

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church of Kansas City

2018 LENTEN STUDY SERIES

“THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT:
THIRTY STEPS TO HEAVEN”

Week 3 – March 7, 2018

Prayer Before Studying the Scriptures

O Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of our hearts, that we may hear Your word, and understand and do Your will. Hide not Your commandments from us, but open our eyes, that we may perceive the wonders of Your law. Speak unto us, the hidden and secret things of Your wisdom. We set our hope on You. O God, enlighten our mind and understanding, with the light of Your knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written, but to do them. We offer praise and thanksgiving to the Father, Son & Holy Spirit, now, always and forever. Amen.

Recap - Week 1 & 2

First Step to Heaven – Renunciation

Christians **renounce** the world by living for something other than the world

World = All those things that are opposed to Christ and to our salvation

Focusing on being Christ-Centered vs. World-Centered

- 1) *Innocence:*
- 2) *Abstinence:*
- 3) *Temperance:*

Second Step to Heaven – Detachment

Christians must guard their hearts against
yearning for what you have forsaken
(*renounced – step 1*)

Reflection Image

Consider the image and
reflect on what comes to
mind



Reflect on the following two words:

Home

Foreign

Third Step to Heaven – Exile

Greek word: *xeniteia* means
“living as a stranger”

Exile means leaving all that one finds familiar.

We leave forever everything in our own country
that prevents us from reaching the goal of
Christian living

Exile is a separation in order to totally hold onto
God. An exile is like a fugitive.

Passages for Reflection

1) 1 Peter 2:11-12

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Passages for Reflection

1) 1 Corinthians 15:33-34

33 Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” 34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Passages for Reflection

2) Hebrews 11:24-27

24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in[a] Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

This Week...

- Re-read the passages we discussed today and continue to reflect on Christ's teaching and words on how to **live in exile knowing that our citizenship is in heaven.**
- Each day this week, reflect deeper on those things that we need to **renounce, detach** from, and live in **exile**?