

enacting Satan's will, were persecuting and wounding the Apostle very much. From these trials, three times Paul asked God to deliver him. It is not forbidden, consequently, that we seek our deliverance from some "thorn". And Christ as a human asked that "the cup" of the Passion "pass", but he immediately submitted to the providence and will of the Father. And the Apostle, after the Lord's answer, "my strength is perfected in weakness", submits with absolute humility to the divine will. And with very great pleasure "(most delightfully)" he boasts about the conditions of weakness, in which, due to the trials he goes through, in order for the truth and power of Christ to dwell in him.

Here is the answer to the question: "What is that which makes man lose his critical ability and be charmed by the deceitful preachings of the false apostles and false prophets throughout the ages?" That which blinds man is egotism. Haughtiness of both the mind and the flesh. This double egotism, paralyzes the judgment and prudence. And makes him prey to the most strange and destructive teachings, which are "served" to him as the unique truths and the unique salvation.

Archim. B. L

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2019 7TH SUNDAY OF LUKE,

Nestor the Martyr of Thessaloniki, Kyriakos, Patriarch of Constantinople, Procla, wife of Pontius Pilate

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Second Tone*

EOETHINON : *Eighth Orthros Gospel*

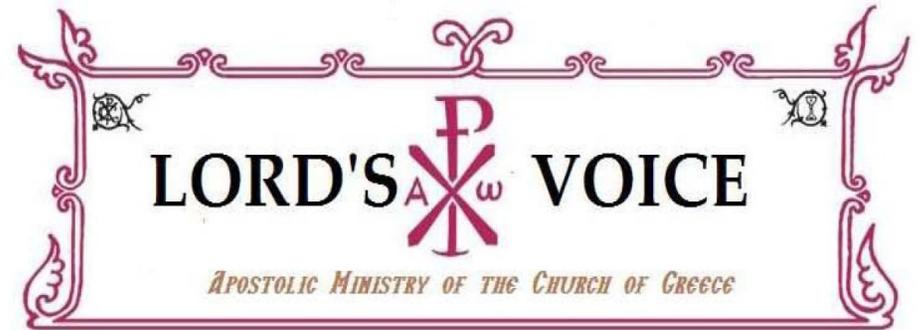
EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Second Letter to Corinthians 11:31-33*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 8:41-56*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2019 5TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, Aicepsimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter, & Aeithalas the Deacon, Martyrs of Persia, Dedication of the Temple of the Holy Great Martyr George in Lydda, Holy Father and New Hieromartyr Gregory of Neapolis. Theodore the Confessor, Bishop of Ancyra, George of Neapolis the New Martyr, Winifred of Treffynnon.

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

GOSPEL READING: *LUKE 16:19-31*



67TH YEAR OCTOBER 27 2019 PAMPHLET #43 (3465)

THE "HOLY" BOASTING

The counterfeiting of coins is not a new "skill". Obviously it exists from then when coins first came out and aims at illegal gain. Unfortunately, "sly workers" (2 Cor. 11:13) attempted such "counterfeits" from very early on in the field of the Church aiming to fool the believers, in order to satisfy personal passions and ambitions. Thus "false Christs," "false brethren", "false prophets" and "false apostles" appeared. And "this is not strange" the Apostle Paul calmly says a little before today's reading. Because "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. So it should not surprise us that his servants also are transformed into servers of righteousness".

Afflictions and revelations

In order for the Apostle to protect the Christians of Corinth from such wolves in sheep's clothing, whom – to his great bitterness – they gladly were accepting them, he is forced to do something that he abhors so much, so that he considers it to be foolish: he is forced to boast. So since, in the previous portion of his epistle he boasted about the sufferings, that he suffered for the glory of Christ, he closes the description of his hardships, referring to his persecution in Damascus. Here" are the marks of the apostolic soul", Saint John admires. To be suffering so many things and to not be shaken at all, to not yield in the dangers, nor to desert, here is how the Gospel is woven.

EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO CORINTHIANS 11:31-33

Brethren, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for ever, knows that I do not lie. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands.

I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise --whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. Though if I wish to boast, I shall not be a fool, for I shall be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Now however, he judges that the moment came for him to speak to us about a "golden thread", about a revealing experience that he lived prior to 14 years. Such was his modesty and humility, that for so many years he was keeping such an event secret. But that they were disputing him as an Apostle and trusting more the false apostles henceforth led the situation to the point that it could go on no longer. It's as if he is telling them: you're forcing me to reveal to

you that then the Lord wished to offer me hospitality for a little in His heavenly bridal chambers. And how would it be possible for me to not offer hospitality to the true Christ in my heart and in my preaching? If I'm not welcome by you, He made me welcome. Nevertheless, even if I know henceforth, how indescribable is the delight of paradise, I want to be on the earth for you. "To remain in the flesh is more necessary for you" (Phil. 1:24)".

Love and humility

The majesty of love and of humility cannot be hidden here. These virtues elevated him so early on, to such a great glory, so that even John Chrysostom expresses his surprise with the words: "If from the first steps of his Christian journey, Paul was such a one, so as to be granted such revelations, then, in other words, when he had not yet achieved great achievements, imagine how great he became a after 14 years". The sacred Father mentions modestly saying "I at least think like that" --and one reason, for which Christ grabbed up Paul and lifted him near Him: "So that it not appear", he says, "that Paul has something less than the other Apostles. Because they saw and kept company with Christ, whereas he not at all". So Paul also saw Him, and furthermore in infinitely greater glory, than the other Apostles did upon the earth.

After these things, justifiably the god-seer Paul says: "If now I wish to boast, I will not be foolish, because I will say the truth. I'm avoiding it, so that no one forms about me an idea above that which he sees in me or hears from me". The contemporary elder Ephraim of Katounankia would say: "O woe to the monk whose name came out greater than his value". No matter how much one glorifies the preeminent Apostle, he will always say less than his value, since Paul himself admits that he lived an "excess of revelations". Simultaneously, however, having the realization of the mortal danger of haughtiness, he recognizes the beneficial role of the thorn which was given to him by God so that he not be proud.

The paedagogy of trial

This "thorn", this thorn in his being, according to some, was a certain physical illness. According to others however, and Chrysostom also belongs to these, it referred to the persons who,

