

## Holy Ascension Orthodox Christian Mission

Whereas the denominations teach that man, (Adam), was made perfect, the Orthodox Church has always taught that man has always had in him the potential to strive for perfection.

God needs to become man. He needed to be incarnate in Jesus Christ who is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God in the flesh. God needed to become man because of His love for His creation—a love which we cannot even begin to fathom, because our love pales in comparison with God's love. And He loves us and knows us infinitely more than we know and have love for ourselves, for others and for God Himself. So God needed to become man to show us the way back to Him and His Kingdom.

Jesus, as the first deified human being, shows people the way. Because of His incarnation, people are now able to strive for this enlightened state by following Him.



**God became one of us.  
The Incarnation of Christ**

**Holy Ascension  
Orthodox Christian Mission**

**What is the  
Meaning of Life?  
To be closer to  
God by becoming  
more like him.**



***You shall be perfect, even  
as your Father Who is in  
the heavens is perfect.  
Matthew 5: 48***

**Holy Ascension  
Orthodox Christian Mission**

## The Orthodox Doctrine of Theosis

Orthodox Christians believe that God created man to become 'gods' (god-like) by grace. It is impossible to become god by nature. The Orthodox Christian belief of Theosis or Deification is to be truly united to God by His grace as we become more and more like Him and are united ever closer to Him through our Orthodox Christian way of life in the Church.

Orthodox Christian pastoral teaching is that of deification and not of man's moral perfection, without God's grace, according to Western standards.

In other words, it's not about, "I am good, I don't hurt anyone." Or "As long as we do good..." That's not enough. Secularism teaches this. Buddhism expounds this. Many of the world's major religions and philosophies subscribe to such a precept and tenet.

If the purpose of our life was merely to become morally better, there would be no need for Christ's coming into the world.

There would be no need to raise the issue of the Incarnation, the Cross, the Death, the Baptism, the Resurrection, the Ascension of Christ - everything we as Orthodox Christians believe in - since the human race could be taught to improve itself morally, become your own saviour, as taught by people like Deepak Chopra, by philosophers and teachers or talk show hosts like Oprah and Dr Phil.

How do we know what is good? From the world? No. Only God is good. Only God is love. We receive goodness, kindness, love, mercy...etc, only from God. We of ourselves do not have these attributes of our own. So the answer is Theosis.

Through Theosis we better ourselves, become better people, learn what is good, how to love, how to be merciful and compassionate...etc.

It's about becoming 'gods' (god-like) by grace. Theosis. Deification. Our life's purpose is to become 'gods' by grace. But many people are ignorant about this. Both within the Orthodox Church and those outside of the Church. They believe that our life's purpose is, at best, merely our moral improvement, our becoming better people.

However, according to the Orthodox Church, this is not our life's purpose. We must not only better ourselves and become more moral, more just, more chaste, more careful. Yes, all this must happen, but it is not the most important purpose. It is not the final purpose, for which our Maker created us.

What is that purpose? Deification: to unite us with God, not externally or sentimentally, but truly.

Our purpose is to have a real, true, personal union with our Creator, not an external, add-on, moral relationship with Him.

Can we unite with God? Yes. How? It becomes possible and achievable through God's incarnation. He became one of us and so now we can relate to Him and become more like Him as well.

Can we be in communion with God? Yes. How? By participating in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. A life of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. By attending the Divine Services and listening to how God wants us to live as Orthodox Christians. By receiving the sacraments, we receive power to put God's commandments into practice in our daily lives.

Can we become 'gods' (god-like) by grace? Yes. How? When we receive the sacraments, we are uniting ourselves in the most intimate way with God, by literally eating His body and drinking His blood. He becomes flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood.

We also become 'gods' by grace when God pours out His abundant grace, blessings and mercies upon us in myriad other ways when we live close to Him in the Church and follow His commandments.

God would have become man regardless of Adam's Fall. Even if Adam had not sinned, God would have taken flesh and become one of us, so that just as He became one of us, we are able to become more like Him. To realise our potential and perfect our lost image in Him.