

free toil is for you to believe in Christ with your heart and to confess your Saviour with your mouth”.

### **The cost of boldness**

This faith and saving confession is based on mainly two historical events: on the Incarnation of the Word and his Resurrection. These are “mysteries of shouting, which were performed in the quietness of God” (Saint Ignatius the Godbearer). We believe and confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord of glory, the Yahweh of the Old Testament, and that He defeated death for us with His resurrection from the dead. “Concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged”, Paul will say, defending himself at the Sanhedrin of the Jews, giving a chief example that the “complete salvation” is not only an unglorious faith, but it has, according to Gregory the Theologian, also a costly addition: “the boldness of confession”.

And this however often “expensive” boldness is a gift of God or rather a reward of God to all those martyrs, who – like the preeminent Apostle – “were strengthened in faith to give glory to God” (Romans 4:20).

Archim. B. L.

**SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2019 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW ,**

John and Symeon the Fool for Christ , Parthenios, Bishop of Arta

**-tone OF THE WEEK :** *Fourth Tone*

**EOthinON :** *Fifth Orthros Gospel*

**Epistle Reading:** *St. Paul's Letter to Romans 10; 1-10*

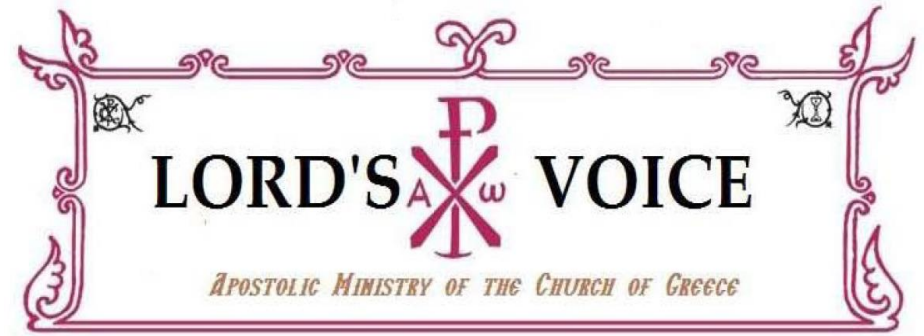
**GOSPEL Reading:** *Matthew 8:28-34*

**NEXT, SUNDAY, JULY 28, 2019 6<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF**

**MATTHEW, Prochoros, Nicanor, Timon, & Parmenas the Apostles of the 70 , Irene the Righteous of Chrysovalantou Our Righteous Father Paul of Xeropotamou**

**Epistle Reading:** *St. Paul's Letter to Romans 12; 61-24*

**GOSPEL Reading:** *Matthew 9:1-8*



**67<sup>TH</sup> YEAR JULY 21 2019 PAMPHLET #29 (3451)**

### **DON'T BELIEVE IN YOUR WAY**

Very often to the exhortation that one enlist in the sacramental life of the Church, the answer is: “I believe in my way”. This is a symptom throughout time of a sick autonomy and self sufficiency, that the Apostle Paul calls «self imposed religion» each one «cuts and sows to his measures» the word of God and the tradition of the Church, presenting a facade of wisdom, humble-mindedness and asceticism, but in essence serving the “satiation of the flesh” Col. 2:23), in other words, the satisfaction of his egotistical train of thought.

### **A deception on account of loving to rule**

In today’s Epistle Reading, Paul writing to the Romans, expresses his deep pain, seeing his fellow compatriot Jews, being in danger of losing their salvation, on account of this fatal sickness, “self imposed religion”. Its symptoms show in their persistence to “set up their own justice”, in other words their own viewpoint about the way of justification and salvation.

The Apostle expressed how great his longing is for the salvation of his fellow compatriots, in the previous chapter of the same Epistle in a moving way: “I would wish, I myself to be separated from Christ (and thus to lose my own salvation) for the sake of my brother Jews (so long as they would be saved)”. Of course, he

*THE GOSPEL ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO ROMANS 10: 1-10*

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified. Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

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does not feel them as only his brethren but also "his children", as the sacred Chrysostom denotes to us, reminding us that for them also he underwent "birth pains" much more dreadful than the natural birth pains. Because "there, on the one hand, is the pain of the flesh", here however the paternal "birth pains tear the power itself of the soul". So that you can learn if these birth pains are worse, I ask you: who ever, for the sake of his children, wished not only to forbear gehenna but also to be anathema from Christ?" In today's passage, the Apostle Paul repeats his heart's fervent desire and his intense prayer for their salvation. The Jews had literally gotten stuck in the deluded henceforth-after the coming of the Messiah – perception that salvation is achieved only with the keeping of the regulations of the Mosaic law. He also literally had a dreadful time, the former Saul to be unhooked from this delusion, since his waking encounter with the Messiah was

needed on his journey to Damascus. And having felt how difficult this waking up is, he is trying here to justify them, saying that they have "the zeal of God but not with knowledge". Immediately afterwards however, he will stigmatize their sick strong mindedness and it's tragic consequence, which is the rejection of salvation in Christ on their part. And these things, the apostle says with pain, in order to show, according to the sacred Chrysostom, that "not out of ignorance but out of argumentativeness and loving to rule rather, they were deceived."

**"From grace, salvation is not from works"**

An unbiased study and correct implementation of the Mosaic law ought to have led them to the saving confession that "Christ is the end of the law". And that He henceforth, is the only one who is able to save "every believer", and not the - "essentially untenable" – keeping of all the legal regulations. Their egotism and loving to rule, blinded them so much, that - as one interpreter says - they neither understood nor kept it, what the law wanted (their being led to Christ). And not only this, but they presented as the aim of the law an excessive and unachievable thing: the mechanical keeping of the plethora of the legal regulations".

Salvation in Christ, the Golden-tongued one will interpret, "totally comes from the grace from above. Not from the works of men but from faith in Christ. Our salvation is a gift of God." The Apostle, trying to give us to understand what "free salvation" means, adopts to his purpose, certain words of the God-seer Moses from Deuteronomy, where the Prophet also tries to tell us that the saving command of God "is neither excessive nor far from us" (Deut. 30:11) "God is not asking you", the Apostle says, unachievable things, for you to be saved. No one told you to ascend to heaven in order to bring Christ down, nor to descend to hades in order to resurrect Him. These highest Mysteries of kenotic love and sacrifice were performed by our Savior Christ. Now henceforth, your salvation is very near you. It is near your mouth and your heart. Your participation alone, your uniquely