

Help! I'm Bored in Church



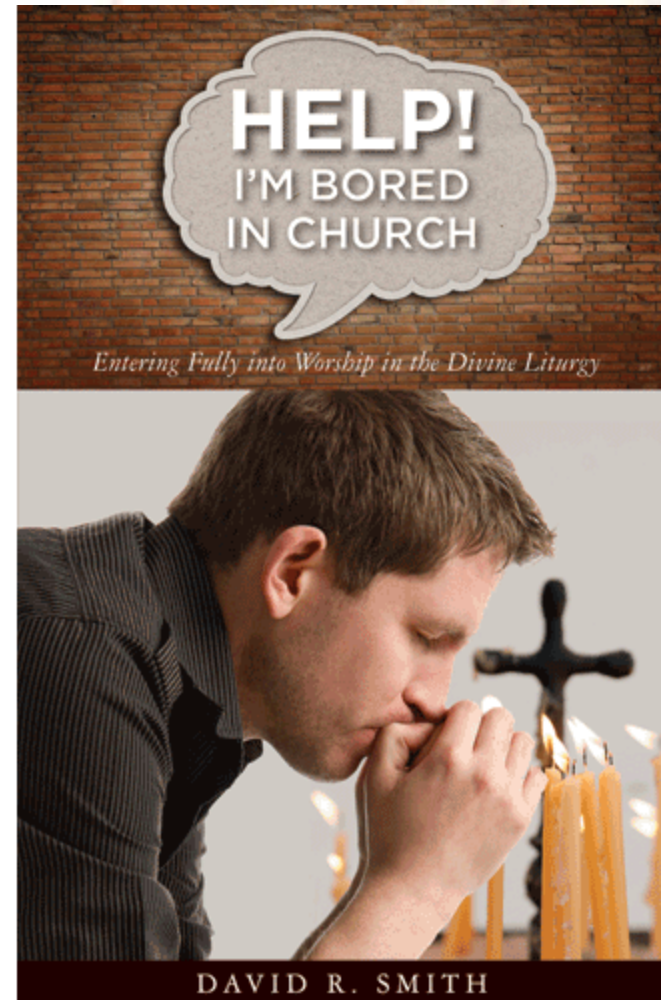
How to Stay Entertained in Church

- † Try to actually listen. You might find out that sometimes it can actually be interesting.
- † Sing or hum in your head.
- † If you're a girl, do your hair.
- † Think. Reflect on your problems, think about who to tell or how to solve it.
- † Bug your siblings: poke them or something.
- † Text. Keep your phone silent or on vibrate. And make sure your parents are okay with it or do it really quietly.
- † Go to the bathroom and hang there for a while.

Help! I'm Bored in Church

† *Church is...*

† *“Of course it’s boring. Finally you’re admitting it.’ If even priests admit that church is boring, then that settles it. We can all stay home and sleep in on Sundays.*



Simon Dewy

Help! I'm Bored in Church

- † *“Or perhaps you think it’s irreverent to say, ‘Church is boring.’ You’re thinking, ‘It’s not right for you to speak about the Divine Liturgy like that. If the priest says church is boring, he shouldn’t be a priest.’”*
- † *“Or it’s more likely that you’re in the middle. Church seems boring at times, yes. But there’s something good about church as well, and so saying ‘church is boring’ makes you a little uncomfortable...”*

Boredom: an Emotion

- † Shopping...
- † Watching sports on TV...
- † Not a characteristics of the activity,
it's a characteristic of the person
- † Emotion!
- † Attending a board meeting
 - ⊕ *Very exciting at the beginning; boring later? You lost interest*



Church Should be

Different

† Not the same as “outside”

⊕ *Some churches: bands, music, videos, ...*

† Worship should be different from other aspects of life

† Provides an atmosphere of calmness – to worship

⊕ *Change of mind: look to God – “look towards the east!”*

⊕ *God is different, His encounter must be “different”*



Who's the Audience?

- † *Liturgy is the same... boring!*
- † *“Does God need to be reminded that He is inexpressible? Or eternally the same? Obviously not. God does not need to be reminded of anything—we do! While you are praying any of the words of the Liturgy—and always remember, the words of the Liturgy are indeed prayers—allow them to teach you about the faith. Allow them to fill you with the One we pray to and teach you why we pray. Allow them to teach you what we believe.”*

It's Too Long!

