ourselves to temptation because we think we are strong.

Examples?

¹³ *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man...*

We frequently feel that our temptations are worse than those of other people. Paul tells us this is not the case. Our temptations are real and painful, but we are just like everybody else. This can be both humbling and comforting.

...but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

The “stress test”

¹⁴ *Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of*

Christ? ¹⁷ For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

St. Paul draws a sharp contrast between pagan idols (“flee from idolatry”) and Christian communion. In the ancient world, an idol an idol was often visually impressive, but inwardly it was nothing but wood or clay or stone – of little value. However, Holy Communion is outwardly only bread and wine, but inwardly it is the Body and Blood of Christ – the most priceless thing on earth.

“That chalice, or rather what that chalice holds, consecrated by the word of God, is the Blood of Christ. Through those elements the Lord wished to entrust to us His Body and the Blood which He poured out for the remission of sins. If you have received worthily, you are what you received.” – Augustine

The Body of Christ is not many bodies but one body. For just as the bread, which contains many grains, is made one to the point that that the separate grains are no longer visible, even though they are still there; so we are joined to each other and to Christ. But if we are all nourished by the same source and become one with Him, why do we not also show forth the same love and become one in this respect too? This is what it was like in earlier times, as we see in Acts (4:32), ‘For the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul’” – John Chrysostom

Here, St. Paul uses the term “Body of Christ” to describe Holy Communion. But elsewhere, he uses the term, ”Body of Christ” to describe the Church:

*¹⁸ And He [Christ] is the head of **the body, the church**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence...²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of **His body, which is the church**. (Colossians 1)*

This is a significant double-meaning for the term “Body of Christ.” The Sacrament and the Church go together. You cannot have one without the other. This is one reason why the Orthodox Church only allows members of the Body (the Church) to partake of the Body (Holy Communion).

Allow no one to eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless they have been baptized in the name of the Lord. For concerning this, the Lord has said, “Do not give what is holy to dogs.” (Didache, late 1st-2nd c.)

"Take care, then who belong to God and to Jesus Christ - they are with the bishop. And those who repent and come to the unity of the Church - they too shall be of God, and will be living according to Jesus Christ. Do not err, my brethren: if anyone follow a schismatic, he will not inherit the Kingdom of God. If any man walk about with strange doctrine, he cannot lie down with the passion. Take care, then, to use one Eucharist, so that whatever you do, you do according to God: for there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus

Christ, and one cup in the union of His Blood; one altar, as there is one bishop with the presbytery and my fellow servants, the deacons." (St. Ignatius of Antioch, late 1st – early 2nd century)

"This food we call the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake except one who believes that the things we teach are true, and has received the washing for forgiveness of sins and for rebirth, and who lives as Christ handed down to us. For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink; but as Jesus Christ our Savior being incarnate by God's Word took flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food consecrated by the Word of prayer which comes from him, from which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus." (Justin Martyr, mid-2nd century)

This is also why the Orthodox Church does not normally recognize the communion of other confessions as being the Body and Blood of Christ.

¹⁸ Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? ¹⁹ What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? ²⁰ Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. ²² Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

This verse is one reason why the Orthodox Church does not allow its members to take communion from other confessions. Not because we believe that the communion of other Christian confessions are “the cup of demons,” but because it is important for both Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians to be aware of the difference between that which is the Body and Blood of Christ, and that which is not.

²³ All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.

Here Paul repeats what he said Chapter 6:12:

¹² All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.

²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; ²⁶ for “the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness.”

This is a repeat of Paul's previous advice that Christians not be concerned about eating meat that had been offered to idols:

8:8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

²⁷ If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. ²⁸ But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake;²⁹ for "the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness." ²⁹ "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? ³⁰ But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?

Here Paul repeats his previous advice that, even if Christians are free to eat meat sacrificed to idols, they should not do so if it offends the consciences of other Christians:

⁹ But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? ¹¹ And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹² But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. (Chapter 8:9-13)

Ignorance is bliss. The food is not unclean in and of itself. Only human intentions may make it unclean. Those who do not know what those intentions are can therefore eat it with a good conscience (- John Chrysostom)

³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Glorifying God is why we were created. It our eternal vocation. Anyone can do it:



³⁷ Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, ³⁸ saying:

“ ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!’

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’”

³⁹ And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”

⁴⁰ But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.” (Luke 19)

We sometimes see the acronym, “WWJD,” i.e., “What would Jesus do?”



