



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

**June 20 - 26**  
**The Julian 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**

**Descent of the Holy Spirit.  
Holy and Glorious Pentecost**

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
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**Acts 2: 1-11**

**John 7: 37-52, 8:12**

### **Acts 2: 1-11**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and

residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.

### **John 7: 37-52, 8:12**

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, “This is really the prophet.” Others said, “This is the Messiah.” But some asked, “Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?” So there was a division in the crowd because of him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why did you not arrest him?” The police answered, “Never has anyone spoken like this!” Then the Pharisees replied, “Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.” Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of

them, asked, "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?" They replied, "Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee."

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

### **Meditation**

Each page of the Bible shows the Lord Who is not afraid to make His hands dirty, Who bends down, humiliates Himself and becomes flesh. And it is not only the Son Who is embodied, accepting the holy human nature, which enables us to build a relationship with God by discovering His love through our eyes and touch. Today the Spirit embodies as well, choosing the time and place for an encounter, becoming God's presence.

The passage from the Acts says: *suddenly*. Like a furrow plowed into the ground to become the place for good seeds. Like thunder, like fire, like a rush of wind, like ... and we lack words, we speak with metaphors, comparisons, unable to explain what happened.

And here is a very clear consequence: *all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit*. They were filled with, completely immersed in God, opened to the action of the Spirit. Here is the embodiment that is still happening. The mystery, which began two thousand years ago, is just as present today in everyone who accepts God and allows himself to be filled with His presence.

They *began to speak in other languages*. After silence and prayer, it was time for a mission. The Spirit is the Mediator Who establishes the relationship between God and us, and not only that. The Spirit overcomes language differences and cultural barriers, gives everyone the opportunity to experience God.

On the day of Pentecost, the prayer of Jesus was heard: *that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me* (John 17:21). This unity is not the ultimate goal, it is not the finish line - it is a tool to achieve this ultimate goal. *That the world may believe that you have sent me*. That the world, that is, all of us, may experience the embodiment of God's love. That all may live by faith in the Son of God, and through Him may receive a new life formed by the Gospel.

Pentecost is not an event that has a beginning and an end. This is a common experience of faith that every believer experiences daily, constantly. Pentecost is God's *today*. It is an ongoing embodiment, without special effects, but with the certainty that God is near. And we are by His side, enlightened and strengthened by the Spirit.

**June 21**

**Monday of the Holy Spirit**

**Ephesians 5: 9-19**

**Matthew 18: 10-20**

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**Ephesians 5: 9-19**

Brethren, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, Awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts."

**Matthew 18: 10-20**

And the Lord said: "Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave

the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

### **Meditation**

People tend to care more about *the great ones*: outstanding, rich, powerful. It is better not to irritate, insult or use *the great ones*, because this can lead to bad consequences. *The great ones* can defend themselves. God does not discriminate between people, He knows and loves everyone, His gifts and grace are for everyone - for the great, for the medium and for the little ones. But He cares especially for *the little ones*, because He knows that they often cannot protect themselves, they cannot take care of themselves.



Only God knows why a person is a little one, He knows not to condemn, but to save. The story of the rich man and Lazarus shows us the miserable life of a homeless sick beggar who dies helplessly. Why didn't he have a place to live? Did he drink away his house? His family couldn't stand him and kicked him out? And why was he sick? Couldn't take care of his health? Did he eat junk food? Didn't he see a doctor in time? Why was he poor? Maybe he was lazy to work? God does not ask such questions, He knows the heart of Lazarus, knows his life and has prepared a future for him by the side of Abraham.

Jesus teaches not to treat *the little ones* arrogantly, not to judge them, and if possible, to help.

God lovingly treats the lost sheep, people who wander in their sins, fears, addictions, who have no faith and rebel against Him. Jesus did not come to judge or punish, but to find them. And when He is lucky to do it, He rejoices over them more than over those who did not get lost.

Jesus teaches people to forgive the trespasses of others. But forgiving does not mean ignoring or enduring. When your neighbor is guilty, you must rebuke him. It can help to settle the situation, encourage him to repent and restore peace. Or it may not help. But it will at least clarify the situation, show the truth, bring to light what happened, and prevent it from happening again.

**June 22**

**Tuesday**

**Romans 1: 1-7.13-17**

**Matthew 4:25 - 5:13**

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**Romans 1: 1-7.13-17**

Brethren, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, 6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish —hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

### **Matthew 4:25 - 5:13**

And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.”

