



## GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

### PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

59 CARR ST, WEST PERTH WA 6005 PARISH PRIEST: FATHER EMMANUEL STAMATIOU

MOB: 0419 961 313 EMAIL: [stamatem@iinet.net.au](mailto:stamatem@iinet.net.au)

Please look at our website to find this and other parish resources: [www.evangelismos.com.au](http://www.evangelismos.com.au)

### SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2017

#### “FISHERS OF MEN”

**EPISTLE** The Reading is from St Paul’s Second Letter to the Timothy [3:10-15]

**But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

#### **EXPLANATION:**

The major theme of this Epistle by Paul to his beloved disciple Timothy who was ordained bishop in Ephesus is about following Paul’s teachings (“doctrines”) and overcoming hardship in the ministry. He emphasizes that, ordained ministers should utilize their spiritual gifts in the Church to keep and pass on her living tradition. Through living tradition – the Bible and the ongoing life of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ – the Church remains

essentially as she was at her inception. He encourages Timothy to follow the example of his life ("**follow my manner of life**") which exhibits what Christ taught. **(3:10)** Paul reveals that life in Christ elicits countless persecutions. He explains that, while union with Christ brings love, joy and peace, it also brings the world's hatred and **persecution**. The world hates Christians because they do not know the Father. A person cannot say he loves God but not God's Son, for those who hate Christ also hate the Father; and hatred for Christ is without legitimate cause for He brings God's love and truth to the world. Christ says, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." (John 15:18) "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:20) **(3:11)** The righteous and godly in Christ will suffer persecution. **(3:12)** And "**evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.**" That is, the devil incites divisions among people so that they are deceived. These deceptive miracles and wonders through Satanic power will fool the unrighteous into following Satan. **(3:13)** Having exhorted Timothy with the example of his own steadfastness, Paul now issues a reminder of the depth of Timothy's training, which combined both oral and written instruction (that is, Tradition and the Old Testament Scriptures), which Timothy has been acquainted with from childhood and which "**make him wise for salvation**". **(3:14-15)** The Bible is the living, actual Word of God. When you read the Bible, you are not just reading something which God spoke to others in the dim and distant past. God is speaking to you now. When you read the Scriptures you are actually in contact with God. He is speaking to you as a loving Father. Most books inform and a few reform. The Bible alone informs, reforms and transforms. It informs us about Jesus, the Son of God Whom to know is eternal life. It reforms us for in it we find the ideal and the standard by which we ought to live. It transforms us because in it we are brought face to face with the grace and power of Christ by which all things are made new. "It finds you." This is the power of the Gospel for salvation. It finds you in your wrong doings and convicts you of sin. It finds you in your loneliness and brings you the companionship of God. It finds you in your need and brings the divine answer to the need. Regrettably, we are not giving the Word of God a chance to find us. If only we could hear Him? From childhood we have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make us

wise for our salvation, but we don't take time and effort to study them, to engage in conversation with God. The Bible is God's blueprint for salvation. He wishes to enter into the most intimate possible relationship of love with us. He delivers the proposal to us through His Word. He expects a response. Our eternal destiny depends on our response. His earnest longing for reconciliation, fellowship and union with us is made known in the Scriptures. They are not written to remain unopened. So take the time to read them and discover God!

### **GOSPEL    The Reading is from St Luke [5:1-11]**

**So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, *"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."* But Simon answered and said to Him, *"Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."* And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, *"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"* For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, *"Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."* So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.**

### **EXPLANATION:**

Jesus was preaching throughout Galilee and as the multitude got bigger he asked Simon Peter if He could stand in his boat to address the crowd at the shore of **Lake Gennesaret** (also known as the Sea of Galilee – 13 miles long, 7 miles wide). **(5:1-2)** Peter immediately obeyed Jesus and called Him

“Master” and after the sermon finished Jesus wanted to repay Peter for his kindness and rewarded him with a large catch of fish. Peter kneels and confesses Jesus as “**Lord**”, showing profound awareness both of the divinity of Christ and of his own human sinfulness. **(3:3-6)** The first disciples, partners in fishing, were to become partners also in the work of mission and evangelism in the early church – “**fishers of men**”. **(5:7-11)** The reason why Peter did not catch any fish after toiling all night was because he was too close to the shore. Jesus said, “**Put out into the deep.**” These words are symbolic of the way we live. Too many of us skim the surface of life, we hug the shore. If we want to live, we must launch out into the deep, putting our faith in Christ. Truth is not always on the surface. Truth is deep. God is the inexhaustible depth and ground of all being. To reach Him we must let our nets down into deeper waters. We must penetrate the depths of our heart and seek Him in constant prayer. The Christian is one who is called to move out of the shallows of self-trust and into the depths of total relinquishment of his life to Christ as Lord and Master. Then he will float on the sea of faith, protected from wind and tide by the power of Our Lord. And Jesus tells Peter, “**do not be afraid**”. There are different kinds of fear – fear of facing the pressures of life, fear of death, fear of illnesses, fear of condemnation, etc. It robs life of meaning by keeping us worried and focussed on trivial things which often lead to despair. But fear of God is a healthy fear which is given to us for our protection. Jesus also tells us to fear hypocrisy – that is, “the leaven of the Pharisees” and the loss of God’s friendship. As Christians we accept fear as part of life, because we know that by accepting Jesus as Our Lord, we are no longer controlled by fear but have the power to overcome. God given faith has the power to destroy fear. As long as we keep our faith centred in God, worry and fear cannot remain. “When I am afraid I will trust in Thee.” (Psalms 56:3) Attach your fear with prayer. Fear of the most devastating illness can be healed by prayer, which gives rise to courage in the sufferer. Also “perfect love casts out fear”. (1John 4:8) The more you love God, the more you trust Him and give yourself and your fears to Him. Commit yourselves and your families in to the hands of God and all your fears will disappear.