



72nd Year

November 3, 2024

Pamphlet #44 (3727)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Luke 16:19-31)

The “bondage” of man to material goods

The Lord said, "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazaros, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazaros in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazaros to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazaros in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses, and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to them, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

THE MEANING OF EARTHLY LIFE

The story of the parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus is divided into three parts: (a) The rich man and the poor man in this life, (b) The death of the two main characters, and (c) the reversal of their situations in the afterlife.

The importance of names

A point that is worth us focusing on is the significance of the name. Our acquaintance with the rich man does not happen through the name, but with the description that he was “wearing purple and fine linen” – in other words, luxurious attire and daily festivities. By not giving the rich man a name, Christ removes the person’s true being in relation to God and his fellow man. His being is reduced to his opulent clothes and daily amusement. Thus, the rich man for those around him, had value not as a person, but as a rich man.

The sin of the rich man was not his wealth but the recognition of his identity solely with daily amusement without any other perspective. His life's purpose was material enjoyment: "Let us eat and drink, let us party, for tomorrow we die."

In contrast to the rich man's eternal anonymity, the poor man has a name: Lazarus, which means "God is my helper."

After death

Poor Lazarus did not go unnoticed in the eyes of God, and angels carried him to Abraham's bosom.

Unfortunately, we often fail to realize that our choices in this life have consequences also in eternal life. The rich man goes to the place of torment after a lavish funeral. What ultimately sent the rich man to Hades wasn't mainly what he did, but what he didn't do, his inability to notice the other person. During his earthly life, he didn't persecute the poor man. No. He simply

ignored him. He was indifferent. However, when the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to cool his tongue with a little water, Abraham explains that an impassable chasm separates them. If we want to live without such a chasm between us and God, we must strive from this life to neutralize it.

The rich man's request

The third part of the parable addresses the rich man's plea for care to be shown to his brothers on earth, who are living with the attitudes of that time, and in the same manner, so that they change, so they do not also go to that place of torment. However, since they did not accept Christ's word or believe in His Resurrection, how is it possible for them to repent?

Christ's word is always relevant. Truly in our day, many people are recognized not by their names but by their economic status and high social, political, and professional positions. However, Christ calls us to repent, to abandon this mindset, in other words, to change our way of thinking and behaving, and not rejoice simply because we have achieved something in our earthly life, but because our names have been written in eternity. The sacred Chrysostom wisely observes that "this parable provides us with medicines for salvation because it chastens those who are rich, while it comforts the poor." He continues to encourage: "Both the rich and the poor must write this parable: those who are rich, on the wall of your home, and the poor on the wall of your mind."

A spirit of communion and love

Let's strive in the way we live, that we partake in daily life, to avoid the selfish mentality of the rich man: a shortsighted view confined to the earth, a mindset that egotistically keeps the material or spiritual treasures for individual consumption. We must know that no one will take anything with them when they close their eyes. So, let us strive to become more like God by becoming even more humane!

† F. A.

November 3, 2024: 5th Sunday of Luke

Saints Akepsimas, Aithalas, and Joseph the Martyrs (4th c.);
Translation of the relics of Saint George the Trophy Bearer;
George the New Hieromartyr of Neapolis († 1797)

2nd Tone – Eothinon: 8 – Epistle: 2 Cor. 11:31-12:9 –
Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

NEXT SUNDAY: November 10, 8th Sunday of Luke
Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19 – Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

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*ΘΕΟΥ ΣΚΗΝΩΜΑΤΑ – ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΑ ΜΝΗΜΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΥΒΟΙΑΣ –
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