### **Meditation**

It is a little strange that John the Baptist, who himself pointed to Jesus as the Messiah, has doubts about the identity of Christ. From prison he sends his disciples to ask: *Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?* Doubts! Even the one of whom Jesus said: *among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist* has doubts. After a moment's confusion, the Gospel tells me that that's what life is like. We often categorize everything into black and white. But not everything can be grouped and distinguished in this way. I ask myself: do I really have no doubts? And never had? Am I better than the Forerunner? Perhaps, the shadows of the prison made these doubts so dramatic for him. But the most surprising in his question is the source of such suspicions.

Let's reread: *John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing. That is? He went about doing good and healing all* (Acts 10:38)! He did works of mercy. Why is this in doubt at all? Usually we have doubts or bad thoughts because of inhuman behavior, not because of the

manifestations of humanity! And yet disappointment spread among the disciples of John.

So what was so strange about what Jesus was doing? Before this passage, Matthew describes the healings performed by Christ: moral and physical healings. Therefore, it is these actions that caused the doubts. John's disciples are confused when they see Jesus in Matthew's house, at a table with tax collectors and sinners. And they do not hesitate to express their indignation to Jesus.

This is a scandal of mercy! Who is Jesus? This question should always be heard in our lives. He is the One Who opens the eyes of the blind, restores mobility to the lame, heals the lepers, gives hope to the poor ... Jesus is mercy. And we are called to live by mercy, to perform the deeds of Jesus in our everyday life; to celebrate and follow His deeds in the Eucharist in order to continue doing all of this outside the temple. Resurrection is to know that Jesus is mercy!

**June 23**

**Wednesday**

**Romans 1: 18-27**

**Matthew 5: 20-26**

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### **Romans 1: 18-27**

Brethren, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

### **Matthew 5: 20-26**

And the Lord said: "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny."

### **Meditation**

In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus stresses one of the preconditions for entering the kingdom of heaven – to exceed the scribes and

Pharisees in one's righteousness. The scribes are the people fully sticking to the law. Their task is to study the law in detail, to accurately and diligently follow it. The Pharisees, besides the law of Moses, also recognized the oral law that embraced numerous prescriptions; and they often placed those prescriptions above the law. The scribes and the Pharisees were considered to be the *better, chosen* part of the Judean people. But Jesus calls them *hypocrites, whitewashed tombs* many a time.

In section 23 of the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus discloses all their activity and gives instructions to His disciples: *Do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach* (Matthew 23:3). The instructions of the scribes and Pharisees differed from their way of living. They taught how to live, but did not live that way themselves. *They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them* (Matthew 23:4). The righteousness of the Pharisees was superficial, just for show. *So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness* (Matthew 23:28). Their goal was not to be righteous, but to seem to be righteous.

How often do I lead the Pharisee way of living? Do I want to *seem* righteous, kind, and merciful? How often do I demand from others much more than from myself? How often am I capable of condemning my neighbour for a minor mistake, and to justify myself for a serious blunder? How often do I hide away a bad intention behind a good deed? How often do I kill my brother with my



thought, opinion, and indifference? How often does my behaviour not correspond to what is inside my heart?

The teaching of Jesus differs from the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees. In His Sermon on the Mount the Lord shows a new, much better way to recognize the law that is not brought down to compliance with certain instructions and bans. To cognize it and to live with it, we need the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, show us our heart, since it is there that a small grain that may later yield a good fruit, or can destroy a person, is born.

**June 24**

**Thursday**

**The Holy Apostles**

**Bartholomew and Barnabas**

**Romans 1:28 - 2:9**

**Matthew 5: 27-32**

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**Romans 1:28 - 2:9**

Brethren, and since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die—yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.

Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. You say, "We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth." Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches

of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will repay according to each one's deeds: to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek.

### **Matthew 5: 27-32**

And the Lord said: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

## Meditation

The excerpt from Matthew 5: 21-48 is built on six antitheses: *was said / but I say to you*. In fact, these are not antitheses. Jesus does not offer any other law, and that becomes clear from those words: *I have come not to abolish but to fulfill* (Matthew 5:17). The law is not new, it is old, but its fulfillment is new. Nobody has never offered it in such a way and not fulfilled it in the way the Son of God does this.

Jesus does not object to the law – He just clarifies it and switches from simple actions to the wishes of the heart where the origin of everything lies. And the good news is that God acts in us via the words He Himself can fulfill. That is why Jesus was sent. Since they were conceived not as the code of perfect and soulless laws, but rather as the annunciation and the gift of life given to us by the Father.

Today's excerpt is related to the issue of relationship between a man and a woman in a spouse. Jesus teaches that it is not enough to avoid all external threats for a spouse (the fact of betrayal). But one should also barricade the way to sexual appetites, avoiding the occasions that can awaken them (look) and dangerous contacts (hand).

The verb *to covet* (*hamad* in Hebrew) expresses a real liking and a solid decision to make a sin, and not just some feeling or idea. It means *to let the desire to master you and to aggressively take the thing you like*, thus some external action is meant.

