

“Come to the light!” 2Pe 1:16-21

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

What does the Church remember today? What event? The transfiguration of Jesus. That's right. Also, God's revelation at the Mount Sinai. Let me ask you, – how do we know about these events? Of course, from the Bible.

Let's talk today about a rather challenging topic, about this book – the Bible. You may wonder, why would this be a challenging topic? Because there are many misunderstandings about what the Bible is and what it is about. And even many Christians have fallen prey to these misunderstandings.

Peter mentions one of them, which is as widespread today as it was back then. “Cleverly devised myths”. And this is how most people outside the Christian community think about the Bible. One more book of cleverly, or not so cleverly devised religious myths. Just stories...

And today, unfortunately, even many Christians have believed that the Bible is mostly about ‘cleverly devised myths’. They think that ‘surely there are some good and useful things as well, but a lot of it must be just ancient myths’.

How sad would it be, if we were living our lives guided by some ancient stories? Right? How foolish! Other misunderstanding is that the Bible is something like a rule book; do this and don't do that, and you'll be fine.

That its main purpose is to teach us how to live good lives, and how to be nice people. Sadly, many Christians have believed this one as well. Then you just learn the rules, and try to live by them and forget about this whole Church thing.

What do you believe? What is this book? Why do we have it? This is what we'll try to reflect on today with the help of this text from the 2nd letter of Peter. What is the Bible and why do we have it?

First about what it is. There is so much to say, but we'll look only at two aspects which Peter mentions in his letter. These two are – testimonies of eyewitnesses, and the product of the Holy Spirit.

This is how Peter distinguishes the message of the Church from all religions and philosophies. What we have recorded in the Bible are testimonies of eyewitnesses. This is a very important point. If someone asks you, – what do

you have in this Bible – you can explain: “What we have are actually testimonies of eyewitnesses.” ‘What do you mean? Testimonies about what?’ About what true God has done in our history. What true God, the Creator and Redeemer has done among us.

I’ll say it once more, – the Bible is testimonies of eyewitnesses about how the Triune God has acted in human history. See, it is about real events. They happened in real places, in real time, with real people involved.

But most importantly, with God Himself involved. Whatever Bible describes are not stories or legends, but real events, witnessed by many. Thus, today we heard about what happened at the Mount Sinai. It happened before the eyes of entire nation.

What heard about Jesus’ Transfiguration, it happened before the eyes of eyewitnesses. I love how John, who also witnessed Jesus’ Transfiguration and many other things, begins his letter. Just listen to these words:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life– the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you.” (1Jo 1:1-3) Isn’t this heart-warming. They touched God...

Remember this, – what we have received recorded in this book, comes from people who themselves witnessed God’s actions in our history, among us.

But there was also the second thing, that Peter mentioned, remember? Not only we have accounts of eyewitnesses, but additionally, as Peter wrote, nothing of what we have in the Bible has been produced by the will of men, instead the Holy Spirit inspired and lead these authors to write down His message.

What does it mean? It simply means that God Himself guided the writing of the Bible. The Holy Spirit used human beings to record His message. Obviously, you have noticed what we say after the readings.

Once the reading is over we say, – this is the Word... yes, of the Lord. This is what we formally believe and formally say. Why do I use the word ‘formally’? Do we really believe it? Do we? Do our actions tell that we really do?

Sure, it is a part of our Christian vocabulary. We talk about the Word of God and we talk about mission and others things. These phrases are a part of how Christians talk. But do you really believe that this here is the Word of the Lord?

Take time, think about it! What if this really is the Word of God? What if these words really were spoken by the Creator Himself, by the All-mighty God? What if this really is His message to His human creatures, to us?

What would it mean? What if we really can have access to what God has spoken and still speaks to us? He is God, the Creator of everything that exists, He is the greatest mystery of all times.

No one knows how many billions and billions of dollars have been spent trying to hear at least something from other living beings outside of our planet. People are fascinated by the thought alone that we could find someone else out there, in this vast Universe.

