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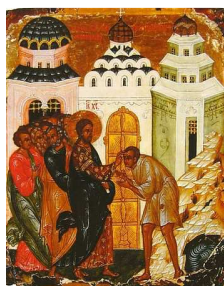
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**Sunday, 9 June, 2024
Divine Liturgy Sundays at 9:30 AM
Confessions 8:45-9:15 AM**

**Sunday of the Blind Man
о Слепом**

Thursday: Ascension of the Lord

**Thursday 13 June: Ascension of the Lord
Четверт 13 Юня: Вознесение Господне
>>Divine Liturgy / Литургия 9:30 AM<<**



Спорит простота веры с лукавым неверием. Вера, пришедши к прозревавшему слепцу, просветила умные очи его, и он ясно видит истину. Смотрите, как у него все логично.

Спрашивают его: ты что о Нем, даровавшем зрение, скажешь? "Это пророк",

ответил он, то есть посланник Божий, облеченный силою чудодейственнойю.

Непререкаемо верный вывод! Но образованность книжная не хочет видеть этой верности и ищет уклониться от последствий ее. А так как это не удавалось, то она обращается к некнижной простоте со своим внушением: "воздай славу Богу; мы знаем, что человек Тот грешник".

Простота веры не умеет связать этих понятий - грешность и чудодейственность, и выражает это открыто: "грешник ли Он, не знаю, одно знаю, что я был слеп, а теперь вижу". Что можно сказать против такого неведения? Но логика неверов упряма, и при всей очевидности не стыдится утверждать, что не знает откуда отверзший очи слепому. "Это и удивительно", говорит им здравая логика веры, "что вы не знаете откуда Он, а Он отверз мне очи. Но мы знаем, что грешников Бог не слушает; но кто чтит Бога и творит волю Его, того слушает. От века не слышано, чтобы кто отверз очи слепорожденному. Если бы Он не был от Бога, не мог бы творить ничего". Казалось бы, после этого ничего не оставалось, как преклониться перед силою такого заключения. Но книжная

ученость терпеть не может здравой логики веры, и изгнала ее вон. . . Поди теперь, доказывай истину веры тем, у которых ум растлился от упорства в неверии. Неверы всех времен - люди одного покроя. (Феофан Затворник)



Forty days after Pascha we celebrate Ascension day. Although this is considered one of the twelve main Holy Days in the Orthodox Church, it tends to be neglected by many since it falls between the two Sunday Holy Days of Pascha and Pentecost. The readings for this day are Acts 1:1-12 and Luke 24:35-54.

According to the Bible, the Lord commissioned His Apostles to preach the gospel to all nations, then He blessed them and "He was lifted up before their eyes, and a cloud took Him out of their sight." His task on earth was done. The tropar for the day tells us "Thou has ascended in glory, O Christ our God, Thou hast made Thy disciples glad by the promise of the Holy Spirit; through this blessing Thou has truly assured them that Thou are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world."

This is a very ancient Holy Day, as the Bible specifically mentions it. It has been observed as a Holy Day from the beginning of the Church. Eusebius mentioned it as a separate feast as early as 341. St. Gregory of Nyssa in 394 and St. John Chrysostom in 407 preached sermons on it. These sermons are interesting not only for their early appearance but also for their content. The Church celebrated the day not as much for its historical significance, but because of its theological reason for being. St. John Chrysostom expressed it in these words: "Through the mystery of the Ascension we,

who seemed unworthy of God's earth, are taken up into heaven... Our very nature, against which Cherubim guarded the gates of paradise, is enthroned today high above all Cherubim."

The Ascension of Christ is the consummation and fulfillment of all other feasts and the happy conclusion of the earthly sojourn of Jesus Christ." (from *The Orthodox Herald*)

† † † †

One of the brightest examples of faith is the Blind Man, to whom the sixth paschal Sunday is dedicated. The Lord once came upon a man, blind from birth, who sat and begged for alms. Knowing that this man had been born blind for the sole reason that God be glorified through him, Christ spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with this clay. Then He said to the blind man: "go and wash in the pool of Siloam." The blind man went and washed and came back seeing. The Pharisees, who observed the law of Moses with hypocritical strictness, did not believe in the healing and went out of their way to discredit the miracle. At first they expressed doubt that the blind man had actually been born blind, and so they questioned his parents extensively, and later questioned the man himself. Then they began saying that Whoever healed the blind man could not have come from God, since He did not observe the Sabbath (i.e. He healed the blind man on a Sabbath!). ... The man who had been blind was not afraid of the Pharisees, but boldly answered them: "It is truly amazing that You do not know from whence He comes, and yet He has opened my eyes; from the beginning of time it has never been heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind, so if this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

This moving story shows us the example of a man who through his faith received total sight -- both physical and spiritual. He earned this miracle by suffering and patiently enduring his blindness for many years, and now suddenly both his physical and his spiritual eyes were opened, and he simultaneously saw the sun in nature and the spiritual Sun -- the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, the blind man was not afraid to declare his faith openly, fearing neither any man, nor harassment, nor persecution for his faith

The story of the blind man also gives us great comfort: it clearly indicates to us that innate physical defects are not specifically given as punishment for sins, but often to demonstrate God's grace. When the disciples asked Christ: "Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind," the Lord said to them: "neither

this man sinned, nor his parents, but this was given so that the works of God should be manifest in him." (Fr Rostislav Sheniloff)

Место вознесения Спасителя

Елеонская гора, на западном склоне которой лежит Гефсиманский сад, является самой высокой из холмистых вершин, окружающих Иерусалим. На этой горе Господь молился ночами, здесь учил молитве учеников, беседовал с ними о конце мира; с этой горы Он вознесся на небо, чтобы сесть одесную Отца. На месте Вознесения был построен величественный храм, круглый, без купола, в котором молящиеся могли созерцать из храма то самое небо, где *облако взяло Его из вида учеников (Деян. 1, 9)*. Камень на месте Вознесения, на котором, по преданию, отпечаталась стопа Спасителя, был окружен золотой решеткой. Персы во время нашествия в VII в. не пощадили это здание. Позже из его развалин была возведена стена высотой два метра, а в центре над самым камнем Вознесения поставлена небольшая восьмиугольная часовня, которую мы находим на этом месте сейчас. След стопы Христовой, «стопочки», как называют его русские паломники, окружен мраморной рамкой.

Fortunately, we are physically sighted, but spiritually we are sometimes blind. We, people who believe in Christ, often do not see God nearby, and if we had seen Him, then doubt would never have crept into our hearts, our faith would never have wavered, puzzling questions would never have arisen in our lives: "Why?" this way and not otherwise?" Because we would see and know that everything that happens in my life is in the will of God, that the Lord walks next to me in my life, and very often it is not I who bear that heaviest cross, but instead of me - my Lord and Savior. Yes, brothers and sisters, if our spiritual eyes could see, then we would not stumble, would not limp on both legs, but would walk with a firm step, holding high our Christian title, testifying that we are truly Christians, that our God is Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And, believing in God and loving Him, we cannot help but listen to His words, not fulfill His commandments and not strive for Him with our whole lives, we cannot exist without Him, we cannot help but put Him at the center of our lives.