Another one from this verse could be, **“Does this give glory to God?”**

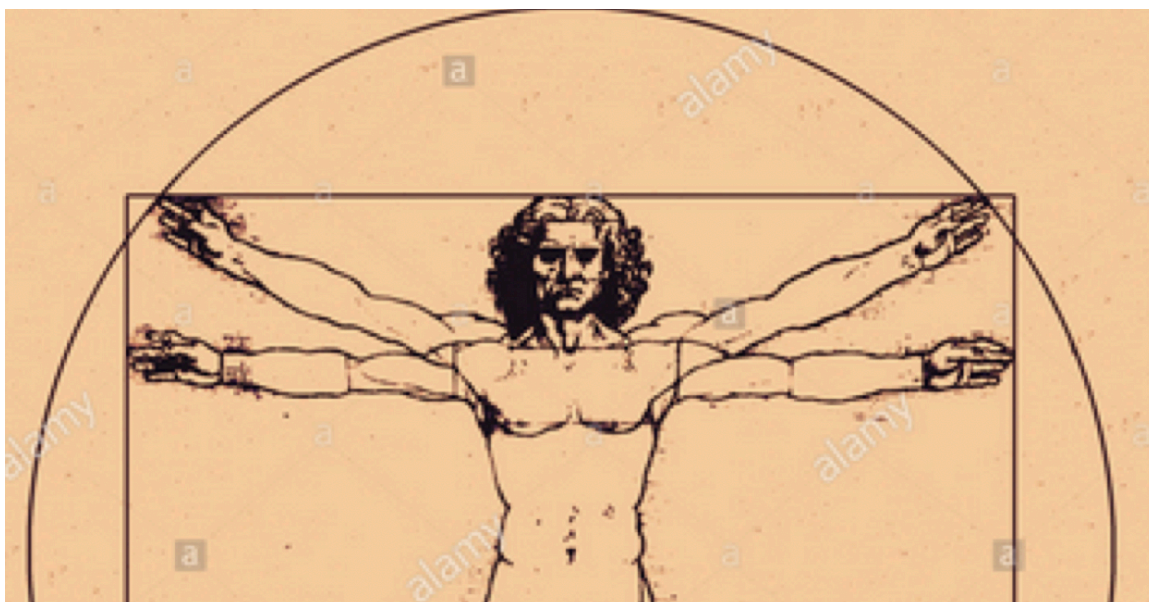
Giving glory to God does not have to be major accomplishments. We give glory to God in small, simple ways.



The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)



Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (Luke 12:27)



I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. (Psalm 139:14)

In what ways can we give glory to God in everyday ways, big or small?

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³² Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, ³³ just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

“It’s easier to catch flies with honey than vinegar.”

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18)

“Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon those who envy and affront me and do me mischief, and do not let them perish through me, a sinner” – from Orthodox daily prayers.

11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

We are all called to be icons of Christ. When others see us, they should see Christ in us. As John the Baptist said of Christ,

“He must increase, and I must decrease.”

Likewise we should see Christ in others.

“I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus.” - Mother Teresa

² Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

This reminds us that there was a Holy Tradition of faith and practice, unwritten, yet preserved and taught by the Apostles, before the New Testament was even written.

Elsewhere Paul wrote of Holy Tradition as existing in his day, before the New Testament was written. And its importance:

Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. (2 Thessalonians 2:15)

The existence of Holy Tradition before the Bible should not be surprising; the Apostle John wrote,

And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. (John 21:25)

³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. ⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶ For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man is not from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹ Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. ¹² For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

¹³ Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. ¹⁶ But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

Cultural origins of the wearing head coverings in church are unclear.

Ancient Greek women were expected to fully cover their bodies. For instance, a woman would not gird up her chiton like a man and display her legs in public. But the Greek headcovering customs for women during the first century are hard to determine with any degree of certainty. In the past, some biblical expositors casually asserted that all respectable Greek women wore headcoverings, and that among the Greeks (as among the Jews) only disreputable women went about with bare heads. But there does not seem to be any good evidence for this in ancient sources. [\(3\)](#) Many scholars now maintain that although Greek women certainly did wear headcoverings at times, and probably more often than not in public, there is no good reason to think that Greek women were under some compulsion to cover their heads in public. The idea that immoral women were recognized as such by the absence of a headcovering has no basis at all in ancient evidence.

*Concerning ordinary Roman women of the first century, Plutarch in one place implies that it was "more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered." [\(9\)](#) But it is unclear to what extent Plutarch's "more usual" indicates a custom strictly adhered to. We do know that in the first century Roman society was undergoing changes, in a direction which can only be called morally dissolute. Ovid (43 b.c.–a.d. 17), in the generation preceding Paul, provides an impressive testimony to the sad state of Roman morals in his book *Ars Amatoria* (The Art of Love), with much explicit discussion of*

female dress, hairstyles and cosmetics. His advice to ladies concerning hairstyles and wigs would be pointless if the ladies went out with their heads covered. If Ovid's representation of Roman society is at all accurate, ⁽¹⁰⁾ it is hard to believe that there was any strict observance of headcovering customs in daily life.

As for Jewish women, there is clear evidence that in the first century they covered their heads not only for prayer but whenever they were outside of their own home. It is said that some Jewish women kept themselves covered at all times. In public, they not only covered their heads, but the lower part of their faces as well. For the women this was a matter of morals, and a religious duty, not merely a matter of style or convenience. Joachim Jeremias describes the Jewish custom.

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/headcoverings3.html>

Interestingly, today, Orthodox Jews (who zealously follow their ancient traditions) require their men to cover their heads in synagogue, but the women are not:

Because of the above passage from Corinthians, the Orthodox Church followed the tradition of women wearing veils during services for well over a thousand years.



Both men and women monastics wear veils as a symbol of their vocation:



This tradition is still very strong in some Orthodox Churches, including the Slavic ones. However, this tradition has waned in the Greek Orthodox Church.

