



**This week meditations on liturgical texts
from **Skynia Magazine****

June 20 - 26
The Gregorian calendar

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Stages of meditation

Please find below some schematic prompts for each stage of the meditation on the Word of God. [Read more.](#)

1. Reading

- Read the text
- What does it tell by itself?
- Clear up the context
- Look up the comments
- Find the key-phrase

2. Meditation

- What is my here and now?
- What does the Word tell me?
- Use your imagination
- "Digest" the text
- The Word and my life

3. Prayer

- What will I say in response?
- Recognition and request
- Gratitude and glorifying
- Prayer in the Word
- My participation in the Divine Liturgy

4. Contemplation

- A call to conversion
- Now I am silent
- Staying in the presence of God
- Now He is guiding me

Biblical readings and meditations

June 20

**Sunday of All Saints of
Rus'-Ukraine**

Romans 6: 18-23

Matthew 8: 5-13

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Prayer](#)
- [Contemplation](#)

Romans 6: 18-23

Brethren, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 8: 5-13

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to Him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.

Meditation

In today's Gospel excerpt Jesus heals a severely ill servant. Gospel writer Matthew focuses not that much on the sick person and his healing, but on the faith with which the centurion came to God to ask for his servant. Jesus was surprised to find such faith in Capernaum. *Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.*

The centurion, whose name is not known to us, as a military man, realized what power, authority, subordination is. He himself had

subordinated *soldiers* and servants who clearly followed his orders. Caring for the sick servant shows his kindness and humaneness. Subordinates and servants, probably, followed his instructions not for the sense of duty or for fear, but primarily for respect. He was also a subordinate and followed the orders given by his chiefs. He knew it by experience what the weight of a word or order given by somebody with higher power, authority was.

If his word, just as that of a centurion, has some power, the word of God who is the absolute power is definitely mighty. Probably, the man approaches Jesus right with this understanding of power. He believes that one word is enough for God: *only speak the word, and my servant will be healed.*

What is my faith like today? Do I believe that the Lord is an absolute power and everything happens according to His Word? Or, probably, I always keep looking for some additional confirmation; I need to see a miracle to believe? Do I believe that the Lord is always staying side by side with me and taking care of me, in spite of what I feel and experience?

Do I have enough faith to say: *Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and...?* Or, probably, like the father who brought the son captured by the evil spirit to Jesus, I still say through tears: *I believe; help my unbelief!* (Mark 9:24)

Jesus did not ignore and did not reject any of these men. Either the centurion who had a strong faith, or the father whose faith was

weak. The Lord accepts and helps everyone who is staying in truth with himself and has the courage to come to Him with this truth.

June 21

Monday

The Holy Apostle Jude

Jude 1: 1-10

John 14: 21-24

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Prayer](#)
- [Contemplation](#)

Jude 1: 1-10

Brethren, Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ:

May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

Beloved, while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share, I find it necessary to write and appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he

has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great day. Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” But these people slander whatever they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that, like irrational animals, they know by instinct.

John 14: 21-24

And the Lord said: “They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.”

Meditation

Those who keep the commandments given by Jesus love Him. And to keep them one should know them – listen, read, contemplate, and accept. Immersion into the Word of God leads people to the

cognition of God. And if one cognizes God like what He really is, it is probably impossible not to come to love Him.

How can you not love the one who heals sick people? Brings relief to them and consoles them, does not reject them. Does not accuse them of the reasons for their illnesses and does not try to find any secret providence and unknown benefits in their sufferings, but just heals them.

God is perfect, He hates sin, He has nothing in common with the evil, and in spite of that fact, when Jesus gets among sinners, He does not despise them. How can you not love the one who forgives – for the first, second time, and seventy times by seven. He redeems sins, erases them, and does not recall them any longer. At each moment of life He provides an opportunity to repent and to start anew. He does not condemn a woman caught in adultery, He forgives the robber dying on the cross side by side with Him. Jesus Himself forgives and commands people to forgive the faults committed to them. He teaches to hold no grudge.

There exists a good way to keep the commandments given by Jesus: one should not rely on himself/herself only. One may truly fulfill the commandments only with God's help, drawing upon God's mercy prepared for those who rely upon Him on a daily basis.

Those who love Jesus will follow His words. Love does not require explanations, evidence, and substantiation. Those who love God want to voluntarily perform His commandments. They are capable of accepting with their faith all the things that their mind cannot perceive. Love urges to trust. It adds power and inspiration in tough

situations. It helps get rid of one's own selfishness and the striving to follow one's own will.

God is love. Those who really love have God in their hearts, and God finds His residence place in them. And those who have God in their hearts all the time have got everything together with Him.

