

WEEKLY PEW BULLETIN

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Clearwater, Florida

Rev. James T. Paris, Proistamenos

Rev. Andrew J. Pavlakos, Assistant Priest

The Lord's Day-11th Sunday of Matthew

Sunday after the Dormition; Samuel the Prophet; Heliodoros and Photini the Martyrs; Lucios the Senator and Martyr.

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GIVE AND FORGIVE FOR NOW, AND, THEREBY, LIVE FOR ETERNITY

The teaching of this simple and powerful parable is so clear, and yet, it is so difficult for us to put into practice. We understand it, and most of us accept it, but we find it so difficult to do it. This is sad, even tragic, for ultimately, nothing less than our eternal salvation is at stake. As we read it or hear it, we say to ourselves: "Yes, yes, of course, we know." We find the teaching understandable and easy to acknowledge, but why do we find it so difficult to live it? After all, Orthodox Christianity is not just about teaching, preaching, and learning; it is about doing, living, and being. Our belief must become incarnate in us through deed and action. The words of Christ must take root in us and bear fruit. We must embody and give life to His words as He Himself, the Word of God, took flesh and dwelt amongst us. However, too often, as in the beginning with the First and Fallen Man, our pride keeps us from Paradise. We choose our own way, not Christ's Way, and we lose eternity for the transitory, infinity for the finite, and the Kingdom of the Heavens for the fallen world. This is our own doing because we chose the way of man and not the Way of God. We chose momentary satisfaction and lost eternal Glory. All this, because we did not listen to and follow the Teaching of Christ

The parable today is well known. It begins with the familiar "The Kingdom of the Heavens is like..." The Kingdom of the Heavens is like a certain who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. Clearly, the King is Christ our God, and we are the slaves. In the End, there will be a reckoning, and Christ our King will return in Glory to judge us by our deeds, for the first time He came in Humility, but the second time, He will come in Glory to judge. As the All Merciful and Loving God, He came as a Sacrifice and Propitiation to pay the Ultimate and Infinite Price as only God can forgive and remit our sins and transgressions. We cannot possibly pay an infinite price. Only God Who is Infinite can pay such a Price. He did this freely for us.

We did not deserve, earn, or merit such a pardon, but He gave it to us out of His Infinite Love, Mercy, and Compassion. On the One Hand, He offers us the Mercy, but on the other hand, for those who refuse His Mercy, He delivers His Righteous Judgment. Since He is a Righteous Judge, He must judge. God created us in His Image and Likeness, and as God is Freedom, we are free. This is a seed of the divinity planted in us. This freedom, however, is very powerful, and with this freedom comes a grave responsibility and a fearsome accountability. God respects our freedom and allows to make mistakes, transgress, and sin. He does this because without this freedom than we are no better than the beasts of the earth, and yet, without His Grace there is no means by which we are saved. God grants His Grace; however, we must freely choose to accept and cooperate with His Grace. By cooperating with His Grace, we become transformed, and we must bear the fruit of the Spirit which manifests itself in love, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and charity, thereby, imitating Christ's Example, and therefore, we become Christ-like, making the kingdom of the heavens real and present. When we exercise mercy and forgiveness, we demonstrate love and show others, in us, the pure Image of the Lover of Mankind (Philanthropos), as we become for others the Face of Christ.

So the King came to settle accounts with His slaves. In ancient times, the king or master had absolute power over his slaves to do whatever he wanted with them with ruthless impunity. They were merely his tools or property. They were not inanimate property (tools and equipment), dumb property (animals, livestock, and beasts of burden), but they were the master's property as living or animate property to be bought and sold and used as he wished. The slave had no rights vis a vis the master. The slave was bought and paid for and owed his life to the master, whether he, or anyone, liked it or not. This was the Roman Law.