In verse 2, we read Paul’s words, *“keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.”*

It should be remembered that there is a difference between Holy Tradition (with a capital “T”) and traditions (with a little “t”). Holy Tradition is fixed, but traditions are not. Over the centuries, the Church sorts out the difference between Tradition and tradition. At least in the Greek Orthodox Church, the tradition of women wearing head coverings in church is more and more being seen as just that – a tradition. As such, there is room for flexibility, cultural adjustments and personal choice.

For example, this same passage says, *“Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?”* Do not our honored monks and some clergy wear long hair that must be kept in a ponytail?

¹⁷ Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. ¹⁹ For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. ²⁰ Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. ²¹ For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. ²² What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

This passage begins an exploration of Holy Communion. Paul starts by pointing out what the Corinthians are doing wrong.

When Paul refers to Corinthian Christians, “...in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.”²² What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?” he is referring to an early Christian custom called, “**the agape meal.**”

For the origin of the love feast, we need to look no further than the Last Supper. “As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’” (Matt. 26:26). So the very first Eucharist was instituted in the context of a meal! A meal continued to be the normal setting in which Christians met together for fellowship and worship. Acts 2:46 tells us: “Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” The expression, “breaking bread,” no doubt includes the celebration of the Eucharist. However, the phrase, “they ate their food with gladness” would also indicate that this was more than communion; it was also a meal.

In the Didache (ca. A.D. 100) there is no sign as yet of any separation. The direction that the second Eucharistic prayer should be offered “after being filled” appears to imply that a regular meal had immediately preceded the observance of the sacrament. In the Ignatian epistles (ca. A.D. 110), the Lord’s Supper and the agape are still found in combination...

The Agape meal disappeared in the late 1st or early 2nd century, largely for the same excesses that Paul describes at Corinth.

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

Paul is passing on to the Corinthians the oral tradition of the words by Christ to institute the Lord’s supper. Those specific words were recorded later by the Evangelists Matthew and Mark, and paraphrased by Luke. They are still a central part of every Divine Liturgy. These words unshakably express our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in Holy Communion.

²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.

³⁰ For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

These verses remind us that any Orthodox Christian wishing to commune must first prepare. We must abstain from all food after midnight before. We must be at peace with others. And we must examine ourselves to see if we are in a serious state of unconfessed sin. To help us partake worthily, as Paul warns, the Liturgy guides us to say these pre-communion prayers together:

I believe and confess, O Lord, that You are truly the Son of the living God, Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. I also believe that this is truly Your pure Body, and that this is truly Your precious Blood. Therefore, I pray to You, have mercy upon me, and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, known and unknown. And make me worthy, without condemnation, to partake of Your pure Mysteries, for the forgiveness of sins, and for eternal life. Amen.

Behold, I approach for Holy Communion, O Creator, burn me not as I partake, for You are fire which burns the unworthy. Wherefore, do You cleanse me from every stain.

Tremble, O mortal, beholding the divine Blood, for it is to the unworthy as a live coal. The Body of God both deifies and nourishes me. Deifies my soul and wondrously nourishes my mind.

How shall I, the unworthy, enter into the splendor of Your saints? If I dare to enter into the bridal chamber, my clothing will accuse me, since it is not a wedding garment; and being bound up, I shall be cast out by the angels. In Your love, O Lord, cleanse my soul and save me.

Loving Master, Lord Jesus Christ, my God, let not these holy Gifts be to my condemnation because of my unworthiness, but let them be for the cleansing and sanctification of my soul and body and for the pledge of the future life and kingdom. It is good for me to cling to God and to place in Him the hope of my salvation.

You have smitten me with yearning, O Christ, and with Your divine love have You changed me; but do You burn away with spiritual fire my sins and make me worthy to be filled with the joy of You, that rejoicing in Your goodness, I may magnify both your Advents.

Receive me today, O Son of God, as a partaker of Your mystical Supper. I will not reveal Your mystery to Your adversaries. Nor will I give You a kiss as did Judas. But as the thief will I confess to You: Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.

This verse is one reason why the Church does not believe that the Eucharist is a metaphor for the Body and Blood of Christ; IS the Body and Blood of Christ. Paul states that the

unworthy partaking of Holy Communion can cause sickness and even death. What metaphor could do that?

³³ Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Paul is urging the Corinthians to start separating their usual meal - the one to satisfy hunger – from the agape meal, where the focus should be on fellowship and mutual love. This separation became the norm for the Church soonafter.

Although the ancient custom of the Agape meal joined with the Liturgy ended in the late first-early second century, its spirit still remains today on Pascha Sunday. On that day, we have just completed the Paschal Liturgy in the early morning hours, and in the early Sunday afternoon we gather for the brief service of Agape Vespers. Immediately after Agape Vespers, many Orthodox churches celebrate a festive meal. That meal is after the conclusion of the most important service of the entire year, and does not conflict with the profound spirituality of the day. But it does add to Pascha a spirit of fellowship, mutual love and feasting, as did the Agape meal of Paul's day.

