

## **What is Orthodox Christianity?**

- Orthodoxy means “right worship”, “right glory” “true worship”
- Orthodoxy sees itself as the Church of the Apostles, the Church of Pentecost.
- Why on earth would a Church claim this about itself?
- Take everything that you have ever understood about the Church and its history and bracket it. Don't toss it out, but simply set it aside for the sake of hearing another perspective.
- Is it not offensive to say that “our Church claims to be the very same Church that the Apostles established and grew through the guidance of the Holy Spirit?”
- Let's look at history.

If we are going to understand how we got to where we are today, it is important first to understand where we came from. Where did the modern 21st century American church experience come from?

- Orthodoxy is completely removed from the tired polemic within Western Christianity - Protestant vs. Catholic. We never had a reformation, nor the need for one. We were not faced with the same problems and situations that were facing the Catholic Church in the 14th and 15th centuries.
- Church history - timeline

## **Authority in the Church: Scripture IN Tradition.**

We can say where the church is, but we cannot say where it isn't.

Who do you say that I am? - Mark 8:29 - He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." - this is the one question that theology seeks to answer

- Christ is the canon, rule, hypothesis, first principle of our faith
- Christianity is first and foremost a confession about a person
- I Cor. 15:1-4 - Christ "preached by the Apostles according to the Scriptures" This is the Christ that became the rule to judge other writings by "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

This leads to the discussion about Scripture and Tradition

Orthodoxy presents an entirely different paradigm than the typical western discussion. It is not a matter of Scripture OR tradition, or scripture AND Tradition, but rather Scripture IN Tradition.

### **What is Holy Tradition?.....What it is not**

1.It is not unbiblical

Col. 2:6,7 - As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

II Thess 3:6 - But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother

who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

Phil. 4:9 - The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

I Cor. 11:2,23 - Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered [them] to you . . . For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you. . .

II Thess 2:15 - Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

2. It is not the same as traditions
3. It is not man made
4. It is not external, or outside the life of the Church

#### What is Holy Tradition?

1. It is the life of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church  
Jn. 16:13 - However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own [authority], but whatever He hears He will speak . . .

Acts 15:28 - For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us

Fr. George Florovsky - "Tradition is not a dead dependence on the past, but a living and total dependence on the Holy Spirit."

2. Holy Tradition brings us into communion with Christ Himself because it is nothing less than anything that reveals the Gospel to us.
3. It is a participation in the fulfillment of Pentecost

4. It is Scripture rightly interpreted - it will never contradict scripture the revelation of Jesus Christ.

5. It is a "continuity of the proclamation of the Gospel, the continuous contemplation of Christ through the reading of Scripture, and succession is the visible expression of this continuity in the line of presbyters or bishops insofar as they do indeed maintain the right faith." - Fr. John Behr

Thus HOLY TRADITION is the revelation of Christ Himself as preached by the apostles according to the Scriptures.

In the church we have many monuments to this Gospel - Scripture, patristic texts, conciliar decrees, liturgical rites, and art to the extent that they accurately manifest Christ to us - living tradition - change to remain the same.

I Tim. 3:15 - but if I am delayed, [I write] so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

St. Irenaeus taught that the interpretation of Scripture was like creating a mosaic of a king. In the hand of a skilled and gifted artist the result is the beautiful image of a king. In the hands of unskilled artist the image becomes twisted and the result is the image of a dog or a fox (read quote).

"Since the savior came and embodied the gospel, he has by the gospel made all things the gospel."

"The cross stands, and the earth revolves"