The first slave was brought to the master to settle his account. This particular slave owed his master

Eleventh Eothinon Gospel John**21:14-25**

When You showed Yourself to Your Disciples, O Savior, after the Resurrection, in return for his love, You gave Simon the feeding of the sheep and asked him to take care to tend them. That is why You said: "If you love me, Peter, tend my lambs, tend my sheep." Then, he at once displayed his affection and inquired about the other Disciple. By their entreaties, O Christ, protect Your flock from wolves that would injure it.

Apolytikion for Dormition

In giving birth you remained a virgin, and in your dormition you did not forsake this world, O Theotokos. For as the Mother of Life you have yourself passed into life. And by your prayers you deliver our souls from death. (p. 223 of Hymnal)

Second Tone Apolytikion

When you descended into death, Life immortal, You vanquished the power of hell by Your resplendent Divinity, and when You raised the dead from the depths of darkness, all the heavenly powers cried out triumphantly: O giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You. (p. 103 of Hymnal)

Apolytikion of Pentecost

Blessed are You, O Christ our God. You made wise men of poor fishermen, by sending down upon them Your Holy Spirit, and through them, You caught the whole world. O Lover of mankind, Glory to You. (p. 172 of Liturgy Hymnal)

Kontakion for Dormition

She is our vigilant intercessor, the Theotokos, our sure hope and protection. Neither death nor tomb held any power of Life, she was taken into life by that very one who deigned to dwell in her ever virgin womb. (p. 289 of Hymnal)

ten thousand talents. Now a talent was an enormous sum of money even to a wealthy man, let alone a slave who had very little or almost nothing. Ten thousand talents was symbolically an infinite amount. The debt, therefore, was impossible and hopeless to pay. He had to no choice but to throw himself for deliverance upon the mercy and compassion of the king, his master. Otherwise, he, his entire family, and all he possessed would be sold, and he would never be delivered from his state of indebtedness, for he could never pay an infinite amount. The slave knew this, and begged the king for patience until he could be pay him back, just so he could buy some time, even though he knew he was living on borrowed time. He tried to make a deal against the inevitable, but the king was moved to compassion, knowing he could not repay the debt, so he mercifully released him, delivered him, and forgave him the debt. All was forgiven. This was a priceless gift that he did not deserve, but the king, nevertheless, paid it for him and his family.

Eagerly accepting the payment, but clearly not accepting his king's example, the slave fell upon a fellow slave who owed him but a few months wages which, in time, could easily be paid. However, the ungrateful slave choked and threatened him, demanding immediate and full payment. His fellow debtor begged him to have patience and he would be in him full. Nevertheless, the slave to whom the king showed mercy, we give no mercy to his fellow slave and debtor and through him into the prison. When the other slaves who had witnessed the behaviour of the forgiven slave towards the other slave, they grieved and reported all to their king. The immediately summoned the forgiven slave and admonished him for not following his king's example and not having mercy on his fellow slave as his master had had mercy upon him. His king forgave him everything. Should not he forgive his fellow slave? Thus, the king delivered the ungrateful slave to the torturers until he should pay the entire debt which was impossible to pay.

Having shared the parable, Jesus made it very clear to His Disciples, that His Heavenly Father, as the King of Kings, would certainly do the same to each of them, if they should not forgive their fellow brothers their trespasses from their heart. The lesson is clear, powerful, and frightening. If we want forgiveness of our trespasses from the God, the Righteous Judge and King of Kings, we must first forgive others who share our same state their trespasses against us. If we want mercy and compassion, we must give mercy and compassion. To forgive others is not just for them for the time being, it is ultimately for us for eternity; for if we forgive others their finite debts, God will forgive us the infinite debt that we owe him and we cannot repay. If we do not forgive, then we are disobedient to His Perfect Example, and we will not be forgiven our debts, delivered from our perpetual fallen and suffering state (the torturers), and freed for our eternal salvation in Heaven. We reap what we sow. Sow mercy, compassion, and forgiveness and reap an eternal harvest of love and joy. Sow anger, vengeance, and indifference, and reap an eternal harvest of sorrow. The Way is simple and clear. Give, forgive, and live. Give compassion, forgive the trespass, and live forever in Christ

