

Truth Matters
3rd Sunday After Pentecost
Titus 3.8-15

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July 14, 2024

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit—one God—Amen!

Today we remember the Fathers of the 4th ecumenical council

There were 7 ecumenical councils and the 4th one took place in 451AD

And in this council they were trying to articulate who Jesus Christ is.

There were many wrong and heretical ideas of who Jesus was.

One said that He was God and only appeared to be a man. . . (Docetism and also Eutychianism)

Another said that he was man and was adopted by God at his baptism in the Jordan (Adoptionism)

A third said that he was some third some third thing that was not fully God and not fully man (Apollinarianism)

And there were others. . . .

But the teaching of the Church—the experience of the Church is that Jesus is fully God and fully man—two natures in one person.

But why is this important?

Well Jesus says in the Gospel that He is the Way the Truth and Life (John 14.6). . . if this is true then we better get the teaching about who Jesus is correct because this teaching gives us access to the truth

And why is this important—to have access to the Truth?

Well, if I join myself to falsehood—to a lie—I cannot have understanding and health and ultimately I cannot be saved

Think about it like this—if I have a broken ankle and I go to the doctor and he tells me—don't worry, just keep doing what you are doing, don't change anything you are doing. Keep running keep walking, keep playing basketball and you will be ok.

If I join myself to that lie I won't heal. I won't have wholeness. I might figure out a way to get along in life but I will never be whole and healed like I would if I join myself to truth—if I put a cast on and take time to heal.

This is why we must join ourselves to what is good and true and beautiful. This is why the Father fought so hard to articulate the truth about our Lord so that we could find healing.

Now...

What lies do we believe?

What lies do we join ourselves to?

Are there lies that we tell ourselves about God?

Today there are so many teachings about who Jesus is, how he saves us and how or even if we can participate in that salvation.

One of the biggest lies about Jesus today is that we only need to believe in Him for salvation... that we can do whatever we want as long as we believe in Jesus

I can just say—yes Jesus is the Son of God, He is fully God and fully man—I can just say those things but I don't need to do anything else. I can do whatever I want and live however I want to live

This is a lie about who God is, who we are and how we relate to God...

St James tells us that even the demons believe and tremble (Jas 2.19)... does that save them... No

It doesn't save them. They are separated from God and it will be the same for us if we do not act on our belief.

In order for us to find salvation we have to do what Paul tells Titus today. We have to be

careful to do good works (Tit 3.8). The things that are taught to us in the gospels in the epistles and throughout the scriptures. The things that Christians do.

If I think that I can go as fast as I want down the highway eventually I am going to get pulled over.

If I think that I don't have to listen to the doctor I won't be healthy

And so I have to live in reality

I have to join myself and submit myself to the ways that this world works and join myself to Truth.

If I want to find salvation then—I need to act in a certain way in accordance with the truth.

In other words, I have to live a certain way.

St John Chrysostom tells us there is one virtue that is greater than all the others... a virtue that makes us like God... a virtue that extinguishes the fire of our sins

What is this virtue?

Almsgiving—almsgiving makes us like God.

Now what is almsgiving? Almsgiving is not giving your money to the Church.

We can think about it like giving mercy to others for this is the meaning behind the word and this is why and how it makes us like God.

We give someone our time... we give someone comfort... we give someone money... we give someone hospitality

These are the things that God gives to us—mercy, comfort, healing, hospitality, nourishment, a listening ear.

And doing these things is a result of joining ourselves to the truth about Jesus Christ.

As the Fathers that we commemorate today articulated the Truth for us—the truth that heals us and the truth that saves us—we are invited to join ourselves to this truth so that we can be healed and saved

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us and save us amen.