June 22

Tuesday

Romans 14: 9-18

Matthew 12: 14-16, 22-30

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Prayer](#)
- [Contemplation](#)

Romans 14: 9-18

Brethren, for to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval.

Matthew 12: 14-16. 22-30

But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, and he ordered them not to make him known.

Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see. All the crowds were amazed and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons." He knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

Meditation

Human logic and justice claim that the evil should be punished, while the good should be remunerated. Jesus did a lot of the good to all those approaching Him. He consoled the upset, healed the

sick, gave hope to the disappointed, fed the hungry, liberated the captives. So why did the Pharisees have a council against Him, aimed to destroy Him? They could not find a single sin in Jesus to accuse Him of, though they took pains to do that. They did not believe that He is the Son of God. A man doing good things and telling the truth, in their opinion, deserves death.

Double standards. When I do something good, I expect gratitude, praise, and respect. But what if that's not me but somebody else? Envy may arise. Criticism may arise that something is done in the wrong way, or not in the right time, or that something wrong is done. Premature conclusions. Sometimes, having the least information about an individual, one may set the diagnosis for him/her, "understand" his/her motives.

Jesus does not assign us the task to assess or judge someone. It is easy to commit a sin while doing so. Jesus invites us to follow Him, learn from Him, to bring one's own fruit rather than look for somebody's.

Jesus does not try to come to terms with the Pharisees, explain everything to them, since He knows their hearts and realizes that they are closed. Jesus does not strive to please the Pharisees, He does not stop doing the things they don't like.

I don't have to explain my actions, to justify myself to all the people who have some complaints against me. It is not human opinion, but the Word of God that has to be guidance for me. The search of approval from people exhausts us and does not yield any fruit. Jesus, having no sin and performing great miracles on a self-denying

basis, for love, was accused of doing all this by the ruler of the demons.

Sometimes criticism and obstacles show that you are doing a good thing. There will always be people ready to test your endurance. They keep scrutinizing your deeds not to support you but to find faults with them and to tell about them in public. Personal prayer will help not to lose patience and self-control. One should pray more in order not to become one of the critics of good deeds.

Since if I am not with Jesus I am against Him, if I don't have my daily prayer, I run the risk of yielding to temptations.

June 23

Wednesday

Romans 15: 7-16

Matthew 12: 38-45

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
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Romans 15: 7-16

Brethren, welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given

me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12: 38-45

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation.”

Meditation

In today's Gospel reading we hear a discussion between Jesus and religious authority of those times. The scribes and Pharisees wish to see a sign from Jesus. But He gave a lot of signs. He healed a leper (Matthew 8:1-4), a centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13), Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-15), the sick and those who were possessed with demons (Matthew 8:16). He calmed the storm (Matthew 8:23-27), cast out demons (Matthew 8:28-34) and performed many other miracles. When people saw these signs, they recognized in Jesus the Servant of Yahweh (see Matthew 8:17; 12:17-21). But the scribes and Pharisees were unable to understand the significance of so many signs that Jesus had already performed. They wanted something else. They wanted to fit Jesus into their own criteria to make it easier to fit Him into their own understanding of the Messiah. They did not open their hearts to the possibility of conversion. They understood nothing of what Jesus had done.

Jesus does not fulfill the requirement of the authority to give a sign, because that authority is insincere. Why show a nice picture to someone who doesn't want to open their eyes? He who closes his eyes does not want to see! The only sign He will give them will be the sign of Jonah. That is, the only sign will be the resurrection of Jesus, which will continue in the resurrection of His followers. This is a sign that the scribes and Pharisees will receive in future. They will face the fact that Jesus, condemned by them to death on the cross, is risen by God, in the same way as He continues to resurrect in every way possible those who believe in Him. For example, He will

resurrect in the testimony of the apostles, *uneducated and ordinary men* (Acts 4:13), who had the courage to oppose the authorities by announcing the resurrection of Jesus. Not miracles, but testimony leads to conversion! We ask the Lord of grace to increase our faith, knowing that only He is able to fill our hearts with His love so that we may become His witnesses every day.

June 24

Thursday

**The Nativity of the
Honourable and Glorious
Prophet John, Forerunner
and Baptist of Christ**

Romans 13:11 - 14:4

Luke 1: 1-25, 57-68, 76,80

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
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Romans 13:11 - 14:4

Brethren, besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass

judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Luke 1: 1-25, 57-68, 76, 80

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your

prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, “This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.”

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways. "

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

Meditation

On this day, the Church invites us to reflect on the beautiful truth. The nativity of John is a *dress rehearsal* for God's presence among His people. This birth is not a self-sufficient and self-contained episode. On the contrary, it is the beginning of a great event that will have a great sequel.

