



13th Sunday of Luke

The Reading is from Luke 18:18-27

At that time, a ruler came to Jesus and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth."

And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone

From on high didst Thou descend, O Compassionate One; to burial of three days hast Thou submitted that Thou mightest free us from our passions. O our Life and Resurrection, Lord, glory be to Thee.

Seasonal Kontakion in the Third Tone

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to * God the Word ineffably, * Who was before all the ages. * Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing * the gladsome tidings; * with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him * Who is willing to be gazed on * as a young Child Who * before the ages is God.

Discussion:

One of the 7 Mysteries/Sacraments of our Church is Confession. Many of us neglect it. It is difficult to tell someone else what we have done wrong; many of us may think that we have not sinned or done anything wrong so confession is unnecessary.

This is not what we are taught by Our Lord. We are taught to be vigilant against sin. The devil wants us to think we are self-justified and can be proud of what we have done (or not done) as if we could accomplish anything without the blessing of Our Lord. It is this type of pride that led Adam and Eve into sin.

Think of the young man in the lesson.

Sorrowful, he walks away. Sadness can lead to repentance. If we put this Gospel Lesson in a modern Orthodox context, it is possible to imagine the average Orthodox parishioner coming to confession and telling the priest, "I don't really know what to confess for I haven't murdered anyone, I haven't committed adultery, I haven't stolen anything or told any big lies."

To that the priest can reply like Christ: *"Good for you, then all you need to do is sell all you have and give it to the poor and go and follow Christ!"*

Instead of a video, look this over. Consider what you do and think, your attitude towards others. Are we as Christ taught us to be or not? Likely we are not but the blessing comes from Christ's sacrifice for us. Redemption is there if we strive and struggle for it. Examining ourselves honestly is a big part of that.

Preparation for Confession and Holy Communion

The Commandments of God

I am the Lord God: you shall have no other gods before Me.

- Have I believed in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
- Have I failed to trust in God and His mercy?
- Have I complained against God when things were rough?
- Have I been thankful for God's blessings?
- Have I given into superstition?
- Have I doubted the Christian faith and the teachings of the Orthodox Church?
- Have I served God and kept His Commandments?
- Have I associated with and/or believed in the teachings of heretics?
- Have I failed to pray to God faithfully?
- Have I put anything before God, including myself?

You shall not make or keep yourself any graven image.

- Have I made an idol of any person or thing?
- Have I given to anyone or anything the worship that is due to God alone?
- Have I tried to follow the example set by Jesus Christ?
- Have I read the Holy Scriptures regularly?
- Have I been attentive during Church, not letting my mind wander or be insincere?
- Have I taken Holy Communion regularly and properly prepared?

You shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain.

- Have I shown disrespect to the holy name of God in any way?
- Have I cursed anyone or anything?
- Have I shown reverence to holy persons and things?
- Have I helped or interfered with the work of the Church's clergy?
- Have I taken an oath for or promised to do illegal, immoral or evil things?

Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.

- Have I stayed away from Church or kept others from going?
- Have I done work on Sunday that is not God's or for His glory?
- Have I behaved properly in a wholesome fashion?
- If I could not go to Church, did I pray at home?
- Have I kept the fasts and holy days prescribed by the Church?

Honor your father and mother.

- Have I respected my parents and obeyed them?
- Have I lied to my parents or caused them pain by my words or actions?
- Have I cared for my parents and done my duty for my family?
- Have I cared for my spouse properly or have I harmed him or her in any way?
- Have I set a good example for my children or my brothers/sisters?
- Have I brought my children up properly, correcting them as needed?
- Have I worked for my employers fairly and diligently?
- Have I treated those that work for me fairly?
- Have I honored God by my actions toward those close to me?
- Have I honored the Church by practicing our religion according to her teachings?

You shall not kill.

- Have I caused injury or death to anyone?
- Have I wished that I were dead?
- Have I hurt myself or anyone else by not living properly or by evil behavior?
- Have I kept my temper and not hurt anyone by words or actions?
- Have I refused to help someone who needed my help?
- Have I failed to stand up when someone was treated unjustly?
- Have I mistreated animals or destroyed any life unnecessarily?
- Have I failed to forgive someone or kept evil thoughts against them?

You shall not commit adultery.

- Have I had unclean, impure thoughts?
- Have I committed impure acts myself or with others?
- Have I read immoral literature or participated in obscenities?
- Have I associated with bad people or gone to immoral places?
- Have I eaten, drunk or smoked too much?
- Have I been lazy or wasted my time?
- Have I tried to get anyone else to do something wrong or to commit a sin?
- Have I been unfaithful to a trust confided in me?

You shall not steal.

- Have I stolen anything or wished to do so?
- Have I kept anything that did not belong to me?
- Have I tried to return things I have found to their owners?
- Have I cheated anyone?
- Have I paid my debts?
- Have I lived within my means, without extravagance or waste?
- Have I given to charity in proportion to my material blessings?
- Have I been honest and upright?

You shall not bear false witness.

- Have I told lies or quibbled with the truth for my own gain?
- Have I made careless statements or spoken evil against anyone?
- Have I betrayed any trust told me in secret?
- Have I gossiped against or slandered anyone?
- Have I concealed the truth or helped a lie?
- Have I looked for the good in others rather than their shortcomings?

You shall not covet.

- Have I been envious of the good that has come to others?
- Have I wished to own the possessions of others?
- Have I damaged someone else's property or possessions?
- Have I shown discontent or dissatisfaction with what God has granted to me?
- Have I been stingy?
- Have I held back something that was due to others?
- Have I hoped for someone's failure so I could gain from it?
- Have I been gracious and generous to others?
- Have I expected God to give me that which I would not give to others?