

THE WORD OF GOD (2)
(13/12/2020)

As we noted in our previous Homily, the Son of God is called the **Word** of God. He is the second person of the Holy Trinity, the Only-begotten Son of God, who became incarnate for humanity; the God-man Jesus Christ.

However, we can also see in the Holy Scriptures and language of the Church, that *Word of God* also means the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He came to earth and taught us. These have been recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and in the Gospels it often states that Jesus “*preached the word to them*” (Mark 2:2). This teaching of the same word of God by the Lord continued with His Apostles, after His Ascension. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that, “*the word of God was spreading, and the number of the disciples [the Christians] multiplied greatly in Jerusalem*” (Acts 6:7). Since then, the word of God (the Gospel) continues to spread, both orally through word of mouth, and in writing, in the Holy Scriptures and writings of the Saints. The first part of the Divine Liturgy is called the “Liturgy of the Word of God,” as it is based on it. In a ritual manner, the Entrance of the Holy Gospel takes place through the nave into the Holy Bema, the Altar area. A passage from the works of the Holy Apostles (either from Acts or one of the Epistles) is read. Then the deacon or priest reads a Passage from one of the four Gospels, and the Sermon of the Divine Word follows. It is in this way that the Church continuously feeds her spiritual children, with the eternal word of God. But there also has to be a reciprocal gesture on the part of the faithful.

First of all, we must be attentive to the lessons that are read from the Apostles and from the Gospels. That is why the celebrant priest, before every reading repeatedly urges us: “Let us be attentive. [This is] Wisdom. Let us be attentive.” If at any time our thoughts wander and we do not focus on what the readings are saying to us, then we gain nothing. It is to our benefit to listen, to open our hearts, and to eagerly receive the word of God. We must make sure to keep what we have heard, and try to diligently apply it in our lives. It is then that we are like the field that has been cultivated, and, as the Lord said, received the seed “*and yielded a crop a hundredfold*” (see Luke 8:8). The word of God has to remain inside of us, with a noble and good heart, so that it may “*bear fruit with patience,*” as the Lord said at the end of the “Parable of the Sower” (see Luke 8:15). The word of God is necessary to spiritually nourish the soul, as bread and other food is for the body. This is something that the Lord emphasized: “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Matthew 4:4). As a person cannot survive without water for so many days, so it is in the spiritual life: The Christian life dies if it is not replenished with the word of God. Like flowers in a flower-pot, if they are not watered, they wither. It is not enough to listen to the word of God once a week when we go to church. This is something that is needed daily, which is why passages from Holy Scripture are read every day at church during the holy Services. Of course, not everyone can come to church every day to hear the word of God, but everyone can (if they understand the spiritual benefit provided by the word of God) at some quiet moment in their home or anywhere else they find themselves, read the scripture reading of the day. To not only read it, but to reflect on how to apply what they read in their daily lives. What a blessing it would be if we also were in a position to repeat the words of the Psalmist: “*How have I loved Your law, O Lord! It is my meditation the whole day long!*” And, because I have loved your law so much “*I am directing myself to Your commandments*” (Psalms 118[119]:97 & 128).

My beloved brothers and sisters! We often feel weak in the face of difficult situations which appear in our life. Our faith dwindles and we feel bitterness; we are disappointed and sink into melancholy; we have anxiety and lose the desire to pray. Even the Divine Liturgy has no attraction for us. Have we ever asked ourselves why all of this and much more is happening? Is it, perhaps,

because we are not feeding ourselves with the word of God every day? Let us listen to the advice of St. Paul, who carried the word of God inside him, even though he was a great Apostle inspired by God. He lived the word of God; he studied it; he felt it; and he preached it to others wholeheartedly. What does he tell us? *“Let the word of God dwell in you in all its richness; let it dwell in you permanently”* (Colossians 3:16). For this to happen, we should love the words of God and, as the Psalmist says, to desire them more than gold and every precious stone. They must feel sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb (see Psalms 18[19]:10).

May each one of us study daily the Holy Scriptures, and have the word of God as the **“Lamp”** and the **“Light”** for our path in life (see Psalms 118[119] &105). The person who is enlightened by the word of God has the right mindset. This person acts correctly, and lives correctly. They are peaceful, joyful, and successfully reach their final destiny.

Let us never forget: It is to our advantage to carefully listen to the word of God, study it often, contemplate it frequently, and to truly apply it.