Faithfully yours in Christ,

✠Fr. Jim

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Epistle: 11th Sunday

1 Corinthians 9:1-12 (p. 106 of Liturgy Book)

Gospel: 11th Sunday of Matthew

Matthew 18:23-35 (p. 217 of Liturgy Book)

Communion Hymn

We will walk in the light of the glory of your face, O Lord, forever. Alleluia. (p. 330 of Hymnal)

Creed in English

TOWN HALL MEETING

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27

11:15AM MATTHEOS HALL



SUMMER HOURS REMINDER

Until Sunday September 3rd....

Sunday Orthros will begin at 8:15 and

Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30.

Weekday Orthros will begin at 8:30

and Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30.

MEMORIALS

1 Year Samuel Buclous

1 Year Frank Cardy

ALTAR FLOWERS

*are offered in memory of Samuel Buclous
by Daisy Buclous & Family.*

Sunday, August 20-11th Sunday of Matthew

8:15am

Orthros (Matins)

9:30am

Divine Liturgy

9:30am

Church School

10:30am

Adult Religious Education Class

11:30am

Altar Orientation (Acolytes)

11:30am

Ministry Fair

12:30pm

PTO Meeting

3:00pm

GOYA Basketball

Monday, August 21

6:30pm

Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, August 23

5:00pm

Adult Basketball

Saturday, August 26

St. Stephen's Camp Retreat

Preparing for the Journey of Marriage Seminar

12:00pm

DOP Welcome Back Lunch,

Mirage Restaurant

Sunday, August 27-12th Sunday of Matthew

St. Stephen's Camp Retreat

Food Drive

8:15am

Orthros (Matins)

9:30am

Divine Liturgy

9:30am

Church School

10:30am

Adult Religious Education Class

11:15am

Town Hall Meeting

11:30am

Altar Orientation (Acolytes)

TODAY DURING COFFEE HOUR

Welcome Table, Capital Campaign Information;

Oral History Project, Disco Ticket Sales

OUR 2017 STEWARDSHIP PROGRESS

Goal:\$445,000-**Received:**\$271,468-**Remaining:** \$173,532

Per Family Per Month: \$76

*Please help our community reach its stewardship goal by
fulfilling your pledge, increasing your pledge, or making a
pledge. Thank you!*

SAT. , SEPTEMBER 16, 2017

LIVE MUSIC

FOOD & FUN



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409 S. Old Coachman Road
Clearwater, FL 33765
For information or tickets call: 727-799-4605

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

DISCO PARTY

featuring
the music of

Disco Inferno

\$50 per person/\$65 at the door
Cash Bar and Heavy hors d'oeuvre
Doors open at 8 pm

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NEW WIFI

A new wifi network has been set up in the Hall and the Churchnasium.

Please see a Parish Council member or refer to the signs posted for the network name and password.

GOD'S LITTLE CORNER

Our Holy Trinity Bookstore is open for you every Sunday after the Divine Liturgy in the Foyer of Matheos Hall.

Come to God's Little Corner to see, learn, and grow in your Faith.

PRAYERS FOR THOSE IN NEED

To have a name added to the prayer list, please contact Esther Tsikos (727) 736-3409 or email her at esthertsikos@tampabay.rr.com.

Please pray for the following people:

Ryan, Athena, Petros and Christina, George, Anna, Margaret, Demetrios, Steve, Theodore, Angela, Anna, Teresa, Connie, Christine, Tiffany, John, Ginny, Kiersten, Fred, Bartholomew, Sheri, Catherine, Athanasios, Evangelia, Eleni, Andy, Jack, Despina, Frederica, Mary, Georgia, Peggy, Faye, Sophia, Frank, Ruth, Irene, Raymond, Zacharoula, Esther.

