21st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

How can we forget the scope of God’s love and mercy for all mankind? It is the basis and foundation for all of the work of salvation which is found within the holy gospels and the rest of the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus demonstrates His exceeding goodness not only toward the people, but towards the demon possessed men who dwelt in the country of the Gergesenes.

Lord is come to save more than one select group of people. He is come to save the whole of mankind. He is come to make all people, His people.

We are surprised by the similarity between the demon possessed men and the people of the city who came to meet Jesus. The demons cry out “what have we to do with thee, O Son of God?” And the people of the city do nearly the same thing when they beg the Lord to leave their city. Each group believes that they have something to lose by the presence of Christ. The demons believe that they will be tormented by the mere presence of Christ. The people of the city feel that they will lose their livelihood by the mere presence of Christ. After all, the herdsmen had lost quite a bit of wealth by losing their herd of swine, which ran into the sea and perished. We expect the demons to be uncomfortable with the presence of Christ, but we should be surprised that the people reject the presence of the Lord in their midst. During the Divine Liturgy we pray for “the ignorance of the people.” Here in the gospels we have this clear example. They cannot see past their particular situation to the great and powerful miracle that the Holy One has just performed in their midst. Instead of rejoicing at the restoration of men who were created in the image and likeness of God, we find that they are gripped by sadness and despair since they lost their swine.

As a Christian it is good to make peace with one simple fact: Jesus Christ is always trying to disrupt our lives. This is a process of holy disruption. What is the character of this holy disruption? It is the process of disrupting the sin in our lives.

The Lord Jesus is always trying to expose us with all of our frailties and shortcomings, to the light of His grace. The mere presence of Christ is powerful enough to disrupt our lives. We often sense the Lord trying to come to the city of our hearts. How does our heart react to this visitation? When does the Lord visit us? Every time that we have a thought that reminds us of God. Every time that our conscience speaks to us and attempts to correct us. Every time that we think about praying. Every time that we are faced with the pain and suffering of others. Every time that we see the poor. Every time we read or hear the Bible. Most importantly, every time we come to the divine liturgy. These are opportunities when God visits us.

Let us take the liturgy for example. What is the disposition of our hearts during the liturgy? Do we long to meet and to commune with Jesus Christ or do we find our minds wandering to all of the things that we’ve got planned after the liturgy. Are we more excited about communion or coffee hour? More excited to chat with our beloved friends or to unite with our beloved Savior? Every liturgy and every day and every moment of every day, brings another chance to either accept Christ

 Let us then acquire unity with Him through spiritual life, repentance and sanctification of His abundant grace.”

AMEN.