

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church of Kansas City

2018 LENTEN STUDY SERIES

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

Week 5 – March 21, 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 - Weeks 1 to 4

“The Break with the World”

First Step to Heaven = Renunciation
Second Step to Heaven = Detachment
Third Step to Heaven = Exile

“The Virtues”

Fourth Step to Heaven = Obedience

Reflection Image



Consider the image
and reflect on what
comes to mind

Reflect on the following word:

Repentance

What is repentance?

- Greek word for repentance = *metanoia* = “to have a change of heart or mind”
- Greek word for sin = *hamartia* = “to miss the mark”
- If sin means missing the mark, then repentance means getting back on target.
- Repentance is the renewal of baptism and an ongoing commitment and promise with God for a fresh start in life
 - It is an ongoing, positive and creative process

What is repentance?

- Repentance is two-folded
 - 1) mourn and grieve for our sins and shortcomings
 - 2) find comfort and joy in God's mercy and love
- A proud person might find it difficult to repent because they are likely blind to their own sins, but at the same they will easily notice and hate the same sin when seen in others.
- Humility enables us to see the truth and see ourselves as we really are.
- Modesty vs Humility
 - When we are humble, we compare ourselves not to others but to God alone.

Steps to repentance

- Self-examination
- Quiet Reflection
- Sacrament of Confession
 - Why is confession a sacrament?
 - When we commit sin, we are separating ourselves from God and from others. Sacrament of Confession reconciles us to God and to the church community and brings us back into communion.
 - An opportunity to be healed: confession is not just admitting or confessing, it is part of a healing process to clear our conscience and guilt
 - Purification

Passages for Reflection

1) St. Matthew 4:17

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Passages for Reflection

2) James 5:16

16 Confess your trespasses[a] to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

This Week...

- **Re-read the passages we discussed today** and continue to reflect on Christ's teaching and words on repentance.
- Each day this week, do an inner self-reflection considering how you can confess and repent.