† Liturgy is long on purpose

- ⊕ *How long does it take for us to change?*
- ⊕ *Few people can just walk off the street, sit in a pew, and after five minutes be in a spiritual mood*
- ⊕ *It usually takes time to warm up, to put ourselves in the "zone" of spirituality.*
- ⊕ *Our prayer services are built to lead us away from the secular life and into the spiritual life*
- ⊕ *Lead us to a point where we can commune with God.*
- ⊕ *Build-up to a climax: Eucharist, Theotokia*



It's Too Long!

† *“You can’t make the Divine Liturgy any shorter, but you can accomplish something within yourself that makes the time you spend in the Liturgy an experience of spiritual delight. Useful. Necessary. Something you look forward to.”*

† **A stubborn person who is cold:**

⊕ *‘I’m cold but I don’t care enough about myself to put on a coat. I’ll just suffer and be unhappy.*

⊕ *“Discover the coat you need to put on, and then—put it on! I’ll give you the answer which has worked for me: The coat consists of prayer and watchfulness...”*



Simon Dewey

Why Not Stop Going?



† Atonement! Oneness with God!

⊕ *Where can we get it?*

⊕ *Sin is the barrier between us and God – we need atonement*

† Church's “boring” message: repentance, confession, prayer,...

⊕ *Car without gas: Talk about all the nice features, but still not going anywhere*