12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: ² You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

“What Paul means is that, if anyone in a pagan temple, was possessed by an unclean spirit and began to divine, he was led away by that spirit like a man in chains, and had no idea what he was saying. For it is peculiar to the soothsayer to be beside himself, to be under compulsion, to be pushed, to be dragged, to be greeted as a madman. But the prophet is not like this, because he has a sober mind and composed temper, and knows exactly what he is saying.” (John Chrysostom)

⁴ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸ for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

These verses tell us that the Holy Spirit gives skills and abilities to people in the Church, which are intended to be used to strengthen the Church as a whole. These gifts may be given to clergy AND laity, men and women. He lists “word of wisdom,” “word of knowledge,” “faith,” “gifts of healings,” “working of miracles,” “prophecy,” “discerning of spirits,” “different kinds of tongues,” and “interpretation of tongues.” Here, Paul emphasizes that these gifts are just that – gifts. They are given by the Holy Spirit. They are not earned or deserved, and certainly never to be a source of pride for their recipients. This was an especially important point since the Corinthians were prone to pride and self-promotion.

Many of these gifts were given to guide and strengthen the early Church in its infancy, such as prophecy, discerning of spirits, and speaking in/interpreting tongues. These miraculous gifts were abundantly given as “training wheels” while the Church was in its infancy. But now, the Church is no longer in its infancy. The Church now has the Scriptures, the Councils, the Fathers, and the rest of Holy Tradition to guide us. The supernatural gifts given to the ancient Church have not disappeared. There are still rare but precious manifestations of the Holy Spirit in our own time. “Word of wisdom,” “faith,” “gifts of healing,” and “working of miracles” still happen. They are rare; if they were common they would no longer be miracles!”

Elders Porphyrius and Paisios

It is important to realize that this list of gifts of the Holy Spirit is not all-inclusive. There are countless more gifts of the Holy Spirit to individuals in His Church to be used for the strengthening of His Church. They are all around us.

What gifts do you see being exercised in our own church every day?

Now Paul begins an extended explanation of the gifts of Holy Spirit and “the Body” – in this case the Body of Christ, the Church:

¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

Our spiritual gifts are related to our baptism. The day before our baptism we were alive, but at our baptism, our bodies and souls were united with Christ, and at our chrismations we received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, we were born with aptitudes that were natural to us (e.g., music, leadership, math, empathy, etc.) But at our baptisms, those natural aptitudes were also consecrated to God, intended for use in His Church.

¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.

Today, we have an even better understanding of one human body having many parts, and how they interact:

¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? ¹⁸ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

All the **parts** of the human body are necessary for the **whole** body to function properly.



²⁰ But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. ²³ And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, ²⁴ but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it...

Just as all the parts of the body are necessary for the whole body to function properly, all are important. The eye is just as important as the hand. And the "less honorable" parts are just as important as the "more honorable" parts – maybe more!

²⁵ that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. ²⁸ And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

There are various degrees of spiritual gifts. Some have more gifts than others. Some receive gifts that are linked with official leadership positions in the Church (“apostles”, “prophets”, “teachers”, etc). Others receive gifts that are mostly functional (“miracles”, “healings, etc).

²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹

This might be referring to the serious problem at the Corinthian church, that Paul had already mentioned – that too many people were seeking prestige and adulation from the community by jockeying for leadership positions to which God had not equipped them. “Too many chiefs, not enough Indians.” Here, Paul is reminding them that God has not called everyone in the Church to be official leaders of the Church.

The meaning that not all are called or gifted to leadership in the Church is especially clear in the original Greek text:

²⁹ μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες προφῆται; μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις; ³⁰ μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν;

With the repeated use of μὴ (“not”), these verses could easily be translated, “*Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they?...* ”

Paul’s discussion of God’s spiritual gifts to His people concludes:

And yet I show you a more excellent way.

As important as spiritual gifts are to the Church, there is something even more important. Paul now devotes a chapter to the most important thing. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 is often called “the chapter of love,” and is one of the mountain peaks of the Bible.

Too many Corinthian Christians were seeking spiritual gifts for their own egos and public recognition. To such people, Paul writes:

13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Love is the essential component to all the spiritual gifts. The Greek language has four different words that are translated into the English word, “love.”

“Philia” (φιλία): friendship, brotherly love (as in Philadelphia, City of Brotherly Love”). Only used once in the New Testament.

“Storge” (στοργή): love, affection, especially between parents and children.

“eros” (Ἔρως): Physical desire, where the English word “erotic” comes from.

“Agape” (ἀγάπη): affection, good-will, love, benevolence: Secular authors from (Aristotle), Plutarch on used ἀγάπησις. The Septuagint uses ἀγάπη for “ahavah” (אהבה) Song of Solomon 2:4, 5, 7; Song of Solomon 3:5, 10; Song of Solomon 5:8; Song of Solomon 7:6; Song of Solomon 8:4, 6, 7; Of the love of God for man and man for God; especially of that love of Christians toward Christians which is enjoined and prompted by their religion, whether the love be viewed as in the soul or as expressed. Alms-giving and charity...

“Agape” love is the term used throughout 1 Corinthians 13.

Modern American culture constantly speaks of love. It is the subject of most of our songs: What do you think the modern American understanding of the term “love” is?

Compare the modern American understanding of the term “love” with the biblical understanding of agape-love:

⁴ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Feelings vs. attitudes, choice, decisions

⁸ Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

One reason “love never fails” is because it is eternal. It is rooted in God Himself. As John wrote in his Gospel, “God is love.” Further, it is important to realize that love requires others as its object. Since God IS love, then this strongly implies the divine Others, the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Christ prayed to the Father, “...for You loved Me before the foundation of the world (John 17:24).

