



The richness of the fathers

Discipleship Class - February 2021



What we're here to talk about

1

The importance of the fathers

2

Which fathers should I be reading?

3

How can they help me in my service?

Why are the fathers important?

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another **the word of knowledge through the same Spirit**, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Why are the fathers important?

- Unites Orthodox Christian understanding of scripture and theology
- Pillar of a universally accepted faith that ascends divisions/factions

“A new book is still on its trial and the amateur is not in a position to judge it. It has to be tested against the great body of Christian thought down the ages, and all its hidden implications (often unsuspected by the author himself) have to be brought to light.” - C.S. Lewis (Introduction to *On the Incarnation*)

Why are the fathers important?

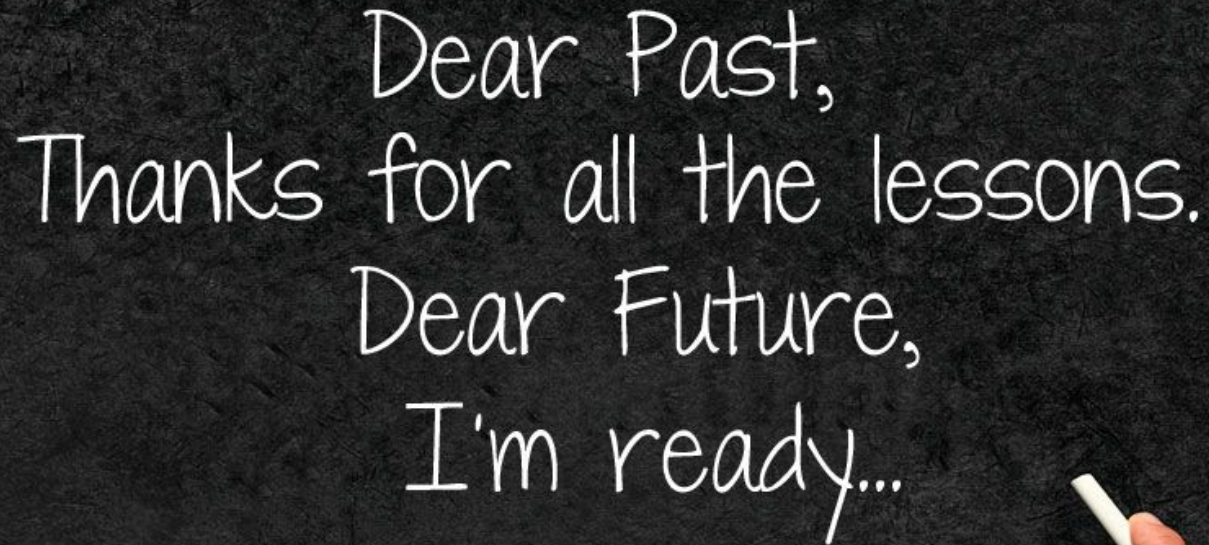
- Challenges confirmation bias or misunderstanding of scripture and of God
- Deepen my knowledge of *who* God is so that I can deepen my relationship with Him

“Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!” - Isaiah 5:21

“Do not be wise in your own eyes...” - Proverbs
3:7

“Do not be wise in your own opinion...” - Romans
12:16

Why are the fathers important?

A hand holding a piece of white chalk is visible in the bottom right corner, writing on a blackboard. The text on the blackboard is written in white chalk and reads:

Dear Past,
Thanks for all the lessons.
Dear Future,
I'm ready...

Why are the fathers important?

“...He feels himself inadequate and thinks he will not understand him. But if he only knew, the great man, just because of his greatness, is much more intelligible than his modern commentator. The simplest student will be able to understand, if not all, yet a very great deal of what Plato said; but hardly anyone can understand some modern books on Platonism. It has always therefore been one of my main endeavours as a teacher to persuade the young that firsthand knowledge is not only more worth acquiring than second-hand knowledge, but is usually much easier and more delightful to acquire.” - C.S. Lewis (Introduction to *On the Incarnation*)

The Fathers and my Service

- The Fathers provide an opportunity to preserve the faith in its purest form
- Stepping into the middle of a conversation
- “Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction.” C.S. Lewis (*Introduction to On the Incarnation*)

Consensus of the Fathers

“The Church believes that ultimately it is guided by the Holy Spirit so that when it reaches a settled consensus and the majority of its members eventually agree about a considered controversial opinion, this represents the guidance of God. ” (*Consensus of the Fathers - The Orthodox Church of America*)

Which Fathers? - Theology and Spirituality

Theology:

- First Clement
- Second Clement
- The Letters of Ignatius
- The Letter of Polycarp to Ignatius
- The Martyrdom of Polycarp
- The Didache
- St. Basil
- St. John Chrysostom
- St. Gregory
- St. Cyril
- St. Athanasius
- List to come!

The Desert Fathers:

- Abba Macarius
- Abba Antony
- Abba Paul
- Abba Moses the Strong
- Abba John the Short
- Abba Pishoy
- Abba Poemen
- Abba Shenouda
- Abba Pachomius
- List to come!

Resources

- <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/>
- <https://www.ccel.org/fathers>
- *The Apostolic Fathers in English* by Michael W. Holmes