⊕ *Stop talking about the gas (repentance)!*

⊕ *If we stop paying attention to our sins, they don't go away.*

⊕ *We must go to the gas station to fix the problem*

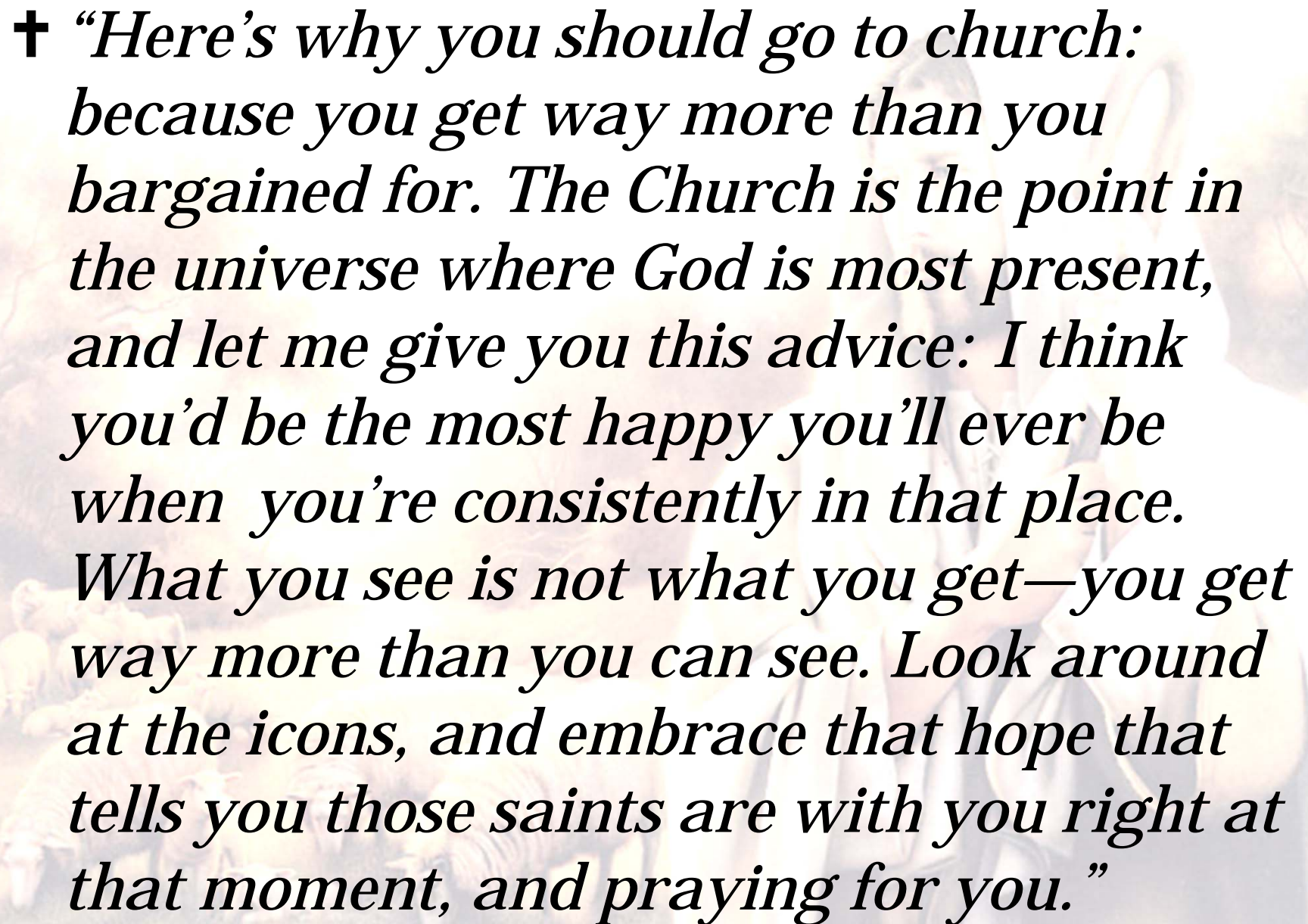
Simon Drwy

Why Not Stop Going?



† The Divine Liturgy

- ✦ *There's no other place on Earth where we can enter into the Divine Palace and be with the King!*
- ✦ *A living event- Getting Oneness (Communion) with God*
- ✦ *“The most spectacular miracle in human history takes place every Sunday in your church—the miracle of the bread becoming the Body and the wine becoming the Blood of God. Every word of the Divine Liturgy prepares for that miracle, celebrates it, points to it, makes it possible, and describes it. It's a beautiful and awesome thing. If you don't know what's going on, you're missing something you definitely shouldn't be missing.”*



† *“Here’s why you should go to church: because you get way more than you bargained for. The Church is the point in the universe where God is most present, and let me give you this advice: I think you’d be the most happy you’ll ever be when you’re consistently in that place. What you see is not what you get—you get way more than you can see. Look around at the icons, and embrace that hope that tells you those saints are with you right at that moment, and praying for you.”*

Dog Dragging a Dead Deer

† We come to church with the dead deer,
and we should leave it outside

⊕ *But we keep going back to mess with it*

† The Holy Spirit tells us, leave the deer and
focus on the glorious presence of God!

