

incapable of receiving the truth of faith, being characterized by a superficial religiosity and fearful egocentrism. So for this reason, He characterizes them as “uncircumcised in heart” (Acts 7:51). So how can you reveal the truth to a people with such spiritual symptoms, that throughout time, are observed in all of humanity? But also again how can He not unjustly treat those who seek the truth with good faith?

Christ establishes the truth of faith as a struggle of life. The truth exists and has been revealed, but it is not for the eyes of everyone, especially of those who are negligent and indifferent; they will misunderstand it, they will misinterpret it, or they will feel they are coerced by its existence. Christ desires freedom and our wholehearted turning towards Him and His truth, so for this reason also, for the safeguarding of freedom and of our selfless love, He has instituted the spirit of discipleship which prevails as a characteristic of all the Saints. While this lies in the constant discipleship in the truth of faith, not with reading books, but in the experiential living through our spiritual struggle and the Mysteries of the Church. The saving truth of faith, has the only truth upon the earth, it is the most important and precious thing which God offers to man, who nevertheless, in order to obtain it, must obtain it with the love of his whole soul and his fully eager struggle, so that he can ascertain that this is not exhausted, but constantly reveals to him, constantly more of the ineffable mysteries of the Glory of God.

Archimandrite I. N

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 16, 2016 SUNDAY OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL**, *Longinus the Centurion , The Two Soldiers martyred with Saint Longinus*

**TONE OF THE WEEK** *Plagal of the Fourth Tone*

**EOTHINON** : *Sixth Eothinon*

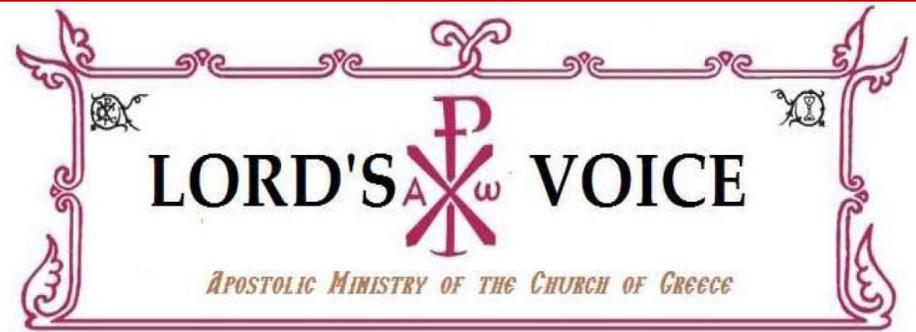
**EPISTLE:** *St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15*

**GOSPEL:** *Luke 8: 5-15*

**NEXT SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2016 6TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, *James (Iakovos) the Apostle, brother of Our Lord, Our Righteous Father Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople*

**EPISTLE:** *St. Paul's Letter to Galatians 1:11-19*

**GOSPEL:** *Luke 8: 26-39*



**64<sup>TH</sup> YEAR      OCTOBER 16, 2016      PAMPHLET # 42 (3307)**

## **THE TRUTH OF FAITH AS A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE**

Contemporary man, indifferent as he is about many things, is likewise indifferent about matters of faith. Of course some sociologists or anthropologists hasten to interpret this phenomenon as “the end of faith”, or again some historians to analyze it as “a turn towards modernism” and “a proof of the new” that characterizes our age. As however, will show further down, none of these things apply, both because those who are religiously indifferent, existed in each phase of man’s historical course, as also because the same people, as soon as their soul warms up a bit, prove to be fervent about faith, to a point that they spiritually surpass many of those who “have been in the church for years.”

One of the causes of indifference is the feeling of self sufficiency as regards the knowledge of faith, that many people have. Workers of the Gospel, clergymen and lay people try to tell them two words, and they reap as an answer “we know these things”. Consequently they call upon their whatsoever religious knowledge from their childhood age in order to substantiate full knowledge of theology of the Church, sufficient to cover their religious needs. Much more so now, that it is realized that the lesson of Religion does not comprise a Catechetical or confessional lesson, but like all the rest of them, a gnosiological, cultural one, with a mere leading of Orthodox faith, as the prevailing faith of the Greek people. In any case, faith in spiritual life are not “objects of knowledge” which are learned only from books, but experiences, which

**SUNDAY OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL**  
**THE GOSPEL LUKE 8:5-15**

The Lord said this parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold." And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." As he said these things, he cried out "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

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a person must obtain, as gifts of God, and they demand a very eager effort and struggle.

### **The purpose of the Parables**

In today's gospel passage the familiar, expressive and descriptive "Parable of the Sewer" is presented, as also its explanation from the Lord Himself. However between the narration and its interpretation, the record is interjected, of the special quandary of the disciples, about the explanation of the parable; and what follows is the saying of the Lord based on the prophecy of Isaiah. The disciples asked about the meaning and the importance of the parable of the sewer which they just heard,

and the Lord answered: "to you who have interest in the good disposition, it was given by God, as a grace for you to learn the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, to the rest of the people however, I speak with parables because they are not interested to accept and know the spiritual truths, while their mind is thick and incapable of spiritual teaching, so for this reason also, I'm teaching in a way so that they are not able to see more deeply and more clearly."

Already many Protestants, as well as some fans of the exclusively historical "interpretation of the Bible", hasten to misinterpret the above, accepting that Christ is deciding to speak in a shadowy way, so that His preaching does not become absolutely comprehended and, consequently, it does not offend the groups of the Pharisees and the Scribes, but also the Romans, who are observing Him, so that He can avoid their wrath against Him. How interpretively weak all these things are, we understand, when recall that our Christ freely "came to the voluntary Passion", while whoever tries to prevent Him, like Peter, reaped stern and scolding answers (Matthew 16:23). So how can we maintain that Christ is using the parables in order to hide and to not offend?

However how again is it reconciled that He who came to lead us "into all the truth" is not speaking clearly, but is using such forms? Cyril of Alexandria will explain to us: "the parables of things which are not seen, are like images, but more so they are noetic and spiritual. Because that which the eye of the body is not able to see, this, the parable shows to the eyes of the mind, using sensorial and almost tangible things, giving a good form to the fineness of the noetic things". However, the purpose of the parables is not merely pedagogical.

### **"To know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God"**

Our Christ referring to the parables, speaks about the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Let no one's fantasy be stirred up about what mysterious, plotting or hidden things hidden behind this phrase of the Lord. Everything is explained subsequently. Our Christ simply desires to use the double quality of the parables, of revealing and simultaneously hiding, so that the truth is clarified to whoever claims it in their life, without however it being declared to whoever is negligent and not eager, despite the whatsoever impression they may cause to them. Christ refers to the spiritual condition of his contemporary Jews and He describes them as "hardened", in other words, harsh and