

condescended, giving them a final opportunity. “Neither this, are we able either”, those supposedly hungering for salvation said. Then the Saint turns to his underling and tells him: “make them a little porridge for them to eat, because they are sick”. And addressing them, he said: “the one, you are not able. The other, you don’t want. What can I do for you? You need much prayer”.

Consequently someone may not be rich in money, but in “justified” stubbornness’s, in self justification and blaming others, in secret haughtiness, in unseen vainglory. And he might be proud that from his youth he kept all of God’s commandments, but in the end, he is glued to “his rights”, which is nothing else than his sinful wills. And the more he gets stuck on them, the more he becomes not only a camel, which is not able to pass through a pin hole, but – according to Abba Poimen – he raises “a bronze wall between him and God”, Then who is able to be saved? For those “dragged down and desiring the earthly things” there is no salvation, says saint Thophylactos. Only when someone lifts his eyes to God, and trusts the divine will and seeks His aid, is there hope that he can approach such “degrees of freedom” so that he can be able to follow Him with his whole heart.

Archim. B. L

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2018 13<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LUKE**

*Apodosis of the Presentation of the Theotokos into the Temple , Catherine the Great Martyr of Alexandria, Mercurius the Great Martyr of Caesarea in Cappadocia*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** First Tone

**GOTHINON :** Fourth Orthros Gospel

**EPISTLE READING:** Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5

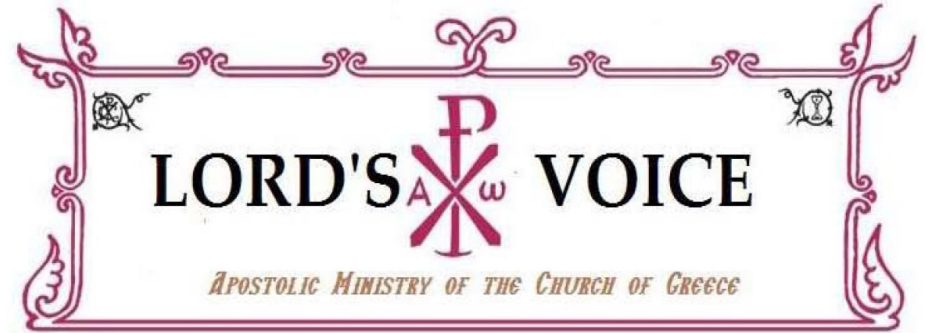
**GOSPEL READING:** Luke 18: 18-27

**NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 201, 14<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LUKE ,**

*Habakkuk the Prophet , Our Righteous Father Cyril of Phileus , Myrope the Martyr of Chios, Our Righteous Father Cyril of Phileus, Joannicos the Monk of Devich, Porphyrios of Kavsoakalyvia, Theophilos the Hermit*

**EPISTLE READING:** Ephesians 6:10-17

**GOSPEL READING:** Luke 18: 35-43



66<sup>TH</sup> YEAR NOVEMBER 25 2018 PAMPHLET #47 (3417)

## THE COST OF TRUE FREEDOM

In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ blessed “those hungering in thirsting are righteousness” and He promised them that he would satiate them. Saint Gregory Nyssa, interpreting, says that this righteousness does not refer to administration, distribution or the handling of goods, but is the enjoyment of the “gospel table.” In other words, “righteousness” is eternal life, which the ruler of today’s parable was “hungering and thirsting” for

### The unending perfection

And it is obvious that the fellow was sincerely hungering and thirsting for his salvation, since from his youth he had kept God’s commandments. The genuine however, obtaining of virtue “is not limited to satiation”, according to Saint Gregory. Christ promises to those who are hungering the eternal life of “a satiation, stirring up the appetite, not dulling it”. And when the appetite opens up, even “the perfect perfection of the perfect ones”, according to Saint John of the Ladder, is “unending”.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO (LUKE 18:18-27)

At that time, a ruler came to Jesus and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.' " And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For 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." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

To this unending perfection, Christ called the rich ruler, asking him to distribute all his belongings to the poor and to follow Him. Essentially it was a calling unique and dedication to a complete handing over oneself to Christ. Such callings are addressed "to those firm ones of God", who – according to the Psalmist – were strongly lifted up from the earth" (Ps. 46:10). But in order for one to get up from the earth strongly, he needs to have decided to cut even the slightest thread, which ties him with the things of the earth. And, from what it seems, for the specific a rich man it was not just the threads, but ropes, which were holding him tied to his belongings. So for this reason and, instead of flying from his joy, hearing the chief calling, "he became very sad",

### Degrees of freedom

Engineers, in their structural studies, speak about "degrees of freedom" of the buildings, which they are regulating. We people made in the image of God, select our "degrees of freedom"

on our own. Christ called the rich man to the highest degree of freedom with the words: "come follow me". In everything, be my disciple. And always follow me "not today, on the one hand, while tomorrow not". And don't hold anything your own. "For if something remains, you are its slave" (Saint Theophylactos). Even the slightest thing or will, that we are holding "in honor and glory" of our "ego", will become our boss. And it will prevent us from enjoying the only existing freedom, which is the freedom that makes us "servants of Christ".

Today's parable, naturally, is neither an obligatory invitation to monastic dedication, nor a strong slap against rich people. Both misinterpretations stink of an unfree spirit. Christ, the only one who knows human nature's illness well, notes that the salvation of us all, is in danger from some attachments, which are not always related to money. Money, of course, is more contagious and with difficulty the person related to it is broken off" according to the Saint of Ochrid. With such difficulty, that, for Christ to reach to make its likening with the camel's difficulty to pass through the hole of a needle. However, we do not lack rich people who managed to, like Saints Abraham, Job, Zacchaeus, and many others, among whom are even kings and rulers who became monks.

### The wealth which raises a wall.

There are however, aside from avarice, many other passions also, biases and attachments – all fruits of selfishness and of egotism – that cut the wings even to high-flying lovers of eternal life. Once Saint Anthony, to the brothers' question of "how shall we be saved?" showed them the brief gospel path of humility: "if someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other one also". They answered him: "we are not able to do this". "Then", Saint answers them, beginning the downgrading, "forbear the one slap". "Neither this are we able", they tell him. "Then, at least, don't render back the slap", the Saint