Or how many hours per week each of us spends listening or watching or reading what others have said? Politicians, celebrities, journalists. We are almost chained to the media thirsting to hear something important.

And here we have the Lord of all creation, the eternal God Himself speaking to us, to each of you, in your own language, and how much interest do we show? How much time do we spend listening to Him?

Here it is, mind blowing an opportunity to hear from our Maker, to hear from our God who became one of us, so that He could converse with us is a way we can understand Him.

He tells you who He is, who we are, why we are here, what is wrong with us, what is His solution to our problems. We have access to the Creator's wisdom, we can know about His loving and gracious heart towards us, and He commands and invites us to listen to Him.

He does even more, for your convenience He even calls and trains and sends people, your pastors, to help you to understand His message. He does all of this so that only you could listen to Him, so that only He could converse with you.

And how much time do we spend in this conversation? How much effort do we put in to understand His message? As I said in the beginning, these are hard questions, but as people who call themselves Christians, we need to ask them.

Do we really live up to our name? Or do we neglect and despise this wonderful gift – the Word of God? The joyful thing is, we can always repent, and ask for God's help and try to do better, and the Holy Spirit will gladly help us.

Now, we need to look at the second part of our today's topic, that is – why do we have this Book? Peter says: "You will do well to pay attention [to this Word] as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns."

He is using this vivid image. The Word of God is like a lamp shining in a dark place. This world, our lives is this dark place. Dark, because we are separated from the light of our God.

Dark, because sin has robbed us of the knowledge of true God, and of knowledge of what we as human beings are, and for what kind of life we are created.

This world is a dark place, for often we are in situations where we don't know what is the right thing to do. In situations where there is no hope, and we are helpless. In situations where the whole world seems to be against us.

Peter says, the Word is like a lamp for you. When we come to the Word, when we hear the Word, Jesus speaks to us, and the Word sheds light, and hope, and wisdom and peace in our lives.

We were once in the Mammoth Cave in US, several hundred feet under the ground. Then our guide turned off light. We were in darkness. In total darkness. It was black, think darkness all around us, we couldn't see anything. Not a thing. We were in a cave roughly 50 meters long and 20 meters wide.

Then our guide lightened a match. One match. And the light from this one match extended to the farthest corners of the cave. Suddenly there was this light. From this one small match.

This world is like that cave. Darkness in which we can't see on our own. Our best effort won't help. Darkness is that thick. And often people even don't realize that they live in darkness, for that's all that they have experienced.

They don't know that there is this light available for everyone. We too tend to forget about this wonderful light, the Word of God, instead trusting that we'll find our own way in this darkness. We can't. And we don't have to.

For as soon as you turn to the Word of God, its light begins to shine and enlightens all corners of your life. Suddenly we can see, it shows us wisdom, and hope, and joy, and peace – in the middle of this worlds darkness.

The Word of God doesn't remove us from this world, instead, our God comes to be with us in this world. Remember, when we listen to our God, when we pay attention to His Word, who is at work? That's right – the Holy Spirit is at work.

He Himself comes to you and enlightens you. He is the One who brings you wisdom and understanding, He is the One who brings you hope and joy and peace. He is the One who reveals you God's loving heart. He is the One who dwells with you and give you peace that surpasses all our understanding.

If we truly understood what this Book is, and what it does, we were running to where its light shines. Peter uses this wonderful image, that the Word now is like a lamp until the day dawns.

The day is coming when all people will see the glorious light of our Lord Jesus Christ, but for now He has chosen to shine through His Word. This is where we can find our God, this is where He comes to us.

And we all can experience it; for there is this divine joy when we study God's Word. This is, why we have this Book. Because through the words of this Book the Author Himself comes to you, brings you hope and joy, creates in you a new heart, gives you a new life, and makes you wise.

Think about it, in this Book your God speaks to you, it is unbelievable privilege to listen to Him, and you will do well paying attention to it. And the peace of God, which surpasses all our understanding keep your minds and hearts in Jesus Christ. Amen.