



72<sup>nd</sup> Year

December 1, 2024

Pamphlet #48 (3731)

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## **THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Luke 18:35-43)**

### **Faith in God**

*At that time, as Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

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## **THE PRAYERFUL CRY**

Today's gospel passage describes the miracle of healing the blind man who cries out to Jesus, our Lord, to have mercy on him. His cry is one of pain, despair, desolation, and suffering, arising from his illness and blindness. However, it is simultaneously a cry of reverence and hope for the future.

### **Approaching Christ**

The blind man approaches Christ, believing that He is his last hope for healing and continuing his life. His cry is one of sincere repentance and faith, recognizing that before him stands the true

Son of God, who can be a benefactor toward him and offer him the precious gift of health.

When Christ asks him, the blind man responds, completely surrendered to the mercy of the Messiah, saying, "I want to see again." Christ acknowledges the blind man's sincere and deep faith, who "sees" and recognizes the "Son of David," and despite being surrounded by a large crowd, nevertheless, He sets them aside to hear the cries of a blind beggar. And He heals him, saying, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you."

### **The human cry**

Pain, despair, mourning, spiritual defeats, disasters, illnesses, and trials provoke in our lives a massive symphony of cries and complaints, whether they are cries of supplication or disbelief. It is notable how the New Testament mentions the cries of fear and disbelief that come from Christ's Disciples. Those who were with Jesus, having seen Him perform miracles and teach so many times, initially struggled to understand the deeper meaning of the Lord's actions.

The same thing happens to us sometimes. We are not ready to deeply understand the work, teachings, silence, and actions of the Lord. We cry out in fear and lack of faith, telling Him, "If You are willing, Lord... everything is possible." And Christ replies with another "if": "If you believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Thus, our cry, in the face of human words' inadequacy and God's greatness, becomes "a fervent plea and supplication of a strong mind" and is not just meaningless words. What is worth asking for with a strong cry is none other than the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

### **The praying heart**

Prayer is standing before the presence of God with your mind in your heart. If we cannot live without God, then we cannot live without prayer because, through prayer, we approach God and stand confidently before Him, becoming partakers of life and witnesses of His Kingdom. In our hearts, we come to see ourselves as sinners in

the embrace of God's mercy. This very vision makes us cry out: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

The prayer of the heart calls us not to hide absolutely anything from God and to unconditionally surrender to His mercy. By its very nature, such prayer transforms our entire being "into Christ," precisely because it opens the eyes of our soul to the truth about ourselves and the truth about God.

† F. A.

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### **ONLY HEARTFELT PRAYER IS TRUE PRAYER**

The Elder used to say characteristically:

"Only heartfelt prayer is true prayer, because it has pain and brings results. One 'Lord have mercy' said with pain is equivalent to a thousand simple 'Lord have mercy' prayers!" We should not let anything stop or disturb the heart's plea to God. Neither when we are conversing, nor when we are walking, or being cursed and slandered. We should not take our mind out of our heart. We should be completely alone in the treasury of our heart (hence the term 'monk' [which means 'alone' in Greek], even if surrounded by a crowd of people. Though, attention should be an ever-watchful guard so that we don't think that thoughts from the demon are coming from God.

"These truths can only be felt experientially and never fully understood cognitively, no matter how many books one reads. As a model in our prayers, we should have: The man born blind who, no matter how much they told him to keep quiet, cried out all the more for the Lord to have mercy on him. The Canaanite woman, who clung to the Lord 'with nails and teeth' and pleaded with Him to have mercy on her (hence the term 'violence in prayer'). The Lord Himself said, 'And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, ' (hence the prayer 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me! '). The Lord Himself, on the Mount of Olives, whose sweat from the prayer became like drops of blood (hence violence in prayer). Once we learn to pray, no matter what grace comes to us, let us attribute it with utmost humility to the love and all-saving providence of God, and in no case

to our intense efforts, which are meant to exclusively show human intention alone.

"We should pray for others with our hearts. One sigh from our heart is equivalent to prayer; I can say it's worth hours of prayer." The Elder said, "A person must feel their sinfulness and have trust and hope in God's mercy, for this will save him. This way, his mind concentrates, and he feels the Jesus Prayer as a necessity, just as he feels God's mercy as a necessity. Thus, he begins to say: 'Lord Jesus Christ, come,' and the heart finds rest."

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

December 1, 2024: 14th Sunday of Luke

Prophet Nahum (700 B.C.), Philaret the Merciful († 792),  
Theocletus the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Lacedaemonia

Pl. 2nd Tone – Eothinon: 1 – Epistle: Ephesians 2:4-10 –  
Gospel: Luke 18:35-43

NEXT SUNDAY: December 8, 10th Sunday of Luke  
Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22 – Gospel: Luke 13:10-17

## **CHARITY FUNDRAISER “DAY OF LOVE”**

These days, the charity fundraiser “Day of Love” is being conducted [in Greece] by the Parish Philoptochos Funds. With your contribution, no matter how small or large, the Church carries out its philanthropic and social mission, especially in today's particularly difficult circumstances.

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