

28th Week After Pentecost – Wednesday

Today's readings, followed by a few pastoral & personal thoughts.

2 Timothy 4:9-22 **9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. 12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. 16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. 21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. 22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.**

Luke 20:1-8 **1 And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, 2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: 4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? 5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? 6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. 7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. 8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.**

St Paul wrote this letter when he was in prison for the second and last time. It was most probably the last letter in the canon of scripture that he wrote. In vs. 16, his “**first answer**” refers most probably refers to his discourse recorded in Acts 22. This was just previous to his first imprisonment.

In this, his second imprisonment, there is a sense of retrospective in his words. Here is a man who has “fought the good fight”, and was contemplating the end of his life, which could come at any time.

St Paul's words remind me of one of the greatest temptation of the pastor, and indeed, even the zealous Christian: loneliness. This loneliness is not because of lacking the company of persons, but because of the great sense of sadness that floods the heart of the believer because of the overwhelming volume of unbelief, timidity and inconstancy

in the world, even among those who profess belief in Christ. Even our Lord Jesus Christ had this temptation:

“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (67) Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? (68) Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. (John 6:66-68)

This feeling, in my opinion, is what the Apostle has in mind when he states that he was “**delivered out of the mouth of the lion**” (vs. 17)

The reference to the “lion” is from the psalms:

“O Lord my God, in thee have I trusted: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me. (2) Lest at any time the enemy seize my soul as a lion, while there is none to ransom, nor to save.” (Psa 7:1-2 Brenton)

“(16:12) They laid wait for me as a lion ready for prey, and like a lion's whelp dwelling in secret places. (13) (16:13) Arise, O Lord, prevent them, and cast them down: deliver my soul from the ungodly: draw thy sword” (Psa 17:12-13 Brenton)

Perhaps most people would think that “deliverance” would mean personal freedom, and safety from physical harm, this certainly is not what the Apostle has in mind. The majority of the Christian life is a battle in the heart; this is where the “lion” is most active.

Bibliography

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel according to St Luke, by Blessed Theophylact, published by Chrysostom Press - <http://www.chrysostompress.org/>. ALL FOUR BOOKS ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Priest Seraphim Dec 11/24 2008.

[St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, McKinney, Texas](http://www.orthodox.net/scripture/pentecost-wednesday-28_2008_2timothy4:9-22+luke20:1-8.html)

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