Jesus goes even further. For God of importance are feelings, purity of ideas, conscience. It could be the case that perfect external behaviour conceals a deeply rotten heart. The appearances should correspond to the inside, with no double life and falsity.

Adultery does not happen by accident, people get ready for it in their hearts. One rabbinic proverb says: *The eye sees, the heart wants, the body commits the sin.*

**June 25**

**Friday**

**Romans 2: 14-29**

**Matthew 5: 33-41**

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### **Romans 2: 14-29**

When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God and know his will and determine what is best because you are instructed in the law, and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? You that boast in the law, do

you dishonor God by breaking the law? For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision but break the law. For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.

### **Matthew 5: 33-41**

And the Lord said: “Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone

wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile."

### **Meditation**

Jesus encourages His disciples not to swear. He does not speak about deceit, it is obvious that to swear falsely is evil and sinful. Jesus speaks about the vows a person can give sincerely. The vow makes you bound and limits you, it is not always possible to fulfill a vow.

A person makes a vow to others that (s)he is telling the truth. The vow is to assure them, to constitute an additional guarantee. Therefore, for a better effect people used to swear with the heaven, the earth, Jerusalem. With something important they did not want to lose. Jesus suggests that they should tell it openly, without trying to justify themselves and supporting their words with vows. To state something it is enough to say *yes*, to deny something – to say *no*, and what is more comes from the evil. That is him who gives birth to mistrust between people, causes suspicions, urging people to justify themselves, to assure, to persuade via fear and the feeling of guilt. The Lord gives us freedom, allows us to speak sincerely and openly, gives the freedom to choose whether to believe or not.

The problem of vow also lies in the fact that the person who gives it is limited in his/her power, knowledge and understanding of the truth. (S)he cannot control the future or change the past, cannot rely upon himself/herself. It is not wise to vow to do something in the future since you don't know whether you will be healthy enough and have time and an opportunity to do this. A vow may



become a burden, and the impossibility of fulfilling it may depress a person.

Jesus offers a wonderful approach to solving the problems that a human may be faced with: to turn the other cheek to be stricken; to give to someone who wants to take something from you also the things (s)he did not expect to get; to do more than you are made to. Only a person who lives with the faith in the kindness and mercy of God the Father is capable of behaving that way. He is not afraid of strikes, offence and contempt do not get into his/her heart since God's love lives there. He is not concerned about material welfare, is not afraid of losing it since (s)he knows that the Heavenly Father will always take care of him/her, and (s)he will not lack anything. (S)he does not avoid any extra work since (s)he knows that (s)he will have a chance to have some rest and to restore one's capacity in the presence of God.

**June 26**

**Saturday**

**Romans 1: 7-12**

**Matthew 5: 42-48**

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**Romans 1: 7-12**

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

**Matthew 5: 42-48**

And the Lord said: "Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for

those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

### **Meditation**

*But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.*

This excerpt from the Sermon of Jesus on the Mount belongs to the most difficult ones. I guess different emotions are evoked in each of us who reads these words and lends an attentive ear to his/her heart, probably, that is even the feeling of revolt or lack of perception of these statements. The questions arise: *How could we love? How could we love an offender who has inflicted pain on me, or my relatives: a killer who has taken away the life of a child; the people which is a violent conqueror and has inflicted many losses on the other people? How could we love?* It is easier for us to even accept the position of cultural indifference, proud tolerance... but to love?! How could one generally demand a thing like that? It is sometimes difficult to love a colleague at work with a different character, or someone from the family, but Jesus sets the bar so high. He says: *And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what*

*more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?* That means that He really wants us to do extraordinary things.

And here the question arises: *how do we bring this into life? What do we do for this to become possible?*

One may try and do this superficially, just decorating the external attitude and thinking that in that way we are already fulfilling the words of Jesus. We often behave that way if we don't know enough about ourselves, when we do not take into account the truth about our hearts which are really so much far away from loving. And one should start with this. Any step to real love starts with the realization of the fact that I don't have it, while my heart requires conversion and healing, it contains a lot of selfishness and faces a lot of different obstacles.

A person who really repents comes to be able to love almost automatically. Why does it happen so? That is because repentance purifies one's heart, and the purified heart becomes the place of descent of the Holy Spirit. The Lord gets united with humans and gives them the power to love.

The key to the fragment is hidden in the words of Jesus He repeats: *so that you may be children of your Father; be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Only in unity with the Father, being in son's love for Him, is it possible to love. Even one's enemies. Everyone without any exception, like the sun and the rain given to all people. Since God is

a permanent giving, and only the person who enters this logic via unity with Him will live a real life.

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