

Make me Lazarus!

Man's free "yes" to God's calling is not forced by anything. Not even by the miracle of a dead person's resurrection. So for this reason also, the patriarch Abraham, to the rich man's unbeneficial philanthropic request to send Lazarus to wake up his brothers, reminds him that "God has striven earlier on, and more than you, for these things, sending many teachers. If they did not listen to them, neither will they listen to a resurrected dead person".

After these things, the disbelievers' or unbelievers' usual argument-demand that "only if I see a miracle, will I believe," crumbles. Miracles support faith, more or less, but they are not its basic presupposition. The main thing which is previously necessary for faith is the cleansing of the heart from the passions and the unbiased study of the word of God. A troparion of our Church very descriptively witnesses this saving truth: "Just as in the parable, the rich man had many material goods, I am rich in passions. And with great uncompassion I was indifferent to my soul, which flying before the gates of repentance, is dying from the hunger of virtues. But, you, O Lord, make me "Lazarus", poor not in money, but in sins. And place me in the patriarch Abraham's embrace

Archim. B. L

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2018 5TH SUNDAY OF LUKE.,

Joannicius the Great, The Holy Hieromartyrs Nicander, Bishop of Myra, and Hermias the Presbyter, Porphyrios the Mime, Emperor John Batatze, the Merciful, George Karslidis of Pontos.

tone of the week : *Plagal of the Second Tone*

EOTHINON : *First Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *Letter to Ephesians 2:4-10*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke16:49-31*

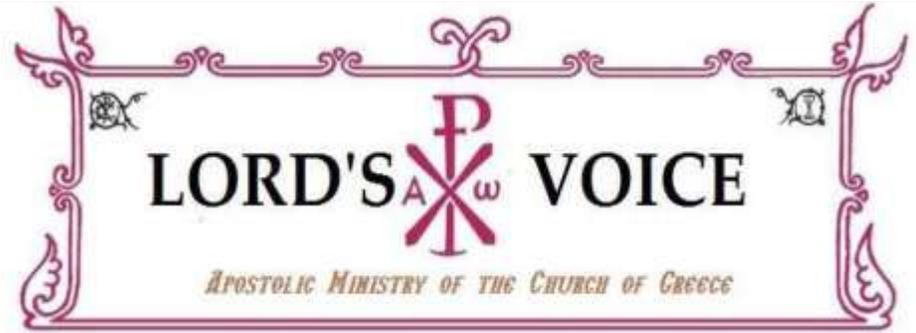
NEXT SUNDAY, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2018 8TH

SUNDAY OF LUKE., *Menas of Egypt, Victor and, Stephanie.*

Theodore the Studite, Holy Martyr Vincent

EPISTLE READING: *II Corinthians 4:6-15*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 10: 25-37*



66TH YEAR OCTOBER 28 2018 PAMPHLET #44 (3414)

THE LIES FINISHED!

The former atheist and later fervent apologist of Christianity, C. S. Lewis, says somewhere that "*the value of Christianity does not lie only in that it is useful and is simply able to make us good people. Christianity is not a remedy. It is a witness of true events*". Christianity is that God became man, was crucified and resurrected, in order to renew and grant us the undetractable joy of true and eternal life. Of a life which does not fear death anymore. Thus the two great lies were torn down: 1) prosperity without God, and 2) that death is invincible. We see this also in today's parable.

The deception of "prosperity without God"

The sacred Chrysostom uncovers the first lie with his perceptive gaze: "The rich man externally wore purple robes and fine linen, whereas his soul was full of spider webs. His body smelled sweetly of aromas, whereas his soul exuded an unbearable stench. The slave flesh, he satiated with a variety of foods, whereas the lady soul, he allowed to die of starvation". So even if he did not obtain his wealth by deceptions and thieveries, his uncompassion towards Lazarus made him so poor in

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO (LUKE 16:19-31)

The Lord said, "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses, and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to them, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

humaneness and love, that he ends up unrecognizable to the God of love. For such an unjust person, God does not even have a name, since only "the names of the righteous are written down in the book of life" according to Saint Theophylactos.

On the contrary, the named Lazarus, having rejected the false prosperity without God, based his hope in God. So for this reason – continues the saint of Ochrid – even if he had the added torture of seeing "the others delighting exceedingly and his own self hungering, he was not

blaspheming nor murmuring, he did not criticize the rich man's luxurious life nor did he condemn his inhumaneness, but he forbore with much philosophy". And the real philosopher Lazarus, exercising himself in the most repulsive for the rich man philosophy, in the healthy study of death, was being nourished with the hope of the Resurrection. Thus he was abolishing also the second lie, that is, the supposed definitiveness and invincibility of death.

What is the cause of the chasm?

Really, for both of them death proved not the end but a transferral. Of Lazarus, on the one hand, into the embrace of "the father of the believers," patriarch Abraham, while to the rich man, on the other hand, into Hades. Here the overturnings are stunning. Now henceforth he is that rich man, who – according to the golden-tongued one – "is suffering more than what Lazarus suffered in his life" seeing Lazarus, on the one hand, having boldness towards God and enjoying great gladness, while himself, on the other hand, being in such shame, and being tortured by the fire of hell. And he who did not even condescend then to accept or look at Lazarus out of scorn, now that he needs him, he does not endure even to turn to see him, in order to ask help from him. Thus he dares to beg the patriarch, causing the just scolding of Saint John: "How do you call Abraham "father", since you did not strive at all to resemble him? He offered hospitality to everyone, while you didn't even cast a glance to a poor person".

However, the patriarch Abraham does not scold him. "Instead of answering him "inhuman fellow, aren't you ashamed?" He tenderly addresses him: "child". What a kind and holy soul!" Saint Theophylactos admires. However, aside from "the kind voice" he is not able to offer him anything else. The chasm which separates them is unbridgeable. Not, of course, on account of God, but because the rich man himself, in his entire life, scorned the "bridges" which God was setting up between Him and people, in other words, Moses and the Prophets. As much as a person voluntarily ignores or even tears down these "bridges", so much is God not able to approach him and save him. And God is unable to do something like that, because He does not want to abolish our freedom.