LORD'S VOICE

APOSTOLIC MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE

74th Year November 15, 2026 Pamphlet #46 (3833)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Luke 10:25-37)
The person of the neighbor

At that time, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live." But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

ON THE MEANING OF THE NEIGHBOR

"And who is my neighbor?" This question, which the Jewish teacher of the law put to the Lord, as today's Gospel passage informs us, gives us the opportunity to interpret scripturally the meaning of the neighbor and to attempt to understand its theological content. The teacher of the law in question acknowledges that, as stated in the Mosaic Law, eternal life is inherited through love for God and for one's neighbor. How, however, did this man understand the meaning of the neighbor? Within the prevailing theological atmosphere of his time, there existed various opinions regarding its significance and, consequently, concerning the limits of the love that the Law required toward one's neighbor.

For example, the religious party of the Pharisees, who usually observed the Law in a formal and outwardly exact manner, did not include within the concept of the neighbor those people who were regarded as sinners. This is why they accused Christ, who treated sinners with sympathy, understanding, and love. Furthermore, the ascetic group of the Essenes, who lived in communal settlements near the Dead Sea, restricted the giving of love to the members of their own community. And, in general, the Jews limited the concept of the neighbor to those people with whom they were connected by ties of kinship, tribe, religion, or nationality.

The new meaning of the neighbor

Christ radically transforms the meaning of the neighbor and gives it its true dimensions. For this reason, He recounts to the teacher of the law the parable, well known to us all, of the Good Samaritan. The neighbor is not someone outside ourselves; rather, we ourselves become neighbors to others through our attitude and way of life. The teacher of the law’s question, “And who is my neighbor?”, focuses one-sidedly on the object of neighborliness, that is, on identifying who the neighbor is: Is he a compatriot or a foreigner? A friend or an enemy? Someone known or someone unknown? The Lord, however, places this

question on an entirely new foundation, overturning what had previously been accepted. For His concern is not who the neighbor is, but rather who is the one who acts as a neighbor in coming to the aid of a fellow man.

For Christ, it is taken for granted that the neighbor, every wounded, wronged, and half-dead person, is unconditionally worthy of love and beneficence on the part of his fellow man, namely, the one who becomes the subject and bearer of neighborly love. Thus, the example held before us is that of the compassionate Samaritan, whose love is selfless, unconditional, and without limits. The merciful Samaritan, of course, is an image of the Lord Jesus Himself.

The Crucified Love

When a person, illumined by God, comes to realize that the model of his love for his neighbor is the infinite love of Christ upon the Cross, a love that cannot be explained or comprehended by human standards, then the boundaries of neighborly love become limitless. Our neighbor may be hostile toward us, may wrong us, afflict us, and wound us, just as those who crucified the Lord wounded Him. Yet whoever restricts his love only to those who love him acts merely in a human way. But whoever knows no such barriers imitates the God of love, who is, in the highest sense, our Neighbor.

Our salvation depends on our neighbor

The Professor of the Desert, Saint Anthony the Great, used to say the following remarkable words: “Upon our neighbor depend both our life and our death. If we gain our brother through love, it means that we have gained God Himself. But if we grieve him, then ‘we sin against Christ’; that is, we grieve the Lord and sin before Him.”

Besides, from the holy Gospel we learn that it does not belong to man to decide who is his neighbor, for our love must be manifested in deeds toward every person whom God places in our path. For this reason, Saint John Chrysostom points out:

"If you love one person because you regard him as your neighbor, but do not love another, then your love does not possess the characteristic of love according to God. But our love is not of such a kind; our Christian love is not so narrow-hearted." May God grant to all of us a widening of love and a heart full of compassion toward our neighbor, upon whom, as has been said, our life and our death depend.

Archimandrite N. K.

November 15, 2026: 8th SUNDAY OF LUKE

Gurias, Samonas († 299–306) and Abibus († 322), martyrs and confessors.

Grave Tone – Eothinon: 2 – Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22 – Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

NEXT SUNDAY: November 22, 9th Sunday of Luke
Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-7 – Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

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