



# The Footsteps of Paul

November 16

## The Footsteps of Paul: Meteora

A Bible Study at St. John Lutheran Church

### Meteora

Meteora is located near the town of Kalabaka in central Greece.

Six 14<sup>th</sup> Century Greek Orthodox Monasteries (originally 24).

St. Stephen's is the only Nunnery.

The name means *lofty* or *elevated*.

We visited the Monastery of Great Meteoron, founded by Athanasius the Meteorite in 1356.

*James Bond: For Your Eyes Only* filmed on location.



Have you ever visited a monastery?

Is it okay to take vows for a holy life?

**Numbers 6:2-3** Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink.

### 1 Corinthians 7:24-32

Does following Christ mean we must leave our spouse, career, or station in life?

What conditions shape Paul's comments?

Is this passage celebrating celibate monasticism as the highest way of life?

**1 Corinthians 7:38** So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

What kind of urgency does Paul suggest?

**1 Timothy 4:4-5** For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

## John 17:14-18

What does the world think about Jesus? About His followers?

How does this play out practically? What brings about holiness of life?

**Psalm 5:3-4** O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch. For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.

**Psalm 141:2** Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!

## 1 Peter 2:9-12

What identity does Peter suggest for all followers of Christ?

From what should Christians abstain? Is the Christian life only about abstaining from evil?

What can we learn from the monastic life?

**Titus 1:7-8** For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

“At one time they were schools of theology and other branches of learning, producing pastors and bishops for the benefit of the Church. Now it is another thing. It is needless to go over what everyone knows. Before, they came together for the sake of learning, now they claim that monasticism is a lifestyle instituted to merit grace and righteousness. They even preach that it is a state of perfection!” – *The Augsburg Confession*

“Since monastic vows directly conflict with the first chief article, they must be absolutely abolished. It is about them that Christ says, “Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray” (Matthew 24:5, 23–24). He who makes a vow to live as a monk believes that he will enter upon a way of life holier than ordinary Christians lead. He wants to earn heaven by his own works, not only for himself, but also for others. This is to deny Christ. They also boast from their St. Thomas Aquinas that a monastic vow is equal to Baptism. This is blasphemy.” – *The Smalcald Articles*