

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
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The Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost
(11.05.2023.)

Luke 16:19-31

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. **(KJV)**

Believers are blessed to have the Gospel proclaimed. The Gospel offers nourishment for the body, mind and soul. The Gospel contains instructions and enrichment for daily life.

Attentive believers experience unity with the Lord through the Gospel. God is always with us. Through the senses, believers experience the presence of God in daily life. Believers communicate with God by prayer and thought.

Bodily actions enable the believer to experience God in daily life. Purposeful daily work and activity of a person keeps the believer's heart, mind and soul united with God.

Daily relationships involve God as each person is created in the image and likeness of God. (Gen. 1:27) The Lord Jesus Christ was clear in saying the nature of relationships affect eternal life. (Mt.25: 31-46)

The present Gospel is a firm reminder for believers to be extremely sensitive to their present surroundings. People in need are very near each one of us. The present Gospel behooves us to reach out and help the needy nearby.

The rich man in the present Gospel neglected to help poor Lazarus. The rich man suffered due to his neglect and failure to help. In his eventual suffering, the rich man wanted to prevent his family from suffering.

The rich man was told his brethren should heed and learn from Moses and the prophets. For centuries believers have had the opportunity to learn from Moses and the prophets in addition to learning directly from the Crucified and Risen Christ.

God's Holy Church offers life-saving teachings developed over the centuries to guide and nourish believers. God's Holy Church provides instructions for life from conception to life eternal. The Church's teachings are freely offered.

Each person chooses whether to heed and learn from the wisdom and teachings proclaimed in the Church. Each believer determines the extent Christ's teachings and way to the Kingdom will be followed.

God cared for blessed Lazarus in the present Gospel. God cares for each person suffering and being neglected. God loves each person. Believers baptized into Christ have the responsibility to help the needy in their midst.

Believers put their souls in peril if they neglect the teachings of Moses and the prophets. The soul is in peril if the love of the Crucified and Risen Jesus does not govern daily life.

The Church offers the Gospel for believers to be nourished and to learn. The Church offers the Holy Mysteries for believers to unite and remain united with Jesus Christ.

The opportunity to grow and mature in Christ always exists while the mind functions and the heart beats. The believer has the responsibility to live the life in Christ and to grow in Christ.

The commitment to live in Christ and grow in Christ continues from Holy Baptism until departure from this life. The Lord is ever-present to help, nourish and guide the believer in the journey to the Kingdom and eternal life.

The present Gospel makes clear what happens when a person is not sensitive to needy persons nearby. The rich man focused only on himself. He had no regard for the suffering Lazarus.

The rich man could have made a lasting difference in his life and in Lazarus's life.. Sensitive believers heeding the present Gospel will learn a beneficial lesson. Attentive believers will seek to heed Moses, the prophets and the Risen Christ.

Effort is necessary throughout the Christian life to grow and mature in Christ.

Growing and maturing in Christ is always possible. God's Kingdom is within reach of each person choosing to learn and to heed the Gospel.

The Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostle James, First Bishop of Jerusalem. October 23/November 5, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic

THE THEOLOGY OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN IS THE NORM OF ORTHODOX CONFESSION

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist John is preeminently called a theologian before the other Apostles by reason of his most obvious confession of God the Word as God, and the heights of his contemplation and depths of his knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the day dedicated to his memory is most appropriate for studying theology, and studying it precisely with him.

Blessed are those who heard his word by mouth in Jerusalem, Cyprus, Ephesus, Patmos, and in the churches of Asia Minor. But we also have the opportunity to join the ranks of his disciples. We have before us his Apostolic epistles. Let us open them and internalize the truths contained in them. We will thus receive an entire course of Christian theology in its essential features. If all the truths contained in the epistles of St. John the Theologian are brought together, then they could be summarized in the following order (come and listen as though you were standing before his own pulpit).

According to his nature and the character imprinted in him, man is intended to be in communion with God. This is his Eternal Life, his life full of joy (1 Jn. 1:3-4). But *God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all* (1 Jn. 1:5). Therefore, in order to be in communion with Him, we must walk in the light, *as He is in the light* (1 Jn. 1:7). He who walks in darkness ceases to have communion with God, and if he says that he has this communion, he *does not the truth* (1 Jn. 1:6).

As long as our forefathers walked in the light of God's will, they were in communion with God; but when they came to love the darkness of their own desires, they fell into sin and ceased to be in God. And in them we also fell into the same darkness and away from communion with God. This is such an immutable truth that he who does not confess it, who says *that we have not sinned*, makes God Himself a liar, and *His word is not in him* (1 Jn. 1:10). No. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* (1 Jn. 1:8).

But in sin there is death and destruction. What does the love of God do? *The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world* (1 Jn. 4:14). *God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him* (1 Jn. 4:9). Behold, God's love for us! We couldn't endure in love, but He never stopped loving us, *and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (1 Jn. 4:10). Now, *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world* (1 Jn. 2:1-2). He

appeared to take away our sins and destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:5, 8). In Him is life, and He was with the Father, and was manifested unto us (1 Jn. 1:2).

Thus, *God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son* (1 Jn. 5:11). From now on, such is the law of God's righteousness and love, that *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life* (1 Jn. 5:12). For he who has the Son has both the Father and the Spirit (1 Jn. 2:23, 3:24, 4:13)—God is Triune, in Whom is the fount of Life.

