

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Lord Christ gave them His Word, and sent them forth. He did it for the same reason that He took on Flesh. He did it for the same reason He died. He did it for the life of the world. He did it for you. Bearers of His Word, they went out as lambs among wolves.

But still the Lord of the Church sent them. If they would be His disciples, they would taste of His suffering. For the Gospel they proclaimed was not what the world wanted to hear. They were rejected and persecuted for their message.

What St. Paul wrote 2000 years ago is true today: faithful preachers are still persecuted for preaching only the Truth. The fallen will not endure sound doctrine. The man who desires to save himself will not hear of a Savior.

Those who desire to ordain women, those who desire to live perverse lives and do so in God's Name, those who rage against the clear teachings of God, must close their ears to God's Word. So they heap up for themselves teachers to teach them what their itching ears burn to hear. Forsaking the Truth, they have turned aside to fables.

A rejection of any part of God's Word is a rejection of the whole. You cannot pick and choose parts of the Bible to believe or teach, while neglecting or ignoring other parts. To do so is sin. It is what the Devil did in the desert as he tried to tempt the Lord.

But this is something that each of us has done. It is something that you have done - that is to ignore the parts of Scripture that you don't want to hear, to fail to study Scripture because you

are secure in what you believe, to fail to receive Words of Scripture that contradict what you hold to be true, to gloss over the Words that show you your sin, to skip the verses that clearly teach that there is no one good, not one, not even you.

Repent. For to reject any part of God's Word is to reject the whole of it. To reject any part of God's Word is, at base, to reject God. Repent, for where there is persistent unbelief, God removes His Word. God will not cast His pearls before swine. The Holy Things are for the holy ones. Repent. For behold, God will come with vengeance.

But in mercy, God came. He was born in Bethlehem. He set His face for Jerusalem. And in mercy, the Lord Christ gave them His Word, and sent them forth. He did it in love. For the Word they preached, the Word they recorded by the Spirit's power, the Word of the Holy Scriptures, brings life.

And so we give thanks to God this day for His grace and mercy shown us through the Evangelist St. Luke. It is the mark of the Gospel he recorded that the Lord Jesus was always traveling towards Jerusalem, the place of His crucifixion. For it was not in Nazareth that our Lord died for the remission of your sins.

Nor was it in Bethlehem. It is in Bethlehem that the Holy One of God was born of the Virgin, as St. Luke so carefully records in inspired Word. But it was in Jerusalem that the Sinless One was arrested. It was there, outside the city gate, that He was nailed to the cross. It was there that He died. It was there that He was placed in a tomb. And it was there that He emptied that borrowed tomb by taking up His life again, that whoever believes in Him might live forever.

It was that Promise that converted St. Luke. A Greek physician from Syrian Antioch, the Holy Spirit called Luke by the Gospel. Luke became a disciple and faithful companion of St. Paul, traveling with Paul on his second and third missionary journeys, taking the Gospel to Asia Minor and Greece.

Medieval tradition says that Luke was a painter, and a portrait of the Virgin Mary in Rome is credited to him. This is probably wrong, but without question with pen by Divine Words Luke paints Christ crucified for the world to behold in the Gospel that bears his name.

God gave that Gospel, that Good Report, to His Apostles and Evangelists, that the Word of Christ might be preached to the ends of the earth. And this Gospel, the only true Gospel, is as St. Luke writes: that Jesus Christ died for your sins, and He was raised on the third day for your justification. Believing in Him, you receive the full forgiveness of your sins. Even the sin of neglecting His Word is forgiven you in the death and resurrection of the Author of all Scripture.

And the Words of Scripture, the Words that the Spirit wrote through St. Luke, work the very faith that receives Christ by the power of the same Spirit. Believing, the Promise is yours. Believing, forgiveness is yours. And where there is forgiveness, there is salvation and life.

So be strong, O Christian, and do not fear. You have the Gospel. God speaks, and the spring in the desert bursts forth flowing into the Font and bringing forgiveness and life and the Spirit of the Living God.

Christ speaks, and by His Word does simple bread and wine become His Body and Blood for you to eat and drink. So with the recompense of God He will come and save you. And the crown of righteousness is laid up for all those, for you, O Christian, who love His appearing.

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