We are all created in the image of the Trinitarian God, where there is eternal and divine love between the Persons of the Holy Trinity. So the eternal and divine Trinitarian love should be replicated in us at the creaturely level. By loving one another, we imitate and are drawn into the love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christ prayed:

*Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, **that they may be one as We are**... ²⁰ “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ **that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one.** (John)*

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Children know and understand the world around them to degree, and have the potential to know and understand far more. But that potential is not realized until they reach adulthood. Likewise, we know and understand the spiritual world around us to some degree, and we have the potential to know and understand far more. But that potential will not be realized until we reach paradise. When that time comes, the ultimate knowledge and understanding will be seeing God, “face to face.”

¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The book of Hebrews defines faith as “the substance of things hoped for, the assurance of things not seen.” In heaven, we will no longer hope for anything, because it will all be present. We will no longer need to believe in things not seen, because we will see it. But our love for God, which is always partial in this world, will be complete in the next. Perhaps this is why Paul says love even greater than faith and hope – because love will constantly grow throughout eternity.

“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’” (1 Corinthians 2)

“And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— ⁴ how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” (2 Corinthians 12)

Now Paul begins chapter 13, which focuses on “speaking in tongues.” This was a supernatural ability to praise God in a language the person had not learned. It is described in Acts chapter 2, at Pentecost:

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.⁷ Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?⁸ And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”¹² So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?”

The gift of “speaking in tongues” apparently not only involved in speaking in known languages, but also unknown languages, often believed to be the language of the angels. Like other supernatural gifts that helped the Church in its infancy, the gift of tongues slowly died out when the Church matured. A third century group called “The Montanists,” believed that the pronouncements and prophecies from tongues-speakers were “new revelations” that took precedence over Scripture and Church authorities. For this reason, the Montanists were excommunicated from the Church. Montanism and the phenomenon of speaking in tongues completely died out by the fifth century.

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues remained dormant until the early 20th century, when it reappeared in Topeka, Kansas, in 1908, and in Los Angeles in 1906. This sparked a major movement in Christianity worldwide. Participants report not only speaking in tongues, but also outbursts of euphoria, physical expressions, fainting, prophecies of the end times, and working of miracles. This movement became known as “Charismatic” (from the Greek word for gift), and “Pentecostal” because they believed they had recovered the experience of Pentecost and other supernatural gifts given to the early Church. This movement led to the formation of new Pentecostal and Charismatic Protestant denominations like the Assemblies of God and Church of God. Although most Pentecostals are Protestant, many Catholics embraced the movement while remaining in the Catholic Church. This movement has had virtually no impact on the Orthodox Church. Here are a couple of examples of Pentecostal services:

<https://youtu.be/J2boRenM0Zg>

<https://youtu.be/ZcbiK2kEzHY>

Orthodoxy rejects these activities of Pentecostalism as delusion and theatrics, at best.

<https://youtu.be/bY1KeHICn6g>

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<https://youtu.be/7HTaKnfZoIM>

<https://youtu.be/9AAPwRwc6wA>

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? ⁷ Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? ⁸ For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? ⁹ So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. ¹¹ Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.

Paul is saying that the purpose of speaking in tongues is to make the Gospel understandable to those who speak a foreign language, and therefore spread the Gospel and to edify the Church:

*¹² Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, **let it be for the edification of the church** that you seek to excel.*

He continues by placing a regulation on the speaking of tongues in the Church – any unknown tongues must be interpreted:

*¹³ Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? ¹⁷ For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. ¹⁸ **I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; ¹⁹ yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.***

This apostolic and biblical requirement is rarely followed in modern Pentecostal churches. The stated requirement is repeated:

Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

²¹ In the law it is written: "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord.

²² Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. ²³ Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. ²⁵ And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

*²⁶ How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. ²⁷ **If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.** ²⁸ **But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.** ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. ³⁰ But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. ³² And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*

In the modern Pentecostal churches, the emphasis is on chaos and spectacle. But the early Church, the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit were the opposite of chaos:

³³ For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

To summarize the message of 1 Corinthians 14 concerning the gift of tongues:

1. The purpose of the gift of tongues are to assist in the spread of the Gospel across languages and to strengthen the Church until the Holy Tradition ripens.
2. The gift of tongues is NOT among the most important spiritual gifts.
3. The gift of tongues is NOT given to all.
4. The gift of tongues MUST be accompanied by interpretation.

These biblical guidelines are rarely, if ever, followed by modern Pentecostal churches. Also, because speaking in tongues has not been seen for 1800 years, and even then was associated with heretical movements, the Orthodox Church is deeply suspicious of it.

15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

If speaking in tongues is one of the spiritual gifts God intended to strengthen the Church until the Holy Tradition ripens, then the Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of that Holy Tradition. The New Testament Gospel depends on it. Our whole salvation depends on it. This is the focus of 1 Corinthians 15.

Twice in these verses, Paul states that the Resurrection of Christ was foretold in the Old Testament.

