

The virtue which brings man near God and he always feels his insufficiency and his poverty is humility. The humble person draws the rich divine mercy and leaves room in his heart for his gifts to blossom, aiming at the benefit of other people and the glory of God. Furthermore in the Divine Liturgy we confess and certify together: "that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from you the Father of lights. And to You do we send forth glory and thanksgiving and worship..."

Humility lifts man so high, it draws him so near to God, that he truly realizes that God is able to do everything except one thing: to force him to follow Him. Then he would cease being God.

Anthony the Great would often say that hell is only for himself and for no other person on the earth. Saying this, that's what he meant, that since no other person upon the earth is for hell, hell cannot comprise a topic of speech or sermon (Paul Evdokimov). He felt so intensely insufficient, completely contrary to the self sufficient youth of today's Gospel, comprising a pointer for us Christians also of the latter times, for us to take the matter of our salvation seriously.

Archim. E. T.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 2014 12th Sunday of Matthew The Placing of the Honorable Sash of the Most Holy Theotokos, Cyprian the Hieromartyr & Bishop of Carthage, Gennadius Scholarus, Patriarch of Constantinople.

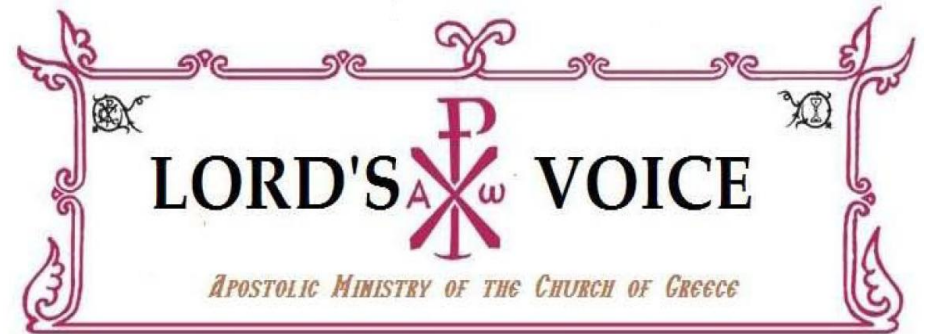
TONE OF THE WEEK: Tone Third **Eothinon** First Eothinon

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 9:1-7, **GOSPEL** Matthew 9:16-26

NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2014 Sunday before Holy Cross, The Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, Sozon the Martyr, Kassiani the Hymnographer, Euodos and Onesiphoros, Apostles of the 70, John the Wonderworker of Novgorod.

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18,

GOSPEL John 3:13-17



62nd Year

AUGUST 31, 2014

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THE REAL WEALTH

In today's gospel reading, beloved brethren, a rich youth approached Christ, and furthermore on his knees he asked Him what good thing he must do in order to gain eternal life. Christ told him one simple thing: to keep the commandments. The rich young man answered Him very joyously, probably with some self sufficiency, that from his tender age even, he's keeping all the commandments. He asks Christ truly wondering: what do I yet lack? Christ told him that only one thing remained to him in order for him to excel in virtue: to distribute his wealth to the poor and to follow Him. Then the rich youth left very sad, because he truly had much money, which he didn't want to depart from. Christ clearly clarifies that it is very difficult for rich people to enter the kingdom of God. The disciples with much wonder and worry asked Him who is able to be saved, since matters are thus? He gave them an answer full of hope: that which is unachievable for people, is able to be achieved by God.

The deception of self sufficiency

The matter of self sufficiency is a dreadfully great problem in the spiritual life. The rich youth of today's Gospel, truly believes

12th Sunday of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew 19:16-26

At that time, a young man came up to Jesus, kneeling and saying, "Good Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you call me good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

that he's keeping all the Law. A little more and he will become a saint! Christ being omniscient reveals to him "the unknown and hidden things" of his heart, bringing to surface the sick binding of the youth with money and wealth, which in the end proved stronger.

That's how most of us behave also: we keep certain commandments and select which ones we should not keep, considering them to be of lesser importance. For example, we want to be regular in attending church, in prayer, and in the catechetical gatherings, but we avoid temperance both of fasting, as well as of fleshly relationships, considering them to be outdated. Thus without realizing it, we're transported to "another

gospel" of our own invention, which flatters our passions and creates the deception of a virtuous Christian life to the degree possible. However, "nothing is more false than this", because he who it is at fault in one thing, is at fault in everything: "for whosoever shall keep all the law, while he transgresses in one, became guilty of all of them" (James 2: 10).

Who is rich?

We're all "rich" in the end, all of us are in danger from self sufficiency in the spiritual life, as also from haughtiness, because he who considers himself virtuous and a proper Christian, it follows that he will consider the others beneath him. There is danger that we will over-evaluate other types of wealth and not only the material wealth. One has a wealth of intellectual gifts, another has an administrative gift, another a gift in prayer etc. In the end, there doesn't exist a person who is not adorned by God with some gifts. Consequently every person is wealthy in this sense and all people "fit" into the archetype of the wealth of the youth of the gospel passage, in which case there is danger that we will make the wrong evaluation, to feel self sufficient and consider that we are just slightly lacking from holiness.

The humble person however is the truly rich person, because he believes that all his gifts come from God and from himself, the passions and sins come.

Who is able to be saved?

The disciples troubled, as soon as they heard Christ's viewpoint that it is very difficult for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God, asked Him who in the end is he who is able to be saved. Christ answered them that God is able to do everything, filling them with hope.