

FORERUNNERS — OF THE — FAITH



The Disciples of the Apostles:

Clement, Polycarp, and the Early Church Fathers

July 1, 2026



The Disciples of the Apostles

I. In the Footsteps of the Apostles (70 – 155 AD)

1. Clement of Rome
2. Ignatius of Antioch
3. Polycarp of Smyrna
4. The author of Didache
5. The author of The Letter to Diognetus
6. The author of the Epistle of Barnabas
7. The author of Shepherd of Hermes
8. Papias of Hierapolis

Locations of the Early Church Fathers

1st – 2nd Centuries AD





CLEMENT OF ROME

The Disciples of the Apostles

I. In the Footsteps of the Apostles (70 – 155 AD)

II. Clement of Rome (30 – 100 AD)

- Clement pastored the church in **ROME** from around **90-100**.

The Disciples of the Apostles

“And so we, having been called through His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified through ourselves or through our own wisdom or understanding or piety or works that we have done in holiness of heart, but through faith, by which the Almighty God has justified all who have existed from the beginning; to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Clement, *First Clement*, 32:4.

The Disciples of the Apostles

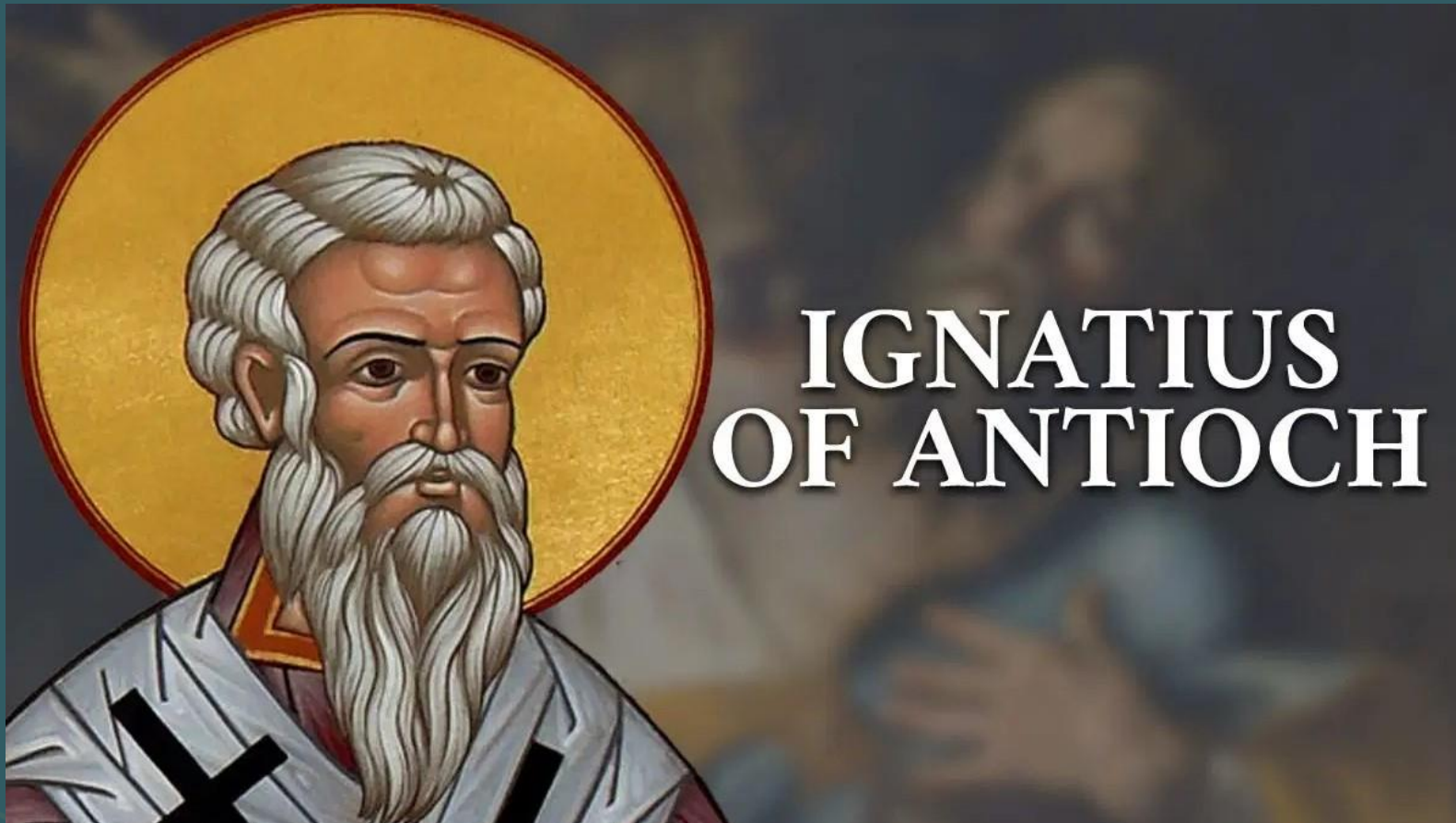
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Lessons:

