



74th Year

January 25, 2026

Pamphlet #4 (3791)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Luke 19:1-10)

The salvation of man

At that time, Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchais; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchais, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchais stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

JESUS CHRIST AS THE SAVIOR OF MANKIND

Studying with attention and prayer the Gospel passage that was read during the Divine Liturgy, we feel the power that comes from the person of Christ, the radiance of His divinity and His love for all, a power capable of transforming human consciences, regenerating and reshaping human existence, and leading it to salvation.

The Lord was passing through Jericho. A crowd of people followed Him, among them the chief tax collector Zacchaeus, a man of wealth and influence who, however, had become rich through injustices and the exploitation of his fellow men. Zacchaeus desired to see Christ. Because of his short stature, he found it difficult. And what did he do? He did not hesitate to climb up into a sycamore tree, disregarding his rank and social position, so that he might be able to see Him.

The sight of Christ's face

What was the motive behind the longing, the irresistible desire, that drove Zacchaeus to meet Christ and to know Him? Clearly, we are not mistaken in saying that the existential emptiness a person feels from the lack of meaning in life, the relentless reproach of conscience under the weight of injustices and sins, the loneliness experienced from the absence of true friendship and love, the awareness of the mistaken path one follows that leads to perdition, and finally the disappointment with oneself, all these give a person the impulse to turn to the Him who can save him, fill him with unashamed hope, strength, and faith, so that he can reconsider his entire life.

The face of Christ radiates a "gentle light," meekness, truth, love, understanding, freedom, joy, life, peace, and hope. In this way, He draws every well-intentioned person to know Him, to love Him, and to believe that He is the Son of the Living God, "true God from true God," as we confess in the Symbol of Faith.

Repentance and virtue

The love and faith of Zacchaeus toward the Lord Jesus transformed his being. He ceased committing injustices, gave half of his possessions to the poor, and repaid fourfold whatever he had taken through deceit. Here we see both the negative and the positive sides of repentance. A person repents for his sins and mistakes and then tries to restore, correct, and heal every form of injustice, every wound he has caused to his fellow men. This is precisely what it means for someone to live with virtue. "Virtue," says the sacred Chrysostom, "is not money, so that you should fear poverty, nor is it bodily health, so that you should fear sickness, nor is it the

admiration of the many, so that you should avoid a bad reputation, nor is virtue simply and vaguely for one to live, so that death should appear frightening to you. Virtue is the precise steadfastness in true faith and the right way of life." Thus, Zacchaeus, through the power of true faith, came to experience the right way of living; he lived with evangelical virtue.

Christ in the search and salvation of the lost

The Lord, addressing Zacchaeus, assures him that he has been saved, because he too is a descendant of Abraham – meaning, a creature of God – who desires, through repentance, "all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). He then proclaims the great truth that the Son of Man came to seek and to save those who are far from God. This is the work of God and of His Church, as the prophet Ezekiel concisely describes: "I will seek the lost, says the Lord; I will bring back the one who has strayed; I will bind up the wounded, and I will strengthen the weak" (Ezek. 34:16).

May these truths increase our faith and our gratitude toward God!

Archimandrite N. K.

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January 25, 2026: 15th Sunday of Luke

Gregory the Theologian,
Archbishop of Constantinople (of Nazianzus) (+390).

Pl. 4th Tone – Eothinon: 11 – Epistle: Hebrews 7:26-8:2
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