⊕ *“Look towards the East”... “Lift up your hearts!”*

⊕ *No, we want to play with the dead deer!*

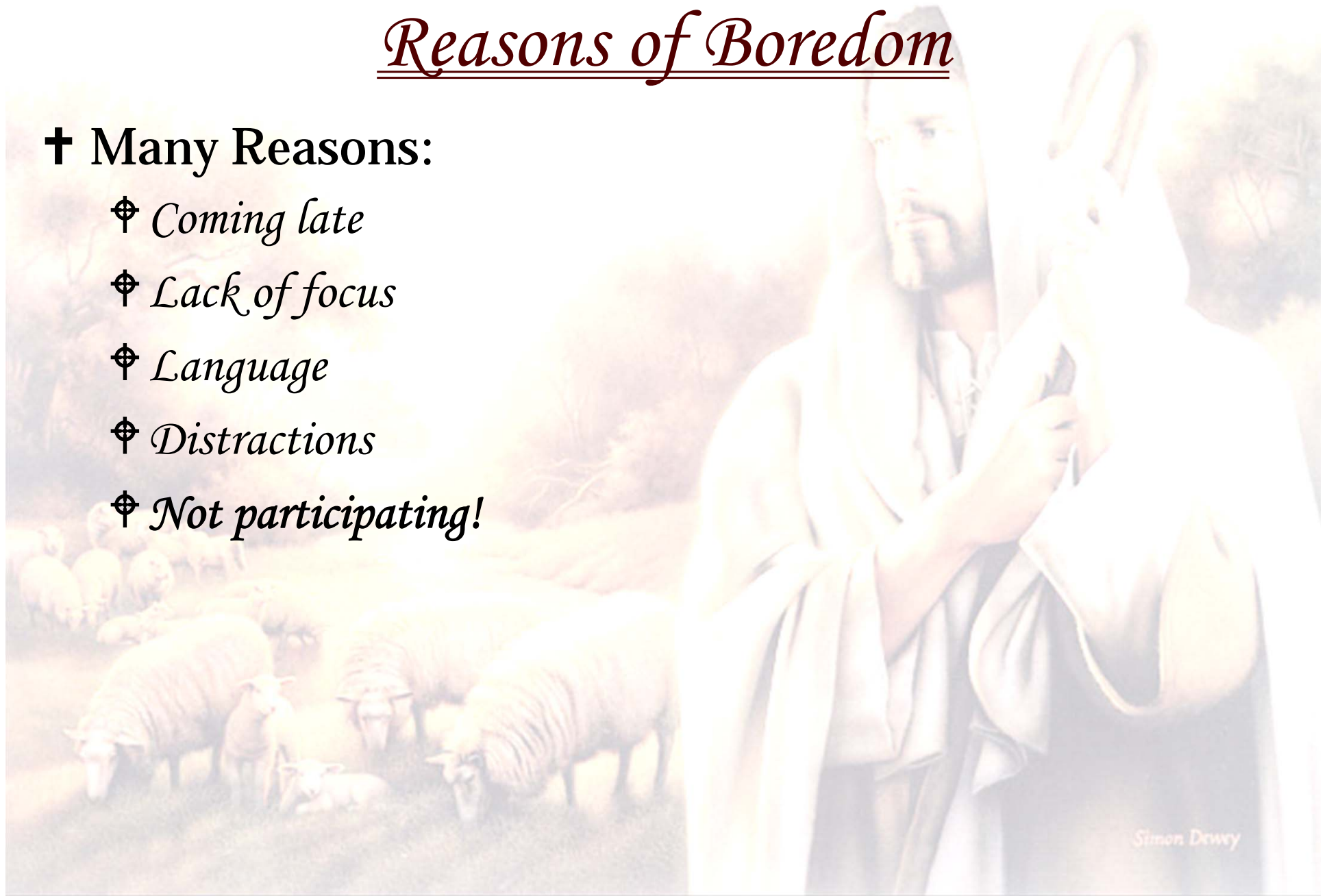
⊕ *Bored because we can't focus on the activities in the
church*

“This is how I want you to think about your relationship to God—like a marriage. A perfect marriage—except that you commit adultery nearly every day. But here’s the good news: God will always welcome you back. He will always run out to the car to hug you and walk with you back into your home. But you have to go home... Picture [the front door of your church] in your mind. I never want you to walk through that door again without saying something to God about how you have cheated on Him since last time you were there. The door of your church, from now on, is the gateway of repentance for you. Only in this way will you understand why you’re there in that building.”

Reasons of Boredom

† Many Reasons:

- ⊕ *Coming late*
- ⊕ *Lack of focus*
- ⊕ *Language*
- ⊕ *Distractions*
- ⊕ *Not participating!*



Time

† Time will be irrelevant if we are participating

⊕ *Asomen vs. Enthoten Ze*

⊕ *Bright Saturday: Readings vs Praises (Agios Athantos...)*

† *“When your time in church is spent in repentance and communion with God, your heart will be overflowing with joy when you walk out.”*



“Liturgy”

† “Work of the people”

⊕ *All must be involved in the work*

⊕ *People called out for a certain purpose, separated from everyone else, to offer everything of themselves to God.*

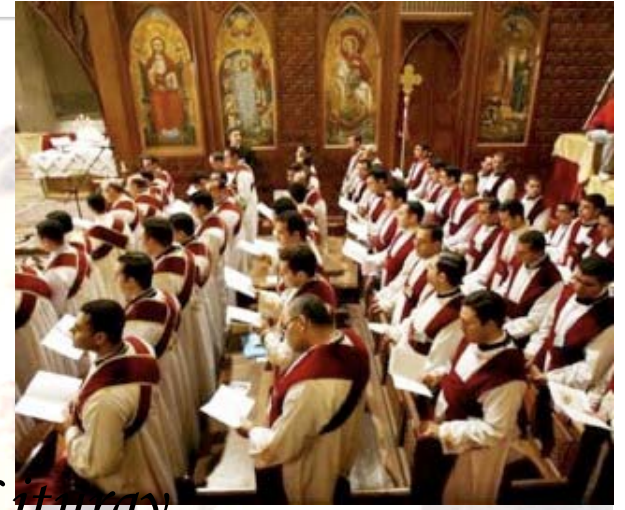
x *Come late, sit in pew, watch the “show”, yawn, ...*

