

Lecture 1 - Continuing Education of Servants

Processes and Events

Why should I self-discipline?

- I am following my Lord
 - The servant in Exodus 21 is the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom God the Father entrusted the Church as a Bride and us as His children
- I am following the True Shepherd
 - John 10:11
 - Hebrews 13:20
 - Ezekiel 34:15

How do I self-discipline to learn daily?

- One day in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ is the ideal day for us as servants
 - (Gospel of St Mark is portraying Christ the Servant, so His deeds are important more than the words that He spoke)
 - Mark 1:16-45
 - It's not the first time the Lord saw them - He saw them in John 1
 - They left their nets
 - What are the nets we must leave in order to cleave?
 - Whatever we are relying on
 - Whatever we think can take the place of self-discipline and perseverance in learning every day
 - Human resources, not divine resources
 - They left their father and the servants
 - Our relationships
 - The Lord entered the synagogue and a demon-possessed man was there
 - Spiritual warfare
 - He called fisherman
 - Levels of Leadership (in order from lowest to highest)
 - Position - one who has the position and is followed simply because he has it
 - Permission - the people permit him to lead because they like him... but nothing gets done
 - Production - you bring results
 - People Development - you invest in people (rather than in events)

- The Lord chose people who were uneducated and undeveloped, so that He would develop them
- He healed Simon's Mother-in-law
 - You will be attuned to the needs of others
- Everyone was looking for Him
 - We will be swayed from our service
- He said "let us go into the next towns"
 - He is not allured by the crowd or the fame, but he did not regard the simple services of the next town
 - It is a plan; a process; an investment in the Twelve - it's not simply an event
- The Leper came to Him and He healed him
 - When we have a purpose, we will not see things as inconveniences but as opportunities
- Acts 4:29
 - The disciples apply all of what they learned from their Master (in the Gospel), in the Book of Acts

Education

- Language of Society includes SEO (Search engine optimization), AI (Artificial Intelligence), etc.
- The time of saying "This is what it is" or "this is how it is" is passed
- **Tracing Origins is Crucial**
 - In any credible scholarship, it is necessary to study what and how others have tackled in the field of study
 - E.g. if we want to understand the theological depth of a specific liturgical prayer, we must study the liturgical development of that prayer
 - We must inquire of the past to comprehend our present and predict our future
- **Studying is Spiritual!**
 - St Gregory Nazianzen says "We must not then dishonor education..." (Oration 43)
 - Some people ignore education in order to remain stagnant and hide themselves and escape their want of culture
 - Some people will say "We need spiritual talks..." as if academic talks are not spiritual!
- Διδαχή - The Teaching
 - Exegesis - what you take out of the text (then, them, there)
 - Hermeneutics - how is it applied to now (here, us, now)
 - Sometimes we give "what we do" as "what we believe" - but "fasting x days" and "staying x hours in Good Friday" have nothing to do with **what we believe**
 - Four words used for teaching:
 - κήρυγμα (Kerygma) - teaching of the Gospel without argument or defense... "This is what we believe"
 - Evangelism - to tell the good news
 - Martyrdom - to bear witness

- Διδαχή (Didache) - teaching must be preceded by Kerygma. Explanation of that which was proclaimed
- Παράκλησις (Paraklesis) - exhortation to accept the Christian faith and live the Christian life
- ὁμιλία (Homilia) - General discussion of any subject in the light of Christian faith
- We lump all of these together and call them "Education"
 - HH Pope Shenouda used to say that a good indicator of a good sermon is if the hearer comes and asks "What shall I do?"
- It is important to not make assumptions about what is known or not known before teaching
- Improve the Feed
 - Farmers spend their time studying how to improve the feed and not how to get more cattle to come to be fed
- How did the service come to a point of mediocrity?
 - We started with the Great School of Alexandria founded by St Mark!
 - But what happened after that? Chalcedon... Arab Conquest... Burning of Patristic Heritage...
 - French Conquest in Egypt... British Conquest in Egypt... and then finally Habib Girgis got us out of this ignorance...
 - But we're faced with Western Missionaries and ideas like Sola Scriptura and Prima Scriptura
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:15 - "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle."
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:6 - "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us"
 - In those two verses, in Arabic, the word tradition is "ميليعة" (instructions)
- Universal Language of God (θεόπνευστος)
- "But beyond these sayings, let us look at the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic (Universal) Church from the beginning, which the Lord gave, the Apostles preached, and the Fathers kept. Upon this the Church is founded, and he who should fall away from it would not be a Christian, and should no longer be so called" - St Athanasius Letter to Serapion on the Holy Spirit

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