

33RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST,

SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS

"...Zacchaeus, make hast and come down; for I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5).

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The description of Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus reveals the truth about him, what a man he really was. By profession, Zacchaeus was a customs officer, collecting taxes for the Roman government. The Israelis did not perceive such people positively, they did not like them because they served the occupiers. But the encounter with Christ, reveals a completely different picture of him. Hearing from people about Jesus' activities, Zacchaeus wanted to know more about Him. He climbed a tree to see the Savior better among a group of disciples and people. Christ noticed him and appreciated the efforts of the publican.

The evangelist Luke notes that Zacchaeus was a publican and a wealthy man. But at the same time, in his soul, was simplicity and sincerity. That is why he gladly received Christ into his home. The simple human curiosity to see the glorious preacher, Jesus of Nazareth, led Zacchaeus to a personal encounter with Him in his own home and a sincere, profound repentance. He overcame the criticism of the people with the words, "...Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and when I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold" (Luke 19:8). With these words, Zacchaeus showed responsibility for his actions, his life, for the fact that he was unjustly enriched at the expense of ordinary people, and had abused his official position.

Today, in talks about economic and social reforms in many countries, much is said about an important element, "the responsibility of heads of state, politicians, and deputies," for a proper standard of living. A common cause of many problems, difficulties in personal and social life is the lack of responsibility for their actions and responsibilities. It is worth remembering here that the common good always consists of the personal good. St. John Chrysostom says, "Remember that you are responsible not only for your soul, but also for the appearance of the whole world." We often demand responsibility - a high level of morality from other people, and forget to ask ourselves what is the level of our morality, religious consciousness, or the level of spiritual life?

One commander of a warship, with great pride, issued an order, to what appeared to be an approaching ship. During the night, through a storm, he noticed that a light was approaching him. He ordered the ship to, "Change direction ten degrees north." The answer came, "You change your direction by ten degrees to the south." The proud commander decided not to give in to another ship, so he sent another message, "Change direction by ten degrees, I am the commander!" The answer immediately came, "You change direction, I am a lighthouse!"

A similar situation can happen to each of us. Pride blinds human eyes and mind. Jesus Christ knocks very often on the human heart and is ready to give us His grace, He is able to save our souls from sin and help us to realize holiness, but not all of us are ready to cooperate with God's grace. But without God's grace, no one is able to attain eternal salvation, so we must cherish it above all else in the world. Christ says, "For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life" (Mk 8:36)?

Dear believers, the Lord visited the house of Zacchaeus and brought salvation there, calling him the Son of Abraham. Let us also seek Christ always and believe that He will bring us salvation and eternal happiness, because there is no end to God's mercy. "For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

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