⊕ *The more we learn about the Divine Liturgy, the more we participate, the more we give of ourselves. The less we know about it, the more we become spectators*

⊕ *“Find a liturgy book and follow along. Get to know the parts of the Divine Liturgy, what each means and how each part contributes to the whole...”*



Liturgy



† Our portion of the “work”

- ⊕ *Being fully present during the Divine Liturgy,*
- ⊕ *adding our voices to the singing,*
- ⊕ *praying for those we know (and those we don't), etc.,*

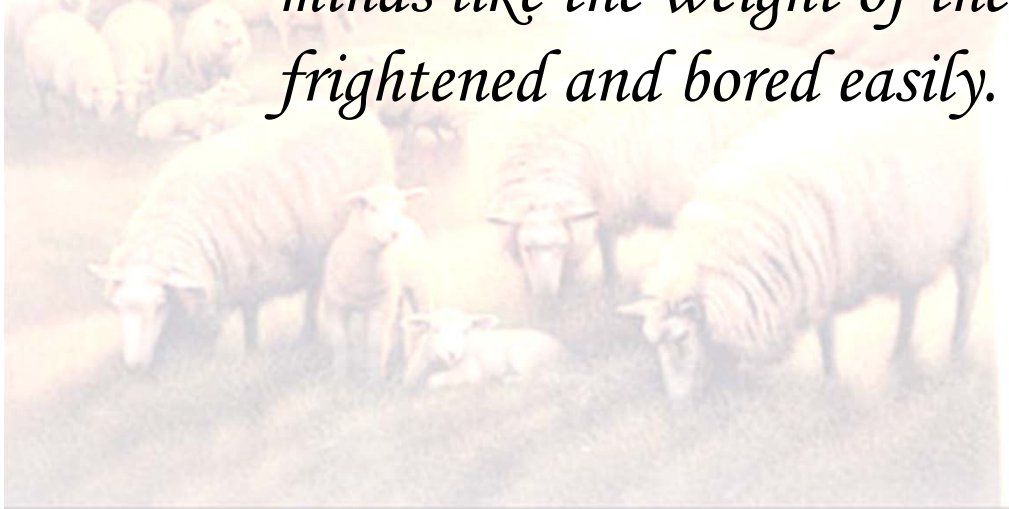
† What's the most important thing for us to do in the Divine Liturgy?

- ⊕ *We really only have one task: to worship God.*
- ⊕ *watchfulness... is not an option, it's a necessity: 'What I say to you I say to all: Watch!'" (Mark 13:37)*

“Lift Up Your Hearts”

† “Where are your hearts”

- ⊕ *Where is your mind when your body's in church?*
- ⊕ *The one thing that we need most in our relationship with God, so that we can best worship Him, is silence.*
- ⊕ *“Silence frees us from the weight of the world, but our minds like the weight of the world. Our minds get frightened and bored easily.”*



Is Silence a Solution?

† Satan will do whatever he can to stop our prayers

⊕ *His best weapon is distraction.*

⊕ *Story: 3 demons*

† Can he really swing something shiny in front of your face and get you to forget the love and mercy of God?

† *Silence can stop this from happening.*



The Screwtape Letters

A few weeks ago you had to tempt him to unreality and inattention in his prayers: but now you will find him opening his arms to you and almost begging you to distract his purpose and benumb his heart.

As this condition becomes more fully established... you will find that anything or nothing is sufficient to attract his wandering attention. You no longer need a good book, which he really likes, to keep him from his prayers or his work or his sleep; a column of advertisements in yesterday's paper will do. You can make him waste his time not only in conversation he enjoys with people whom he likes, but in conversations with those he cares nothing about on subjects that bore him. You can make him do nothing at all for long periods

Helping Your Kids Enjoy the Liturgy

- † *Sit towards the front where it is easier for them to see and hear what is going on. They tire of looking at the backs of heads.*
- † *Quietly explain the prayers and rites.*
- † *Whisper the sermon to them in words they can understand.*
 - ⊕ *Ask them to take notes of what they understood*
- † *Sing the hymns, pray and voice the responses; children learn the liturgy by watching you!*