“For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10, quoted by Paul in Acts 13:33-35)

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. (Isaiah 53:10-11)

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40)

It is important to see that the Good News of the Resurrection of Christ comes not from untrustworthy ecstatic experiences like speaking in tongues, but by a reliable chain of eyewitnesses. Paul starts with the original eyewitnesses to the Resurrection, and he stakes his claim on their testimony. Paul had already imparted their testimony to the Corinthians:

*⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. ¹¹ Therefore, whether it was I or they, **so we preach and so you believed.***

Every generation of Christians, continuing with our own, accepts the same foundational proclamation: “Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen.” This is the message of Pascha, the holiest day of the year. It is also the message of every Sunday, which is the holiest day of

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the week, and when every Divine Liturgy is a miniature Pascha. "... He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures..."

¹² Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Resurrection of the dead was not a common belief among 1st century religions. Even among the Jews there was a sect – the Sadducees – who not believe in the resurrection of the dead:

Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him... (Luke 20:27)

But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"

⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. (Acts 23: 6-8)

Both the Greeks and the Romans believed in an afterlife, and believed that the souls of the departed went to their eternal destinations, but they were never reunited with their former bodies. But for Paul, and for Orthodoxy, the belief in the resurrection of the body from the dead is essential. Christ's resurrection from the dead is the down payment for our resurrection. Both are the source of our Christian hope. *"The reality of the former guarantees the reality of the latter"* (John Chrysostom)

¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. ¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Why is the resurrection of the body so important? God created humanity with both a soul and a body. Both are necessary for the complete human being. Death is a tragedy precisely because it takes that unity and replaces it with two appalling spectacles – a corpse and a ghost. If God did not eventually reunite the soul with its body, He would only have souls that were incomplete. The future resurrection of humanity will reunite the two incomplete halves and eternally restore the complete humanity in which we were originally created.

This understanding is also why we Orthodox continue to intercede for our departed loved ones. We have a very real hope that they are now in the presence of God. The more that they lived their lives in faith, hope and love, the more assurance we have. But even the most holy of the faithful departed, who are now enjoying the presence of God, their joy is still incomplete. They are still missing their bodies. They will not be able to enjoy the fullest blessings of God until they are reunited with their bodies, and can experience God with both their bodies AND their souls together. That is why we continue to pray for them – to help them through their temporary incompleteness.

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

Here Paul is referencing the Old Testament Feast of the Firstfruits:



⁹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. ¹² And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹³ Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. ¹⁴ You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. (Leviticus 23)

The day before the harvest, the farmer brings a small sample of the harvest, plus flour, oil, wine, and a perfect male lamb, to the priest. He makes an offering of all of them to God.

Notice the parallels between the flour and oil baked in the fire (i.e. bread), and the wine, to New Testament Holy Communion.

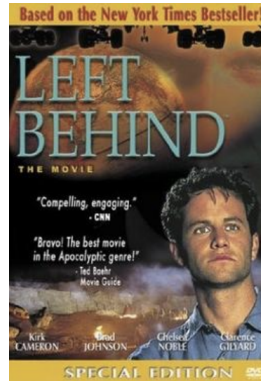
Notice also the parallel between the perfect male lamb to the sacrifice of Christ. The day after these sacrifices are made, the farmer may complete the harvest and enjoy its bounty.

The reality of the first fruits on the first day is the assurance of the full harvest the next day. Paul is saying that Christ's firstfruit resurrection is the assurance of our resurrection soon after.

Our resurrection remains in the future, and is combined with the Second Coming of Christ to earth.



Most evangelicals have a keen interest in the end times. Many books and even movies like “Left Behind” reflect this keen interest:



Most evangelicals believe that Christ will return twice. The first time, which they call the “rapture,” Christ will return only as far as the sky. He will not land on earth. He will resurrect only the righteous, and return to heaven with them, leaving the unrighteous dead in their graves and the unrighteous living on earth, for seven years. At the end of those seven years, which they call “the Great Tribulation,” Christ will return to earth again. This time, He will land, destroy His earthly enemies, raise the unrighteous dead, judge them, and send them to hell. Most evangelicals believe that Christ will then rule on earth for 1,000 years, which they call “the Millennium.” At the end of that, they believe there will be one more human rebellion against Christ, at which time Christ will destroy the rebellion, send the rebels to hell, create a new heaven and a new earth, and eternity will begin.

This complex evangelical timeline was invented in the 1800’s. It was created by taking a variety of biblical passages about the End Times, and combining them in a very haphazard and imaginative way. The Orthodox Church does not believe in this scheme. The Church has always believed that the Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection of ALL the dead, and the Final Judgement, will all be one, cataclysmic event.

“And He shall come again with glory, to judge the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end...I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come...”

Paul continues to describe the Second Coming of Christ just as the Orthodox believe it will:

²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸ Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

The Orthodox Church recognizes no multiple returns of Christ to earth (one halfway and another complete), no multiple resurrections (one for the righteous and one for the unrighteous), no seven year and 1,000 year time lapses between these events, and no separate judgements of the righteous and unrighteous. Just one return, one resurrection of humanity, one judgement, and one eternity.

