

Wisdom! Let Us Attend!: The Readings and Homily

Theme

Having been prepared by the first part of the service, the readings show us Christ and our life in him.

Outline

Context

Prokeimenon

Epistle

Gospel

Homily

Scripture References¹

Psalms 32 (33)

Luke 24.25–31

Acts 8.26–40

Apocalypse 20.11–15

Glossary

Prokeimenon: A short passage from the Psalms that precedes the reading of the Epistle (or Gospel in Matins).

Quote

The Gospel represents Christ, and he who has found Christ has obtained all that he could desire...and those who possess all things need ask for nothing more.

— St Nicholas Cabasilas *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*

Resource

Commentary on the Divine Liturgy; St Nicholas Cabasilas

The Divine Liturgy: A Commentary in Light of the Fathers; Priestmonk Gregorios

The Heavenly Banquet: Understanding the Divine Liturgy; Fr Emmanuel Hatzidakis

¹ References from the Greek Bible; differing Hebrew Bible references are noted in parentheses.

The Order of the Readings

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: {facing east, announces the prokeimenon}

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: {announces the title of the Epistle}

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: {faces west and reads the Epistle}

Priest: Peace be to thee that readest.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

People: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

— Quietly —

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy

Priest: Illumine our hearts, O Master Who lovest mankind, with the pure light of thy divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of thy gospel teachings; implant in us also the fear of thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto thee. For thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto thee we ascribe glory, together with thine unoriginate Father, and thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Deacon: Bless, master, him that proclaimeth the good tidings of the holy, glorious apostle and evangelist N.

Priest: May God, through the prayers of the holy, glorious apostle and evangelist N., enable thee to proclaim the good tidings with great power, to the fulfillment of the gospel of his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Deacon: Amen, amen, amen. Let it be to me according to thy word.
O holy apostle and evangelist N. Intercede with the merciful God that he may grant our souls forgiveness of sins

— Aloud —

Deacon: Wisdom. Stand upright. Let us hear the holy gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: The reading is from the holy gospel according to N.

People: Glory to thee, O Lord. Glory to thee.

Deacon: Let us attend. {and chants the lesson}

Priest: Peace be to thee that proclaimest the gospel.

People: Glory to thee, O Lord. Glory to thee.

Extended Edition E-mail

Scriptures References²

Psalms 32 (33) NETS

Pertaining to David

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous.

Praise befits the upright.

Acknowledge the Lord with a lyre;

with a harp of ten strings make music to him.

Sing to him a new song;

make music skillfully, with shouting,

because upright is the word of the Lord,

and all his works are in faithfulness.

He loves mercy and justice;

the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm,

and by the breath of his mouth all their host,

as he gathers the waters of the sea like a wineskin,

as he puts the deeps in storehouses.

Let all the earth fear the Lord,

and due to him let all the inhabitants of the world be shaken,

because he it was that spoke, and they came to be;

he it was that commanded, and they were created.

he Lord scatters counsels of nations,

and he frustrates thoughts of peoples

and frustrates counsels of rulers.

But the counsel of the Lord remains forever,

thoughts of his heart to generation and generation.

Happy is the nation of whom the Lord is its God

a people he chose as a heritage for himself.

From heaven the Lord looked down;

² Bible Versions:

ESV: English Standard Bible (a revision of the Revised Standard Version)

OSB/SAAS: Orthodox Study Bible/St Athanasius Academy Septuagint

LES: Lexham English Septuagint (a diplomatic translation of the Vatican Codex)

LEB: Lexham English Bible (From Hebrew OT, and Greek NT)

NET: New English Translation (with extensive translation notes) (not related to the NETS)

NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (an academic translation of the Septuagint, in these quotes proper names have been standardized)

he saw all the sons of men.
From his prepared habitation
he looked down on all the inhabitants of the earth—
he who alone fashioned their hearts,
he who keeps observing all their deeds.
A king is not saved by a great army,
and a giant will not be saved by the greatness of his strength.
Unreliable is a horse for deliverance,
and by the greatness of its power it will not be saved.
Look, the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him,
those who hope in his mercy,
to rescue their souls from death
and to keep them alive in famine.
Our soul waits for the Lord,
because he is our helper and protector,
because in him our heart will be glad,
and in his holy name we hoped.
May your mercy, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hoped in you.

Daniel 7.9–10 NETS

I kept watching
until thrones were set,
and an ancient of days sat,
and his clothing was white like snow,
and the hair of his head was like pure wool;
his throne was a flame of fire;
its wheels were burning fire.
A stream of fire drew in before him.
A thousand thousands were serving him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.
A court sat in judgment,
and books were opened.

Luke 24.25–31 ESV

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

Acts 8.26–40 ESV

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Romans 10.14–17 ESV

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed

what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

2 Timothy 3.12–17 ESV

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Revelation 20.11–15 ESV

Then I [John] saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Quotes

After the Trisagion is ended the priest admonishes all present to cast away negligence and inattention, and to listen carefully to what is being said and done, for that is the meaning of "Let us attend." The priest wishes peace to them all, and calls to mind the wisdom with which they should enter into the holy mysteries and attend to them. What is this wisdom? It is the sum of those thoughts which are in accord with the ceremony, which should occupy those full of faith when they behold and listen to the ceremonies and prayers, so that they are concerned with no purely human sentiment. Such is the wisdom of Christians; that is the meaning of the cry "Wisdom" which the priest says to the faithful many times during the liturgy; it is a reminder of these things. Is this not how we stir each others' memories, often by the use of a single word calling a whole sentence to the mind of our listeners?

— St Nicholas Cabasilas *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*

More Resources

Scripture as Real Presence; Hans Boersma

Sacramental Preaching; Hans Boersma

(While Hans Boersma is a Reformed Christian, he draws much from the Patristics and is part of the Protestant *ressourcement* [return to the sources] movement. He is in dialogue with Frs John Behr and Andrew Louth which shows in his writings.)