



72nd Year

November 17, 2024

Pamphlet #46 (3729)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Luke 12:16-21)

The good is God Himself

The Lord said this parable: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." As he said these things, he cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

ON GREED

The occasion for the parable about greed on the 9th Sunday of Luke was the dispute between two brothers over inheritance issues. The Lord knew that both of them were enslaved by greed. Therefore, He also refused to act as their judge or divider of material goods.

Man's greedy attraction to material goods is (a) tempting for everyone, especially in today's world, and (b) repulsive, because nobody wants to hear about the dangers that come with material goods and wealth.

In the parable, Christ does not speak against wealth itself, but against greed, which ultimately made the rich man foolish.

Greed is the source of sin, turning man into an idolater and making him unfree. Man was created to be the master and steward of material goods.

Dependence on material goods

If a person removes God from his being, then he relies on material goods for his life. Man's sin is the illness of his will, which ultimately ruins both himself and the creation's goods.

Greed does not give a person a sense of sufficiency or completeness but of poverty and lack. The rich man in the parable had many goods but was restless and troubled. The greedy person thinks he is happy with his possessions, but in reality, he is worried, filled with fear, agony, and anxiety.

Greed methodically, that is demonically, tries to convince us that acquiring material goods guarantees exclusive prosperity and enjoyment for oneself. Here, man's life is equated with the biological recycling found in the survival of animals. "Eat, drink, be merry." Saint Basil the Great emphasizes: "If you were a pig, what better thing could you say to your soul?"

Overcoming death

The Lord safeguards us from this illusion in the continuation of the parable. Man does not transcend death with money and material goods, because all of these inherently carry the thought of death.

The accumulation of material goods signifies dependence on their natural state. In other words, on the poison of decay and death. This is why, when a person dies, he does not even take his own body with him, entrusting it to the earth until the Second Coming and the resurrection of the dead.

The Lord reveals to us our true treasure, which is not our individual selves or material goods, but wealth in God. In other words, love and charity. Let these be our pursuits!

THE SPIRIT OF GOD RESTS ON THE HUMBLE PERSON

– “Elder, what virtues must a person have for the Grace of God to overshadow him?”

– Humility alone is enough. Often, I am asked, “How much time does it take for one to acquire divine Grace?” Some may live their entire life in a seemingly spiritual life, practicing asceticism, etc., but because they believe they are something special, for this reason, they do not receive God's Grace. Others, however, are graced in a short time, because they humble themselves. If a person humbles himself, divine Grace can shower him in a minute, turning him into an angel and placing him in Paradise. Whereas, if he becomes proud, he can become a little demon and end up in hell within a minute. In other words, if a person wants to, he can become a lamb; if he wants, he can become a goat. The poor goats, even if they want to, they cannot become lambs. However, to man, God gave the ability to transform from goat to lamb so long as he wants to.

God's grace comes only to the humble and meek person. There, the spirit of God rests. Did you see what the Prophet Isaiah says, "To whom will I look but to the humble and the quiet one?" God wants us to have just a little humility to be akin to Him, and then all His gifts come in abundance, one after the other. Because God, in a way, owes the humble person much Grace, and gives it as a gift, without the person asking for it. This is a spiritual law. "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble," says the Gospel. This is how God has arranged it. "I am humble" means "I have divine Grace." The more humble, the more Grace one receives from God, because the humble person, like a sponge, absorbs divine Grace.

Whoever bends humbly and accepts blows from others, drives away his own bumps, beautifies spiritually like an angel, and thus fits through the narrow gate of Paradise. No one ascends to Heaven through worldly ascent, but through spiritual descent. Humility opens the gates of Heaven, and God's Grace comes to man, whereas pride closes them. Father Tychon used to say, "One humble person has more grace than many people together. Each morning, God blesses the world with one hand, but when He sees a humble person, He blesses him with both His hands. The one with the greatest humility is the greatest of all!" Everything depends on a humble mindset.

When a person has a humble mindset, then Earth naturally meets Heaven. People with humility have found the key; they press it and ascend to the "Third Heaven" with the spiritual elevator of love. And you hear some people say, "and why does God want us to humble ourselves?" Have you heard such talk? But if a person does not humble himself, he cannot fit into Paradise, and even in this life, he has no rest. What did Christ say? "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

(From the book of the Apostolic Ministry,
Anthology of Counsels of Saint Paisios the Haghiarite)

November 17, 2024: 9th Sunday of Luke

Gregory, Bishop of Neo-Caesarea († 270), Gennadios, Archbishop of Constantinople († 471)

4th Tone – Eothinon: 10 – Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20 –
Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

NEXT SUNDAY: November 24, 13th Sunday of Luke
Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18 – Gospel: Luke 18:18-27

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