

Dear All,

The Study Service topic for Sunday at 7pm is **"LENTEN JOY: the Eastern Orthodox Lent.** While Eastern & Western Churches share many of the traditional Lenten practises, such as fasting, self-discipline, prayer & self examination, the Orthodox church lays less stress on these as such & much more on looking forward to the resurrection & its joy.

Lent should certainly be a time of solemn reflection and of remembering all that Jesus suffered. But if we take seriously that he died in our place (precisely that we might not have to in the way that he did), to take our sin and death on himself and rise in order to give us his new life, then we would seem to be denying that by behaving as if we should copy his steps.

How do we hold the "bittersweet" balance between the Jesus' road of suffering to the cross with the joy to come for which he underwent it? Does the cross we all have to take up (Mk 8.34) refer to suffering we have to bear, or something much more radical, & then only in the light of the resurrection?

The concept of "Lenten Joy" should help us to see that while Lent is an all important time of solemn reflection on Jesus' suffering, his passion was something he suffered for us, once and for all, which we can never reduplicate. It reminds us what earning our salvation cost Jesus, but our focus should be firmly on the resurrection joy to which he looked forward (Heb 12.2).

Readings:

Mark 8.27-38

Mark 9.9-10, 30-32 & 10.32-34

Mark 14.43-49 & 16.1-8

7-8.30 pm by Zoom meet - details on request (see Greyfriars Kirk website for more information & some edited transcripts
Best wishes - Bob