

Partaking of the Lord Jesus Christ's Sufferings

Objectives

To understand the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ' sufferings and to deal with our own tribulations

References

- ❖ "Salvation in the Orthodox Understanding" by HH Pope Shenouda III
- ❖ "How was accomplished the redemption of mankind?" By HH Pope Shenouda III
- ❖ "God is my salvation" by Father Tadros Malaty
- ❖ "The Cross of Christ" by Maged Attia

Scriptural Verse

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that is set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12: 1-2)

Lesson Outline

- ❖ "Through Adam, sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5: 12)
- ❖ Death penalty was a must as God said "You shall surely die" (Genesis 2: 17)
- ❖ God the Eternal Logos, took flesh, liable to death, and through this union He was able to present the whole humanity while remaining holy and without blemish.
- ❖ **The Lord** Jesus Christ the Incarnate Logos offered Himself to redeem the life of all and to pay the debt of all through His death.
- ❖ Jesus Christ is the only redeemer. No one else shared with Him in accomplishing salvation "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me" (Isaiah 63:3). And also "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)
- ❖ He offered Himself by His own will with pleasure to save us and redeem us (Isaiah 53:12); (John 10:17-18).

Who has been redeemed?

- ❖ The sacrifice of the Lord is a sacrifice of love for us and is sufficient to redeem the whole world from the death penalty (Isaiah 53: 6 and Matthew 20:28) but no one can benefit from it but those who: believe (John 3:36 and 28); repent (Luke 13:375); are baptised (Mark 16:16); are confirmed (Acts 2:38) and partake in the Eucharist (John 6: 53- 58); then come the good deeds upon which the believers will be judged (Matthew 25: 31-46).
- ❖ The righteous people of the Old Testament were waiting in Hades till the salvation of Christ when he delivered them through His cross (Ephesians 4:9) and (1 Peter 3:19).

What is our share in Christ's sufferings?

- ❖ The fellowship of His sufferings (Philippians 3:10) does not mean sharing in His redeeming sufferings but it is sharing His suffering in service and preaching, and in sustaining the tribulations and the persecution because we are His members (1

Corinthians 12:27) and should have His same features and will be refused like Him (John 15: 18-20).

- ❖ The Lord Jesus Christ shared with us all our sufferings from the day of His incarnation. He offered us His huge sufferings at the end of His life by His own will and pleasure when He offered His Holy Body and His Precious Blood before being crucified.
- ❖ He stopped the flow of pain and death which are related to the sin but He granted to His believers a new kind of pain and sufferings for the sake of love (John 16: 33).
- ❖ He asked us to follow Him carrying each one his own cross (Matthew 16: 24 and 10: 38).
- ❖ The believers looked to Him on the cross and longed to die with Him so they offered themselves as martyrs following His footsteps (Acts 7: 60).
- ❖ We die with the Lord Jesus Christ and we are buried with Him and we rise with Him through Baptism (Romans 6: 3-5; Colossians 2:12).
- ❖ We crucify the flesh with its passions and desires when we live for the Lord Jesus Christ and consider ourselves His own (Galatians 5:24).
- ❖ The Holy Body and Precious Blood are given to us freely as a grace of God to abide in Him and He in us (John 5: 56).
- ❖ We should endure all tribulations and sufferings joyfully considering ourselves sharing the sufferings with the Lord (James 1:2).
- ❖ “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life” (James 1: 12) and (Matthew 5: 10-12).

In the book “How can we endure tribulations and carry the cross”, Fr. Bishoy Kamel said: Christianity without the cross is like a bride without the groom

We should carry the cross because:

- ❖ It is a divine commandment and a condition of discipleship (Luke 14: 27).
- ❖ It is a fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ the suffering Saviour (Isaiah 53: 5-12).
- ❖ It is the only way of redemption and salvation (Acts 4: 12).
- ❖ It is the source of power and glory (Galatians 6: 14).

How to carry our cross:

- ❖ Without murmuring and disputing (Philippians 2:14-15).
- ❖ Contently like Demas the thief who felt the due reward of his deeds and asked for the kingdom of God and got it (Luke 23:42-43).
- ❖ Joyfully like our Lord Jesus (Hebrews 12: 2).

Features of carrying the cross

- ❖ Crucifying the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:24).
- ❖ Enduring sufferings and hardships (Acts 14:22).
- ❖ Love of the enemies (Matthew 5:43-47). This challenging commandment requires the power of the Holy Spirit and living under the feet of the Cross.
- ❖ Life of Submission like St. Mary (Luke 1:38) and father Abraham (Genesis 22).
- ❖ Serving the Brethren like St. Paul (Acts 20:18-24).
- ❖ Crucifying the ego knowing that God resists the proud (1 Peter 5: 5).
- ❖ Fulfilling our family duties towards each other; sacrifice from husbands, submission from wives (Ephesians 5: 22-33) and obedience from children (Ephesians 6:1).

❖ Entering by the narrow gate (Matthew 7:13-14).

Conclusion

“To us it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1: 29)

There is no salvation without the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither faith nor deeds are accepted without this Holy Blood. No one can share in the redeeming sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ but we accept tribulations to be like Him and to be glorified with Him (James 1:12).

Activities/Discussion Points

1. Contemplate the martyrdom of St. Stephen and see how he accepted his sufferings (Acts 6: 9-15 and 7:54-60)
2. Discuss the verse: “You have not resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin” (Hebrews 12: 4).