



Orthodox Mission of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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Jesus, Son of David, Have Mercy on Me! Week of February 3, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

And as He drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Luke 18:35-37)

The lesson of the healing of the blind man that we heard on Sunday morning in our Gospel lesson follows closely on the heels of the lesson we heard last week, the one about the rich ruler who asked Jesus how he could attain eternal life. The one man had everything and left with nothing, but the other had nothing and left with everything. The rich ruler had wealth, youth, health, power, prestige and every good thing that the world can offer; he approached the Lord as if He were simply one rabbi or wise man or prophet or philosopher among many. The blind man had nothing. He could not even see Jesus with his physical eyes as He passed by; he had to ask who it was that was coming; but when he heard that it was Jesus, he prayed with the entire strength of his soul the Prayer of the Heart: "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" The Lord healed him with a word, saying simply, "*Your faith has made you well.*"

The crowds who heard the blind man praying to Jesus wanted to silence him. They, like the rich man, were willing to give Jesus the respect and honor due to any great teacher, but no more. St. Luke tells us

that they were even willing to address Him as a great prophet – as someone perhaps even extra special, someone who should be sought for wisdom and guidance to be sure. But more than that they were not willing to give. To address Him as the Christ, God in the flesh, the Incarnate Hope of the ages – well, that they were not willing to do. They followed Jesus like any crowd might follow someone who is admired and popular. They followed Him in the same spirit in which the rich ruler came to Him in last week's lesson: *"Tell me, Good Teacher, what I should do to have it all – and then when I am ready, to enter life eternal with my good things."* And if He were to give the right answer, the answer that would allow them like the rich ruler to serve God AND mammon in a dressing of eternal life, well then they might consider trying to consider what He might say. But to pray to Him in faith as one prays to God Himself – *that* they would not do. For the Word of God dare not ignored; it *IS* eternal and binding, and it cannot be so easily cast aside.

This was apprehended by the blind man in an instant. What he could not see with his physical eyes, he saw with the eye of his soul: *"Jesus, Son of David, Lord – Master – Eternal Self-Giving of the Father in Heaven – have mercy on me the sinner! Heal my soul and give sight to my blindness."* This faith in the Lord as the One Who alone could help and heal and give light and life to him – this is the faith that we pray to our Lord the Holy Spirit to make manifest within us. This simple and uncompromising understanding – not academic – but foundational and basic and elemental, that He is God – God *for* us, God *with* us, and God *in* us.

We can approach Him in either way, you see. Either He is one choice among many, one possible solution to those things that trouble us, or He is *THE* solution, the One and Only, the Great Alternative to everything and everyone else, the One before Whom we can only bow down in humility and love and cry the simple prayer of the heart: *Jesus, Son of David, Son of God, Savior and Redeemer of my soul and of every soul who will receive You, have mercy on me the sinner. Heal my soul. Give light to the eye of my heart. Turn never away from me, for in sickness, in health, in death and in life, You, Lord, are the One True and Only Hope in Whom I will trust – my salvation, the beginning and the end of my being, all things for all people. Have mercy on me the sinner. To You be all glory and honor forever!*

These are the only two ways, Brothers and Sisters. Either we come before Him as God with the simple faith of the blind man in our need and take everything He gives us so very freely; or, we will know Him not at all.

Remember what the LORD has done for you! Give Him thanks and praise! *Glory to His NAME for all things!* Pray for me, His most unworthy of priests.

In Christ our true God,

+Fr. Elias

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