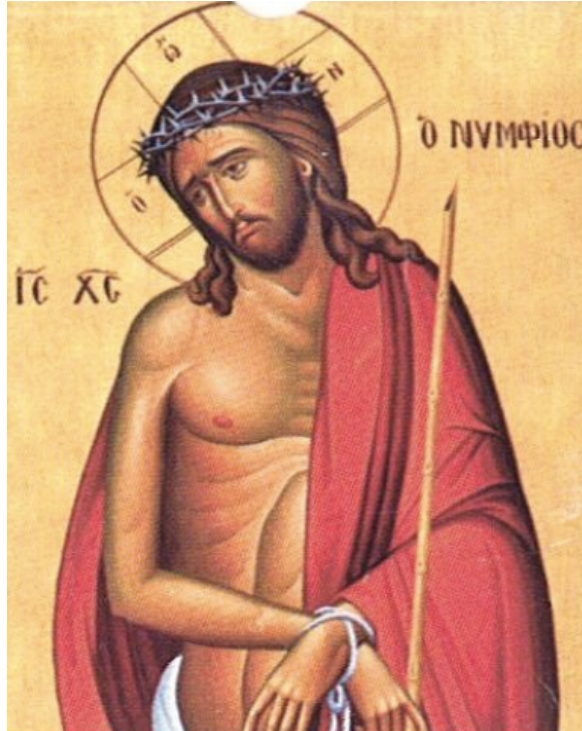
The theme of the Second Coming of Christ is incorporated in the liturgical life of the Church. The Sunday of the Last Judgement is the last day before the beginning of Great Lent. On the Sunday, Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week, the “Bridegroom Matins” are appointed. These Bridegroom services recall Christ’s parable of the returning bridegroom in Matthew 25:1-13:

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶ “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹ “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹² But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

¹³ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.



The hymn that is repeated throughout all the Bridegroom services is:

Behold, the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night, and blessed is the servant He shall find vigilant; but unworthy is he whom he shall find neglectful. Beware therefore, O my soul, lest you be weighed down by sleep, lest you be given over to death and be closed out from the kingdom; but rise up crying out: "Holy! Holy! Holy are You our God; through the intercessions of the Theotokos, have mercy on us.

In any discussion of the end times of the earth, we must remember first of all that each of us will face our own personal “end times.” Our time on this earth will certainly end long before the end of the world. The Bridegroom services remind us to focus on our own end times by being ready for it at all times through constant watchfulness and repentance.

²⁹ Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?

What is Paul referring to in “baptism for the dead”?

The 4th century Western commentator Ambrosiaster writes, “*It seems that some people were at that time being baptized for the dead because they were afraid that someone who was not baptized would either not rise at all or else rise merely in order to be condemned.*” The 4th century Alexandrian Didymas the Blind states, “*The [heretical] Marcionites baptize the living on behalf of dead unbelievers, not knowing that baptism saves only the person who receives it.*”

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Baptizing the living on behalf of the dead has never been a practice of the Orthodox Church, Catholic, or Protestant churches. It is, however practiced by Mormons today.

Paul now returns to the importance of faith in the past Resurrection of Christ, and the future resurrection of humanity.

³⁰ And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? ³¹ I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. ³² If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me?

Paul underwent enormous personal suffering on behalf of the Gospel. Elsewhere he stated,

*²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—
²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11)*

Yet all these sufferings would have been worthless without the Resurrection:

If the dead do not rise, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”

The quote, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” was a popular slogan in the 1st century Roman world and derived from a school in Greek philosophy. It presumes that there is no afterlife, and no accounting for what we do in this life.

It concludes that the best use of this life is to pursue hedonistic pleasure.



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Clearly this philosophy of life has become very popular in 21st century America.



Paul points out that the lack of belief in the afterlife, resurrection and accountability, makes people act much worse:

³³ Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” ³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

1st century Corinth was much like a continuous New Orleans Mardi Gras. Paul’s shaming of the Corinthians suggests that many Corinthian Christians were still living the Mardi Gras lifestyle because they did not take seriously afterlife, resurrection and accountability.

³⁵ But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” ³⁶ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain.

Paul is saying that the seed that is planted in the ground produces fruit that can be very different. This...



Leads to this...

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Yet everything in the tree is already present in the acorn.

Christ also used this seed-grain analogy to death and resurrection:

²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life (John 12).

This is precisely why Orthodox use grain in the koliva in our Memorial services;



The grain symbolizes seed going into the ground like the body into the grave, in the hope of a future harvest of eternal life.

Paul continues to point to nature in comparing/contrasting the bodies we possess in this life with the bodies we will receive in the resurrection:

³⁸ But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

⁴⁰ There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, another

glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

⁴⁵ And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

The bodies that we now have are “corrupt” and “dishonored” and “weak” and “natural” and “of the earth and of dust” Our future bodies will be “incorrupt,” and “honored,” and “powerful” and “spiritual” and “heavenly.”

Paul does not go into specifics as to how our current bodies and our post-resurrection bodies will be different. However, we have some clues.

The Apostle John writes,

*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, **we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2)*

Christ’s body after the Resurrection:

Recognizably similar to our earthly bodies:

³⁶ Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” ³⁷ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

It will be a real physical body:

*³⁸ And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, **for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.**” (Luke 24)*

Yet not as limited as old bodies:

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*¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, **when the doors were shut** where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, **Jesus came and stood in the midst**, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” (John 20)*

We will be able to eat and drink, although it will not be a necessity to live:

*²⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. ²⁹ But I say to you, **I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.**” (Matthew 26)*

*⁶ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the^[d] Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, **for the marriage of the Lamb has come**, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

*⁹ Then he said to me, “Write: **‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’**” (Revelation 19)*

Our resurrection bodies will no longer be subject to pain or sickness and death:

³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21)

It is very likely that our resurrection bodies will not need sleep or rest

There will be no marriage in heaven:

³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. (Matthew 22)

We will have “mansions” in heaven:

In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2)

We will have some knowledge of what is happening on earth after we left it:

²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. (Luke 16)

The departed can be helped by prayers by those on earth:

³⁸ Judas rallied his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was approaching, they purified themselves according to custom and kept the sabbath there.

