



73rd Year

November 16, 2025

Pamphlet #46 (3781)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (Romans 10:11-11:2)

The acceptance of God

Brethren, the scripture says, "No one who believes in God will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry." Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people." I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

THE WORD OF GOD, A PREREQUISITE FOR SALVATION

In today's Epistle reading, the Preeminent Apostle Paul connects the salvation of our soul with the acceptance of the Word of God and the observance of the divine commandments. He teaches that whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Yet, for this to come to pass, one must believe in Christ as Savior and Redeemer. And this faith is born through the divine word, which the Church undertakes to proclaim through her teachers. But this alone does not suffice. What is required is the acceptance of the word of God, which consists in the keeping of His commandments. Thus, there precedes a succession of specific conditions which lead to salvation.

At the center: every local Church

From this teaching, the fundamental mission of the Church becomes manifest: the offering of the divine word to all people, without exception, in every age and by every means. The center of this offering is each local Church, Parish, and Monastery, for their brotherhoods and pilgrims. Otherwise, if the Church does not respond to this lofty duty, she does not fulfill her mission. A blessed elder once said: "There is no hope for spiritual life if there is no word of God. It is better to change monasteries (or parishes) and seek someone who is at least a humble voice, as long as he speaks of God, rather than remain in a monastery even if holiness is present there." (Hieromonk Aimilianos of Simonopetra)

Thereafter, what is required is the acceptance of the word of God and its reception as a necessity, in order that the spiritual life may be preserved ever-vigorous and evergreen. The blessed Metropolitan taught that "the word of God is as necessary for the spiritual life of man as bread is for the preservation of his body. 'By bread the body is nourished, but by the divine word the soul is sustained,' teaches Saint John Chrysostom. The Bread 'which came down from heaven' is as

necessary as the 'daily bread'; indeed, in certain circumstances, the divine Word is even more necessary than material food."

The pedagogy of the divine commandments

The next and decisive stage, which gives meaning to faith, is the observance of the divine commandments. With simple yet deep words, Saint Paisios the Athonite taught this truth: "The infant, before it is born, is kept safe within the womb of its mother. It is under restriction. When it is born, the parents place it in its little bed, which is surrounded by rails. It is as though they place it in a prison. They do this, however, out of love, for the child's own good. As soon as it begins to take its first steps, the parents hold it by the hand, lest it fall. And when it grows older, there are the laws of the state, which it must observe. Thus, there must be discipline, for lawlessness and disobedience lead to destruction. In like manner, the commandments of God safeguard people, lest they fall. God, therefore, out of love and for our good, gave His commandments, that He might help us to be corrected. It is not that God has need of us to do His will; rather, we have need to do the will of God, and we must feel this as a need."

Under these conditions, faith is given meaning and becomes the path of salvation. Otherwise, according to Saint Maximus the Confessor "blind is the faith of the one who does not put into practice the commandments of God, yet imagines that he believes. Since the precepts of God are light, it is altogether certain that he dwells in darkness who does not conform himself to the divine ordinances. Consequently, he bears the name of Christian in vain and lies each time he wishes to be called and considered a Christian."

Let us, therefore, attend to the word of the Saints. They themselves are the first to fulfill the commandments of God in their lives, showing to all of us both the path and the manner of our salvation.

November 16, 2025: Sunday of Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist

Pl. 2nd Tone – Eothinon: 1 – Epistle: Romans 10:11-11:12
– Gospel: Matthew 9:9-13

NEXT SUNDAY: November 23, 9th Sunday of Luke
Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22 – Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

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VOICE OF THE LORD, a weekly pamphlet of Orthodox faith and life of the "Apostolic Ministry of the Church of Greece". Iasiou 1, 115 21 Athens. Publisher – Director: Metropolitan of Phanariou, Agathangelos. Editorial office, tel. 210.7272.331. Processing, tel. 210.7272.388. Through the holy churches, it is distributed free of charge. From the Printing Office of the Apostolic Ministry.

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