



73rd Year

July 27, 2025

Pamphlet #30 (3765)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (2 Timothy 2:1-10)

The good strugglers of Christ

Timothy, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will grant you understanding in everything. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel, the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal. But the word of God is not fettered. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Today's Epistle reading comes from the Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy. Both letters to Timothy, as well as the one to Titus, form the so-called "Pastoral Epistles," through which the Preeminent-Among-the-Apostles addresses the Pastors of the Church in order to advise and strengthen them in

carrying out their pastoral duties. He does the same in today's reading, in which he encourages Timothy to always be empowered by the grace of Jesus Christ, to preach the truth of the Gospel to well-disposed souls, and to not hesitate to suffer for the love of Christ. In order to accomplish all of this, Paul urges him to keep the risen Jesus Christ constantly in his mind – that is, to pray to Him, seeking enlightenment, strength, and help from above.

The foundation of deep humility

The essence of Apostle Paul's words pertains to the power and value of prayer to Jesus. We can achieve nothing in life or in our works if our thoughts are not turned toward Him. A blessed Elder from Mount Athos advises: "Understand that a person who does not know how to pray is, in reality, a defeated person. There is no possibility for him to succeed in life." This is so because the great struggle of prayer constitutes the oxygen of spiritual life, the vital power of the soul.

However, our prayer to God presupposes faith in Him and the certainty of His presence in our lives. The Elder also says: "Prayer is a turning toward a Person. Therefore, in order for there to be prayer, that Person must exist. And for me to say that I am praying, the presence of that Person must be active for me. I am able to appropriate His presence and His existence. Christ, the indwelling One, the One present everywhere, becomes present within my life through my participation in worship..."

Prayer also presupposes humility, a sense of our unworthiness and inadequacy before God, whom we call upon to fill our gaps and complete our deficiencies, both in spiritual life and in our spiritual work. The experience of the Saints of our Church affirms: "The foundation of prayer is very deep humility. Prayer is nothing other than the weeping and mourning of a humble mindset. When humility is absent, the exercise of prayer is threatened by delusion and demonic deception."

The commemoration of the name of Christ

The Apostle Paul insists on the commemoration of the name of Christ, because he knows experientially the power it hides, and the impetus it gives to those who invoke Him with faith and humility. He knows that this name can transform the world and render what is humanly impossible, possible, through the will of God. According to a well-known hesychast hieromonk, "In the name of Jesus are gathered and active all the mysteries of our salvation. When we repeat this name, the reality of Jesus can penetrate us, to fill us, to saturate us in such a way, that the word becomes 'flesh within us.' The name of Jesus enters the soul like a drop of oil silently spreads through a piece of cloth. The name of Jesus contains the whole world, just as a ray of sunlight contains the colors of the rainbow... The invocation of the name of Jesus upon all beings permits transformation, the 'Christification' of the universe, the discovery of its true meaning."

Let us strive to become partakers of this great spiritual gift, so that the Grace of God may illuminate our lives, and we ourselves may become radiant examples of prayer for all people. Amen.

Archimandrite E. Oik.

July 27, 2025: 7th Sunday of Matthew

Saint Panteleimon, the Great Martyr and Healer († 305)

Pl. 2nd Tone – Eothinon: 7 – Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10
– Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

NEXT SUNDAY: August 3, 8th Sunday of Matthew
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 – Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

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