



Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

306 W. Main Street Emmitsburg,
MD 21727

<http://EntranceMission.org>

717-817-0084

The V. Rev. Elias Yelovich,
Rector

The Rev. Anthony Duvall,
Assistant

You Have Heard That it Was Said ... But I Say Unto You ...
June 29, 2025

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

You have heard that it was said...

"Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. "Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head,

for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil. **"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**

You have heard that it was said. But I say to you....

Our Gospel Lesson today comes from the very middle of that section of St. Matthew's Gospel that we call the Sermon on the Mount. And it is presented in St. Matthew's Gospel as the giving of a new, expanded Law. A Law that reveals the inner nature of the Commandments given through Moses. It's not a new law, but one that reveals what God's original intent was from the beginning. We are to be the kind of people who are transformed through our relationship with God so that we become the kind of people who fulfill the law automatically. As our relationship with God increases and matures, actions of love flow like a stream of water from a spring. Jesus describes this as "living water," water that flows automatically.

Like the people of old, we think that God is interested in us following the letter of the law. As long as we do this or that according to the canons of the Church, as long as we follow the guidelines set before us by the rules and regulations of our tradition, we will be ok. After all, we act in ways that are generally thought to be acceptable. We do not take God's name in vain, we do not commit adultery, we do not kill. But these guidelines are only outward manifestations of a more complete internal transformation.

This is why Jesus repeats the phrase: "You have heard that it was said; ... but I say unto you." You have heard that it was said, do not kill; but I say unto you, you have transgressed the law even if you are angry with your brother or sister. ... You have heard that it was said, Do no commit adultery ... But I say unto you if your even give a thought to doing so, you are liable to judgment. You have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; in other words, offer a fight against your enemy only to the extent that they have harmed you. But I say unto you, turn the other cheek to those who strike you; pray for those who persecute you; bless, do not curse, those who are your enemies.

Jesus reveals that the inner nature of the Law is love for the good of the other; patience with those who want to hurt us; compassion for those who are on the outs with everyone else.

In other words, the goal of our relationship with God is transformation. Complete transformation, so that we automatically exceed the righteousness of the strictest interpreters of the Law, the Pharisees. So that we treat others as God treats us. This, you see, is the entire point of the Apostolos lesson we heard from Romans 5 from St. Paul. God accepts us, He justifies us, by Grace; in other words, by His will to do so apart from our actions. He reaches out to us to pour His Spirit into our hearts so that we willingly trust Him, so that even in our sin, we trust Him to save and transform us. This relationship that we call faith bears the fruit, the automatic ramification, of love for all. We not only do not kill, but we also withhold our judgment of others and seek what is best for others in every situation. We not only do not fight unfairly against our enemies; we do not fight at all; we practice a life of pacifism praying for our enemies to become our friends; we not only do not commit adultery, we do not allow ourselves to be misled into the desire to do so. We bless rather than curse; we allow ourselves to be mistreated even as our Lord allowed Himself to be mistreated for the good of those who mistreated Him.

The way of the Lord Jesus is the way of reconciliation, peace, charity, love, compassion, care for others without limit. This is how we will be as we are transformed by the Holy Spirit to love Him. Faith active in love.

This is why, you see, we cannot be comfortable with just about any actions that are currently going on in the world. Our goal as disciples of Jesus Christ, united to Him by virtue of His Grace that accepts us unconditionally, is to be the kind of people He is: The Kingdom of God and its righteousness comes first; and all else follows in place.

We find no joy in any warfare; we cannot support any talk of promise of strength over our enemies; we weep for those who are in need in any location or state, not wanting to expel them from our midst, but seeking to serve them, because we have what they want no less than do we.

The Sermon on the Mount is an eye-opener. The Way of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Way of the inner meaning of the Law. The fulfillment of the preaching of the prophets. The great alternative to the misery we all inflict on ourselves and others through hatred, violence and retribution. Never forget: You have heard that it was said. But I say unto you: Follow me, be like me: men and women of peace, mercy, charity and compassion for all in any need! That is the inner meaning the Law and the Prophets!

Fr. Elias

Orthodox Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

306 West Main Street

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

<https://EntranceMission.org>