



Fr. Joseph's Outline for the 2nd Sunday of Great Lent- St. Gregory Palamas

Mark 2:1-12 - Sunday 03/15/2009

“Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your pallet and walk’?” (Mark 2:9)

The city of Capernaum

- Capernaum was in existence from the 2nd century B.C. It was built along the edge of the Sea of Galilee and had up to 1,500 residents during Jesus' time.
- Jesus made Capernaum his home during the years of his public ministry: “Leaving Nazareth He went and lived in Capernaum” (Matt 4:13).
- Capernaum had a synagogue, built by a Roman centurion. At one point, Jesus healed the servant of this centurion (Luke 7:3).
- At this synagogue, Jesus was confronted during His teaching by a possessed man and healed him by expelling the demon out of him (Mark 1:21-28).
- In this synagogue, Jesus gave His sermon on the “bread of life” (John 6:35-59), and many people turned away from Him.
- Capernaum was one of the cities that rejected Jesus' teaching, despite the numerous miracles that Jesus did in it, and was condemned for that by Jesus.

Why was this reading chosen for today?

- Today is the last Sunday prior to the third Sunday of Great Lent, the adoration or veneration of the Holy Cross.
- In Church history, the third Sunday of Great Lent marked the deadline for those who were to receive holy Baptism on the eve of Pascha.
- In the context of Holy Baptism which grants the person forgiveness of sins, today's reading shows that forgiveness of sins can be obtained only through Jesus Christ, thus encouraging the non-baptized believers to strive hard to obtain the divine grace of Holy Baptism.

Sin and its consequences in our life

- Sin is not a normal action according to human nature; it should never be perceived or accepted as being normal or natural.
- Sin is **THE** source of death: “The Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” (Genesis 2:16-17).

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- Liberation from death can only happen through liberation from sin. If a person is liable for even one sin only, that is all that is necessary for him to die: “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin” (John 8:34).
- Based upon the fact that Jesus was not contaminated with any sin, Jesus did not have to die: “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?” (John 8:46). But He chose to die, so that we can live.
- When people live under the influence of sin, they can never get to know God. Purification from sin is conditional to knowing God: “He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God” (John 8:47).

How do we go about being healed from sin and its consequences?

- Knowledge of God starts with repentance and forgiveness: “You will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins” (Luke 1:76-77).
- There is no escaping eternal death without Christ: “I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins” (John 8:24).
- The journey with Christ starts with repentance from all committed sins and obtaining forgiveness through baptism: “I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins” (Nicene Creed).
- True repentance requires not going back to the sinful life: “Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, ‘See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you’” (John 5:14).
- The Church sacraments are a source of life to help the faithful on their journey as they fight against sin: “This is My Blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28).
- Forgiving others is a prerequisite condition to obtain forgiveness for one’s sins: “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” (Mark 11:25).

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Conclusion: salvation can never be achieved if man stays under the slavery of sin.

“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away...if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” (Matthew 5:29-31)

This, and many other strong statements throughout the holy Bible, indicates how harmful the damage of sin is.

Sin is the bond of debt that Satan has, which gives him the power to hold our souls hostage in eternal death.

“No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him-- For the redemption of his soul is costly.” (Psalm 49:8-9)

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, I come to You, wanting healing for my paralysis. I am bound up with my many sins. I am bent down because of their heavy weight. There is no one who can help me. There is no one who can protect me from the power of Satan who presses against my soul, except You. Save me, O Lord, do not forget me, and do not let the number of my sins be a reason to abandon me. I cry out to You with my whole heart: listen to me and save me. Amen.

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