

Fourth Sunday of Pentecost – Spiritual Glasses: Seeing Christ Everywhere

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The early Church was plagued with many heretics and heresies, some of the most well-known were Arianism, Nestorianism, and Gnosticism. Arianism taught that Christ was not begotten of God the Father, but was created out of nothing, which Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses preach and believe. Nestorianism taught that Mary was the bearer of Jesus, not the bearer of God (not the Theotokos/Աստուածածին), which Christian Scientists still preach. Gnosticism taught that matter was evil, there were two forces fighting each other: good and evil, and that the truth is revealed only to a few, which the New Age Movement teaches.

Yet another, very strong heresy that existed in the second century was Marcionism. Marcionism was a dualistic belief system, which believed there were two gods: the god of the Old Testament (evil) and the god of the New Testament (good). As a result, since the god of the Old Testament was evil, Marcion rejected the Old Testament. His canon of scripture was comprised of only a revised Gospel of Luke (with all Old Testament references removed) and ten letters of St. Paul. He removed and erased the Old Testament from his scriptures because he felt it was pointless and useless.

Today we know and recognize that the Old Testament is indispensable to our Christian faith and that Christ can be found throughout the Old Testament, in every book. This was Marcion's problem: he could not see Christ in the Old Testament. His vision was blurry, thus he believed something else. All he needed were the correct pair of glasses.

Everyone who wears glasses remembers the moment when their vision began to go and they needed glasses. I was in seventh grade and was taking notes for a test the next day. I went home and studied my notes for the next day's test. When I got to school, I took the test and after about a week, when I received my grade, I saw that I had failed. I asked the teacher why and showed her my notes, to which she showed me the book. I then realized that my eyes had failed me and I believed something that wasn't there.

What glasses did Marcion need in order to see Christ? He needed the cross. The Church Fathers advise the faithful to read the Old Testament through the lens of the cross, that is to

say, we must read the Old testament knowing the end of the story: Christ's crucifixion, burial and triumphant resurrection. When we read the Old Testament with the cross in mind, things become clear and Christ becomes visible.

Yet, this also means that we must look at our everyday lives differently. Our lives are not so black and white, obvious or even mundane. If we look at our lives thinking like that, we end up acting like Marcion, believing things that are not true because we do not see clearly.

Amen.