

November 30, 2014 Sermon

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Glory be to God that every Sunday the Church presents such salvific thoughts to us that sort of shake us up, arousing us from the sleep of laziness and sloth.

That being so, allow me to read again to you the words from the fourth chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

¹I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Here is the image of the truly Christian life! This is the condition and attitude toward each other to which we must aspire! The Apostle Paul, a considerate father and man, voluntarily binding himself with ties of obedience to God, who did not seek in them his own profit, but only yearned for the glory of God and salvation of his flock, enlightens us with the words of his Epistle to the Ephesians. And we are simply obliged to heed his words. Paul is an Apostle because he brought to the people the word of the incarnate God. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself addresses us through the words of the blessed Paul.

First of all, we need to behave worthy of the title to which we are called. This is the title of "Christian". That is, we should always be mindful of our title and guard ourselves so that we ourselves do not fall away from God, and do not lead other people into temptation.

Secondly, we must very attentively monitor our attitudes toward one another. "²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". Of course, it is not possible to acquire such an attitude instantaneously, it is not possible to play it - it is a gift from God. But just as love is a gift of God, it is possible to gain it if we attentively watch ourselves, to repent when we see our sinful infirmity, to ask God's help and again and again to become such as the Apostle Paul sees us. Look inside yourself and fight with your sinful proud, lazy, egotistical man, so that, in time, lowliness, meekness, and longsuffering can become integral to your soul.

When we see the infirmity of our near ones, try to act, in the words of the Apostle Paul: "to bear with one another in love". Why do we need to fight with each other, trying to justify ourselves and show wrongness of other person? It would be better to pray for them and for ourselves, to bear with them in love, and let the peace of God and unity of spirit live among us!

How important it is to be united! It is not for nothing that Paul gives us an example of one body and one spirit. A man has one body and one spirit. And a Christians should be of one Body – the Church, the head of which is Christ, with the single goal of hope in the Kingdom of God with Christ. And if we are

together in one Body, then how can we be divided? It means that we are not in this Body, the Church. And it means that we must repent so that the Lord can again bring us back into His Body...

Today's passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians closes with the words? "one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in all of us."

And so it happens in spiritual life. In the beginning, man remembers and accepts that God is above him, and for this reason, he tries to act in all ways as if before the face of God. Acting in such a way, man does the truth of God, and God's truth (meaning God Himself) through the acts and words of man is acting in the world. Acting in such a manner and living by God, man gradually changes, so that, with time, the Lord Himself, through His Spirit, moves into him and that man is sanctified, being made a living Temple of God. Thus says the Lord: "For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: *I will dwell in them and walk among them*". (2 Cor: 6, 16)

Without movement there is no life. And we cannot allow ourselves to stand still in our spiritual lives. We have one purpose – the Lord, His Truth, His Sanctification. Do you remember: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (Thes: 4, 3)? His holiness should be our holiness. Let's try not to be satisfied with our spiritual condition, but as long as we have the strength of both spirit and body, and as long as the Lord gives us time, let us labor for the sake of our Lord and the salvation of our souls.

And let this be an internal exploit for each one of us – to strive to sanctify to God our works, words and thoughts. Without such an attitude it is not possible to become Godlike, to be a true Christian.

Amen.