Primarily Luke describes John as a *preacher*, as a herald. John proclaims, in fact, only two things: the judgment of God (and does so with strong and bold words) and the religious hypocrisy of the people of God.

John reminds us that salvation is not about belonging to a particular race or religious system, but about faith and life. That is why he will rebuke Herod for living with the wife of his brother and for many other evil deeds that are not just distant, but incompatible with God's life. It will end predictably: with imprisonment. Such is the fate of the prophets, and the sign that confirms their truth.

In addition John is described as a *witness of Jesus*. It immediately becomes obvious who he is pointing to, who he is talking about, who he is waiting for! Perhaps this is his most important characteristic. He turns the attention of people away from himself in order to attract it to another person, of course, to Jesus.

John (and this is his third characteristic) is brave up to martyrdom and at the same time humble up to the complete removal of himself from the stage. He combines the power of appeal and severity of his own way of life with a remarkable ability to be specific and moderate. In fact, he decides to live in the desert, in friendship with God, but he does not force anyone to follow him and his decisions.

And today we also recall how the vocation of John was born of God's initiative. If we submit our lives to God's calling, then He will work miracles and send graces, as it was in the case of the

Forerunner. We ask the Lord today for the grace to be at least a little bit like the Baptist – to be the courageous witnesses of Jesus.

June 25

Friday

Romans 16: 1-16

Matthew 13: 3-9

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
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Romans 16: 1-16

Brethren, I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who

has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

Matthew 13: 3-9

And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!”

Meditation

Chapter 13 of the Gospel of Matthew begins the third great discourse, - the discourse in parables.

Today we meditate on the parable of the sower and seeds. Jesus preaches clearly by means of comparisons and parables. His parables usually mention everyday things: seed, lamp, mustard seed, salt, etc. These things are well known to people of all epochs.

The parable of the sower and seeds tells about the lives of peasants. In those days it was not easy to live from the fruits of the

earth: the fields were covered with stones, there was a lot of sun but little rainfall and moisture. The seeds thrown by the sower fall on this earth. Some seeds fall on the road, other fall among stones and thorns, and still some seeds fall on good soil, and, depending on the quality of the soil, will bring thirty, sixty, and even a hundredfold grain. The parable uses visible and understandable things to explain invisible and unknown things – the kingdom of God. The Galileans knew everything about seeds, soil, rain, sun, and harvest. Jesus uses these understandable images to explain the mystery of the kingdom.

Let anyone with ears listen! This expression means: *Here! You have heard everything, now try to understand it!* The key to understanding this parable is to search: try to understand! The parable does not present everything at once, but encourages to think and discover its meaning. Let us meditate on this parable today to understand the way the seed of the Word of God works in our life.

June 26

Saturday

Romans 8: 14-21

Matthew 9: 9-13

- [Reading](#)
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Romans 8: 14-21

Brethren, for all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Matthew 9: 9-13

And the Lord said: "Let anyone with ears listen!"

Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secret of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' "

Meditation

Today the Church suggests a meditation on the passage of a tax collector, - Matthew. Tax collectors, as a certain social group, did not enjoy much respect. Even more, they were hated because they often took away the last of the people of Israel and gave it to Rome. Obviously, people did not want to see such traitors who profited from their job and helped the occupying state.

As Jesus was walking along, he saw Matthew. Christ does not do something extraordinary, He just invites this man to follow Him. Without any doubt Matthew changes his life. We see that he does not ask any unnecessary questions, he does not provoke, he just hears the call *Follow me*, which for us should also be an invitation and a challenge. It is obvious that this person, - Matthew, - provoked the Pharisees to anger and to rebuke Jesus.

Christ not only calls Matthew, but also visits his house, where many tax collectors and sinners came. For the Pharisees such a behavior of Jesus was very strange. How is it possible to sit and eat with obvious, public sinners? How can a person who is considered to be

a prophet behave in that way? But Christ breaks the logic of the Pharisees and of the society. These *public sinners*, tax collectors and sinful women are the ones who accept the Lord's call to follow Him without any hesitation. Their heart is open and eager to change. The Pharisees do not understand this because of their closed hearts. What's next? Christ responds that the sick need a physician and not the healthy ones. Not only physically but also spiritually sick people need a physician. How often do we look nice and healthy, and in our souls we bear so much pain and suffering? That is why Christ invites You and me to change our heart, to transform our reality, and to accept His call to follow Him. As we learn to trust and listen to His voice, we will be able to attain eternal life with Him in His kingdom. Therefore, let us pray that we may hear the calls of Jesus in our daily lives and become the ones in whose lives there will be a meal with all the saints.

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Skynia Magazine is published with the purpose to help its readers meet the Lord with the help of the Bible.

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