



Orthodox Church of the 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

Remember Who You Are!
December 8, 2024

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Remember who you are!

This was the only admonition that my parents gave me when I left the United States to study abroad. Remember who you are!

Nothing else needed to be said. By telling me to remember who I was, my parents were reminding me of all the many years we had spent together Sunday after Sunday in church; they wanted me to call to mind the years of study we did as a family with the Catechism, the explanations of the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the teachings and example of our Lord, Jesus. Remember who you are, and act accordingly. For people come to the Jesus not on the basis of what you or anyone else teaches, but on the basis of what you do, how you act, whether or not you reflect in every moment of every day the love, and mercy and care of the Lord. Remember that it is the merciful who are shown mercy; remember that it is the meek, not the bullies, who inherit the earth; remember that it is those who trust in Him and who see that trust, that faith that you have, that will draw them to the Lord.

Today in our lesson we heard the story of one of our Lord's most remarkable healings. St. Luke says that Jesus came upon a woman who had a "spirit of infirmity." Something was seriously wrong with her. Perhaps malformed bones or crippling arthritis of one sort or another had caused her to be bent over for over 18 years. The Holy Fathers all point out that our Lord healed her out of His compassion for her; she did not prove her faith to Him; indeed, she did not even ask. He bowed down to her level, touched her and healed her out of love for His afflicted Creation.

But it was on the Sabbath day. In the Jewish faith of the time, indeed even today among hyper strict Orthodox Jews, the Sabbath Day is more than a day of rest; it is a day of strict adherence to the principle that no work may be done at all. Intended as a Day of Rest and Worship by God, the Commandment had been turned into a burden rather than a release. God had given the commandments as a means of life: vital guides for us in our relationship with Him and our neighbors. Honor and love the Lord and honor and love your neighbor as yourself. This will be the means through which people who do not know the Lord will come to see in your actions how good He is, who merciful and loving He is; how vital He is for your life now and in the age to come!

The religious authorities such as the ruler of the synagogue in the story were indignant when Jesus healed on the Sabbath, because they would not see beyond the fact that He had done work on the day that was to be a day of rest. They would not see that all of the commandments were not given to be a burden, but a means of blessing; they would not acknowledge that the Lord, as St. John said so very plainly, was the God of love; indeed, that He is love incarnate. They had forgotten who they were, and they made their religion into a series of rules and regulations that had taken the place of its inner meaning.

Many Orthodox Christians in my experience do the same. They are sometimes drawn to the Church for the wrong reasons – the strict seriousness of our faith, the beautiful words in the Liturgy, the traditions that we all value. But all too often they forget who we really are: Disciples of the Lord, Who above all shows compassion to the down-trodden, the infirmed, people enslaved by sin. It is for them that the Lord came, and He entrusted to us the Holy ministry of imparting to them in our time, in our lives, the same healing compassion and love that He showed to the woman with the spirit of infirmity in today's Gospel.

Brothers and Sisters: Let us remember who we are: Sons and Daughters of the One Who is love incarnate; and let us treat one another and indeed every person we know and meet with the same compassion that our Lord showed to the woman he healed in our lesson!

Fr. Elias

Orthodox Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

306 West Main Street

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

717-817-0084

<https://EntranceMission.org>