³⁹ On the following day, since the task had now become urgent, Judas and his companions went to gather up the bodies of the fallen and bury them with their kindred in their ancestral tombs. ⁴⁰ But under the tunic of each of the dead they found amulets sacred to the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. So it was clear to all that this was why these men had fallen. ⁴¹ They all therefore praised the ways of the Lord, the just judge who brings to light the things that are hidden. ⁴² **Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out.** The noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. ⁴³ He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. **In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind; ⁴⁴ for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead.** ⁴⁵ But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. ⁴⁶ **Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin.** (2 Maccabees 12)

¹⁶ The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; ¹⁷ but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. ¹⁸ The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.... Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16).

O God of spirits and of all flesh, You trampled upon death and abolished the power of the devil, giving life to Your world. Give rest to the soul(s) of Your departed servant(s) (Name) in a place of light, in a place of green pasture, in a place of refreshment, from where pain, sorrow, and sighing have fled away. As a good and loving God, forgive every sin he (she, they) has (have) committed in word, deed, or thought, for there is no one who lives and does not sin. You alone are without sin. Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your word is truth.

For You are the resurrection, the life, and the repose of Your departed servant(s) (Name), Christ our God, and to You we offer glory, with Your eternal Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Those in heaven are aware of what is happening on earth, have concern for suffering Christians, and ask God to take specific action:

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. (Revelation 6)

The Church exists both in heaven and on earth. Christians pray for each other, and this duty is not changed by death.

Next follows one of the two most significant biblical passages in the Bible which give us a glimpse into the future resurrection, when we will receive our new bodies:

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—

“We shall not all sleep”

“Sleep” is often used in the Bible as a metaphor for death of a believer:

*⁴⁹ While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." ⁵⁰ But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." ⁵¹ When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. ⁵² Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "**Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.**" ⁵³ And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. (Luke 8)*

*⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, **he fell asleep.** (Acts 7)*

We Orthodox still use this metaphor of sleep in referring to the faithful departed:

*Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy church, and for all our fathers and brethren **who have fallen asleep** before us, who here have been piously laid to their rest, as well as the Orthodox everywhere. - Litany of Fervent Supplication*

In another passage of Scripture, Paul describes the day of resurrection in similar terms:

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¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning **those who have fallen asleep**, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede **those who are asleep**. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, **and with the trumpet of God**. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4)

Note that in this passage, Paul assumes that the Second Coming/Resurrection Day is so imminent that he would still be alive when it happens:

...Then we who are alive and remain...

⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Deification is a slow process, but resurrection will instantaneous.

Both these passages which describe the Second Coming/Day of Resurrection mention trumpets. In the Old Testament, when the Israelites were wandering in the desert, God commanded that trumpets for be used for several purposes: to signal new moons or festivals, gather all the people together, to assemble for battle (e.g. Jericho), and announce that they are beginning to move again:

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² “Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. ³ When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁴ But if they blow only one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. ⁵ When you sound the advance, the camps that lie on the east side shall then begin their journey. ⁶ When you sound the advance the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall begin their journey; they shall sound the call for them to begin their journeys. ⁷ And when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but not sound the advance. ⁸ The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations. (Numbers 10)

The blowing of trumpets (shofar in Hebrew) is still used by Orthodox Jews, especially at their feast of Rosh Hashannah:

<https://youtu.be/EKQrBURDtQE>

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It is noteworthy that the sounds of these ancient instruments will be part of the resurrection day, when the righteous departed will be called to assemble and move on.

⁵³ *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*
⁵⁴ *So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."*

Here Paul is quoting Isaiah 25:8,

He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

⁵⁵ *"O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?"*

Here Paul is quoting Hosea 13:14,

Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.

⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Christ's Resurrection is a victory over death, shared with us when we are resurrected. It is a shared reality. As we sing at Pascha,

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

⁵⁸ *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

The more confidence we have in the historical resurrection of Christ, the more confidence we will have in our own future resurrection from the dead. And the more confidence we will have in our own future resurrection from the dead, the more confident we will be in working towards it.

Through Christ's resurrection, the faithful are on the winning side. That assurance helps us be "*steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*"

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ² On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. ³ And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

Paul exercises his spiritual authority, “I have given orders...”

“The Collection plate” has been a part of Sunday (“first day of the week”) worship since the beginning.

The major priority of the offerings was to provide financial relief for suffering Christians in Jerusalem. At the approximate time of this writing (55 AD), Jerusalem was in a state of political upheaval. It was a time of infighting among various Jewish religious sects, and small-scale rebellions against the Roman occupiers, which resulted in bloody reprisals. In such a chaotic situation, it is not surprising that the economy of Jerusalem was poor for all who were living there at the time, including the Christians.

Paul mentions his efforts to provide economic assistance to the Christians in Jerusalem in his other writings:

²⁵ But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. ²⁶ For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. (Romans 15)