- ✓ Pursue and Maintain Unity in the Church (Eph. 4:1-3; John 17:20-23)
- ✓ We are justified by Faith apart from Works (Rom. 3:20-28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9)



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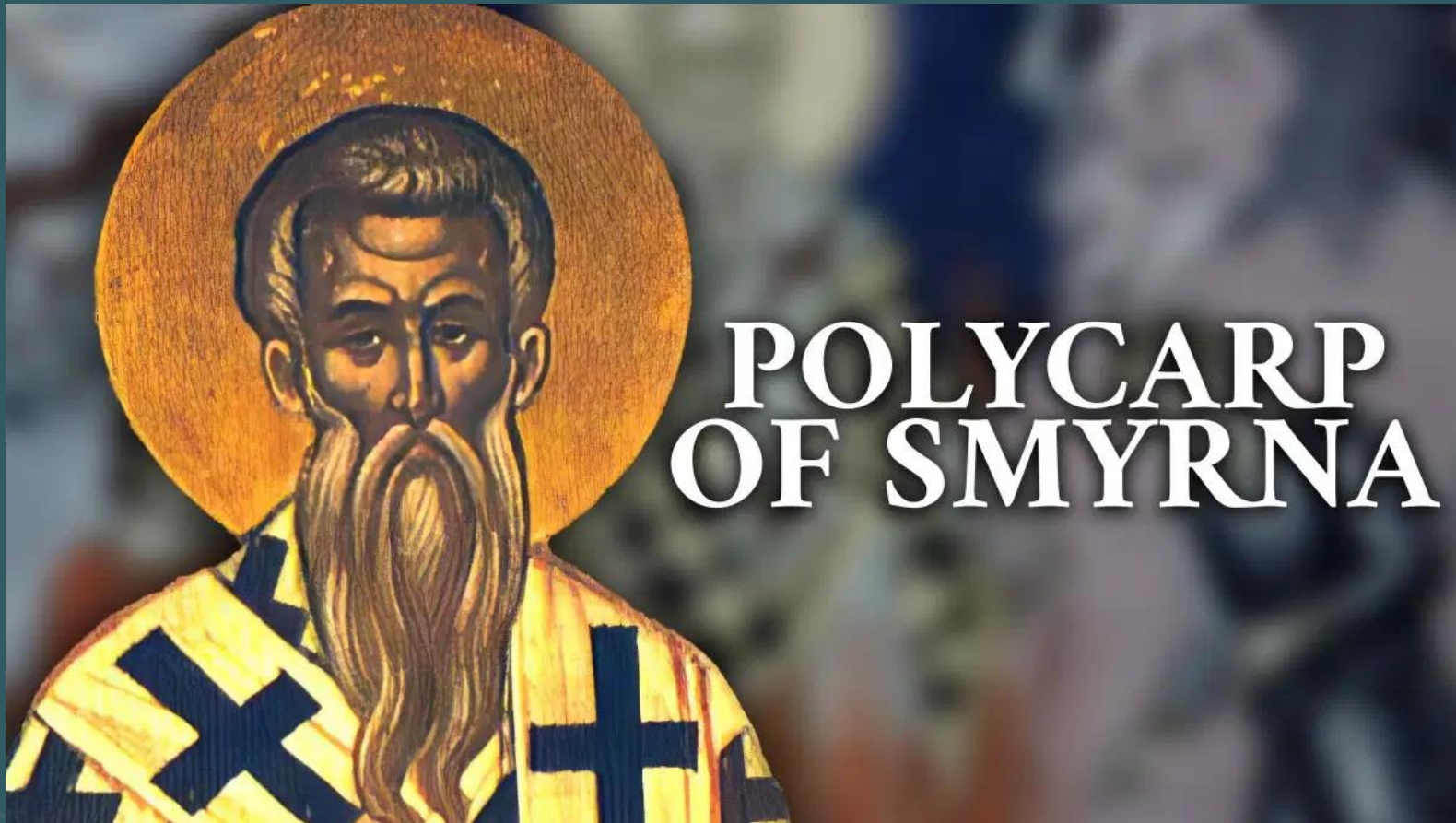
I. In the Footsteps of the Apostles (70 – 155 AD)