Such are the laws of communion with God, and these are its advantage and fruits: Those who dwell in God are called and are *sons of God*, who, as *born of God doth not commit sin* (1 Jn. 3:1, 9, 5:18). For His light abides in them (1 Jn. 2:24), and they always bear the fruit of righteousness according to their nature. If anyone sins, the Blood of the Son of God cleanses him *from all sin* (1 Jn. 1:7). He who confesses his sins is absolved of them, and he is cleansed *from all unrighteousness* (1 Jn. 1:9). Therefore, those who abide in Him, when He appears, will *not be ashamed before Him at His coming*, but will have *boldness before Him in the Day of Judgment* (1 Jn. 2:28, 4:17), for *this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life* (1 Jn. 2:25).

Such is the blessed end of communion with God! Having been vouchsafed this gift, let us make an effort to remain in Him. He who wants to be in unceasing communion with God must *keep His word* (1 Jn. 2:5). Only *he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him* (1 Jn. 3:24). *And His commandments are not grievous* (1 Jn. 5:3). *And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment* (1 Jn. 3:23).

The first commandment: Let us believe in the Son of God. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God* (1 Jn. 4:15). Whoever wants to please God without the Lord Jesus Christ, let him hear the judgment against him—only he who has the Son has the Father. *And Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*. So he who rejects that Jesus is the Christ, rejects the Father and the Son. *And He is antichrist* (1 Jn. 2:22-23). Whoever does not believe in the Son, makes a “liar” out of God Himself, *because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son* (1 Jn. 5:10). So, all that you have heard from the beginning—may it abide in you! *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father* (1 Jn. 2:24). For *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son* (2 Jn. 1:9).

The second commandment: Let us love one another. He who abideth in Christ *ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked* (1 Jn. 2:6). *And He laid down His life for us* (1 Jn. 3:16). Thus, *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another* (1 Jn. 4:11). *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him* (1 Jn. 4:16). He deceives himself who says: “I love God, and that’s enough.” No. The commandment is such that he who loves God must also love his brother. *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?* (1 Jn. 4:20).

He also deceives himself who says: “I will love the brethren, and that’s enough.” No. The law is such that only he who loves God truly loves the sons of God (1 Jn. 5:2). *He that loveth not his brother abideth in death*. Therefore, *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ... hath no eternal life*

abiding in him (1 Jn. 3:14–15). Thus, brethren, it is only when we love one another [that] God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us (1 Jn. 4:12). Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good, knowing that he that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God (3 Jn. 1:11). But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word ... but in deed and in truth (1 Jn. 3:17-18).

Such is the bright, blessed brotherhood of the sons of God. Those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who do not receive His teachings, or receive them but are alien to His spirit in life and disposition of heart, constitute the pernicious world, which *lieth in darkness (1 Jn. 5:19)*, which thinks evil, works evil, and teaches others to do evil. Brethren! *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 Jn. 2:15–17).*

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 Jn. 4:1-3). Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists... They went out from us, but they were not of us (1 Jn. 2:18-19). Whoever comes to you from such and does not bear the true teaching of Christ, receive him not into your house and do not rejoice in him, so as not to become partner to his evil deeds.

They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error (1 Jn. 4:5–6). That which we have heard with our ears, what we have seen with our eyes ... and our hands have handled, we announce to you *of the Word of life. For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life... That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 1:1–3).*

And God Himself testified of Him. *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. Everyone that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself (1 Jn. 5:9-10).* He who stands in the truth knows the truth. *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things (1 Jn. 2:20). But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him (1 Jn. 2:27).*

This, brethren, is the entire course of Christian theology, in brief! Having received it as from the mouth of the Apostle himself, let us hold fast to it. *Now we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 Jn. 5:20). And now,*

little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 Jn. 2:28). Amen.

St. Theophan the Recluse
Translation by Jesse Dominick

Services this Week

- **Wednesday 11.08.2023. – Holy and Glorious Great- martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-gusher of Thessalonica – 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- **23rd Sunday after Pentecost - 11.12.2023.- St Milutin , King of Serbia; Ven. Theoctist and Helena; Conf. Varnava of Hvosno - 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy**

Donations October 29, 2023

Offering - \$ 623.00 Candles - \$66.00 Dues - \$100.00

Large Candles

In Memory of My Wife, Martha Banda from Husband Nick
In Memory of Parents, Andrew & Mildred Banda from son Nick
In Memory of Betty Gjurich from Lazo & Debbie Gjurich
In Memory of Amelia & Joseph Kondas from Richard Kondas
In Memory of Betty Gjurich from the Gjurich Family
In Memory of Bosa & Lazo Vuckovich from Dyne & Dan Tomak
In Memory of Damjena & Lazo Gjurich from Dyne & Dan Tomak

Please visit our St. Nicholas Web Page <https://stnicholasjohnstown.org>
We have now added a "DONATE" button to make it easier for you to send your donations. Please take a look.

**Join us next Sunday for a Kupas i grah luncheon!
Dine in - Donation
\$6 - Quart to go**

Anyone interested in running for and/or remaining on the St Nicholas Church Council for 2024 must submit their name and intent in writing to a member of the nominating committee (Helene Gleason, Joseph Golden and Carole McAllister) - You may also leave this information in the Candle Room to the attention of the Committee. All intentions due no later than Sunday, November 12, 2023.

KOLO NEWS

The Kolo is taking orders for our famous PUMPKIN ROLLS! \$12 each. See any Kolo member. Order forms are in the hall by the coffee pot. Order by November 5th. Pick up and pay after church November 19th.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FISH FRY

Friday, December 8, 2023

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 10, 2023

St. Nicholas Slava Celebration!!!

Sunday, December 17, 2023