



LORD'S VOICE

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΗ ΔΙΕΚΚΕΣΗ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ

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THE RICH YOUTH

Jesus the Allgood God. The rich youth of today's Gospel passage called the Lord "good teacher", because he saw Him only as a virtuous and wise Jewish rabbi. The Lord wanting to correct the humble opinion which the youth had about Him, interrupted him telling him that the only true good one is God. With this word of His He was drawing the youth to the realization of His divine quality, because many times the Lord called Himself not only simply good, but the light of the world, the truth, life and source of life, the bread which descended from heaven and offers life to people and He is completely clean of sin.

The maturity of the rich youth. Subsequently the youth asked the Lord how he must live, in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus reminded him of the commandments of the Holy Scripture, revealing that he is not contrary to the Old Testament. The Commandments of the Old Testament apply also in the New Testament as regards their spiritual content. Then the youth with the answer which he gave to the Lord revealed that he was feeling inside him that he was still missing something, in order to have the sure hope and assurance that he would gain eternal life. He realized that only the general keeping of the commandments does not bring comfort to man. He has need also of personal notification from God, in order to correctly proceed in his life. Precisely this shows the maturity of the youth and his sincere and guileless interest in his salvation. So for this reason Christ, as the evangelist Mark witnesses, liked him, and revealed what is the will of God for him.

The response to the will of God. For the rich youth, the will of God was for him to sell all his belongings, to distribute them to the poor and to follow Jesus Christ. From many others he did not seek this. Not even from Nicodemus the pharisee, nor from Joseph of Arimathea, who was an official person, or from the possessed fellow whom He healed at Gergesa, nor also from quite a few others who themselves had asked to become His disciples and to follow Him wherever He is going. The rich youth had a select soul and many presuppositions, in order to be shown forth as a disciple and apostle of the Lord. So for this reason also the Lord especially honored him calling him to abandon his wealth.

Unfortunately however the heart of the youth was more given to riches, than to the word of God which was addressed personally to him. He was not implementing that which David teaches: "if

wealth flows, do not add the heart". So for this reason very sad, he departed from the Lord and from his personal salvation.

Which rich people do not enter into the Kingdom of God. The Lord bemoaning the youth and those similar to him said that it is impossible for rich people to enter into the Kingdom of God. And He added that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, rather than for a rich person into the Kingdom of the Heavens. With this word of His He was not referring to all rich people in general, because Abraham also and Job and other holy people were rich. He was referring to every person in whom the wealth of his heart is found in whatsoever earthly thing and not in the will of God. Every passion, person, thing, habit, thought or idea, which gains the heart of man, so that for its sake he departs from the will and word of God, is considered as "wealth" which prevents him from entering into the Kingdom of God.

Self salvation in Christ salvation. Because all people are tyrannized more or less by one or also many passions and sinful habits, the apostles justly wondered if there is a person who is able to be saved. Then the Lord answered that this thing, in other words, the achieving of salvation, is impossible for man, however it is possible for God, because in God everything is possible. In another case He urged His disciples to remain united with Him, because without Him they are not able to do anything. Consequently, it is impossible for man, no matter how virtuous he is, to be saved on his own. Man receives his salvation freely, when he believes in Jesus Christ, the God and Creator of all, when he is baptized in His name, communes of His body and blood and keeps His commandments.

Having the above in mind, let us not settle for a dry keeping of the commandments. Imitating the rich youth, we ought to seek the will of God in our personal life, paying attention to the words of the Scripture and of the Saints, studying the dictates of our conscience, praying and frequently seeking the advice of our spiritual father. However, avoiding the evil example of the youth, let us always put first the will of God, so that we may be shown perfect before Him and follow Him into His eternal Kingdom.

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