II. Clement of Rome (30 – 100 AD)

III. Ignatius of Antioch (35/50 – 117 AD)

- A fifth century tradition suggests that **PETER** gave instructions for Ignatius to be appointed as the pastor of the Antiochene Church.
 - Highlights that Christians gather for worship on Sunday, which is the Lord's Day.
 - An advocate of each local church / congregation having only one 'bishop' or lead pastor.
- Ignatius was martyred in **ROME** around the year 117 AD.





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I. In the Footsteps of the Apostles (70 – 155 AD)

II. Clement of Rome (30 – 100 AD)

III. Ignatius of Antioch (35/50 – 117 AD)

IV. Polycarp of Smyrna (69 – 155 AD)

- He was a disciple of the apostle **JOHN**.

The Disciples of the Apostles

Convictions of Polycarp

- ✓ Jesus is both King and Judge
- ✓ We must submit to God and His Word
- ✓ The believer's hope in Jesus Christ is greater than persecution
- ✓ Because our hope is sure, we are able to stand firm in the faith and focus on loving others

“Eighty and six years have I
served Him, and He never did
me any injury. How then could
I blaspheme my King and
Savior?”



Cultivating Convictions

- ✓ Saturate Your Mind with the Words of Christ (Col. 3:16)
- ✓ Meditate Often on Christ's Person and Work (Heb. 12:1-2)
- ✓ Practice Costly Obedience in Ordinary Life



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- V. The author of Didache (late 1st Century / Early 2nd Century)

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V. The author of Didache (late 1st Century / Early 2nd Century)

- The Didache (meaning the Teaching) was an early manual of **CHRISTIAN ETHICS**.

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V. The author of Didache (late 1st Century / Early 2nd Century)

VI. Epistle to Diognetus (Mid to Late 2nd Century)

- In Christ, sinners can find both **FORGIVENESS FOR SIN** and **ETERNAL LIFE**.

“But when our wickedness had reached its height, and it had been clearly shown that its reward, punishment and death, was impending over us; and when the time had come which God had before appointed for manifesting His own kindness and power, how the one love of God, through exceeding regard for men, did not regard us with hatred, nor thrust us away, nor remember our iniquity against us, but showed great long-suffering, and bore with us, He Himself took on Him the burden of our iniquities, He gave His own Son as a ransom for us, the holy One for transgressors, the blameless One for the wicked, the righteous One for the unrighteous, the incorruptible One for the corruptible, the immortal One for them that are mortal. For what other thing was capable of covering our sins than His righteousness? By what other one was it possible that we, the wicked and ungodly, could be justified, than by the only Son of God? O sweet exchange! O unsearchable operation! O benefits surpassing all expectation! That the wickedness of many should be hid in a single righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors!”

Epistle to Diognetus, 9.2–6. Trans. from *ANF* 1:28.

The Disciples of the Apostles

VII. Final Thoughts (and lessons)

- ✓ They Sought to Live According to the Word of God
- ✓ They Sought to Preserve the truth of the Gospel
- ✓ They Sought to Demonstrate their Faithfulness even to the point of death

Small Group

