

2ND SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Today, on the second Sunday of Lent, the Church reminds us of another event in the life of Jesus Christ. On the way to Capernaum, He stops in a house where many people have gathered, and as the evangelist Mark tells us, "...he was preaching the word to them" (Mk 2:2). Paralysis is the image of how sin affects a person. He, having mastered a person, is able to paralyze not only his mind and will, but also the body. When we meet the Lord, when we go to Him persistently, with the conviction that He alone is able to forgive human sin, to break the shackles of sin, then a miracle happens - and we hear about this miracle today.

When the paralyzed man was brought to Jesus, the first words he heard from Christ were, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." Jesus said those words of forgiveness because the paralyzed man really needed to hear them. In those words of forgiveness, he felt so much in his heart the love of Jesus Christ for him that he stood on his feet and began a new life.

The Apostle Paul says, "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, as the evangelist John says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Confession of our own sins is the first step towards salvation, so if we say we have no sin, then we close the way to salvation for ourselves. That is why confession of our own sins is so important.

The Old Testament religion provided for the concept of "ritual purity" or "ritual impurity." In order to be a full member of society, a person had to be physically healthy. The sick person was perceived as a sinner and therefore, unclean. When the Savior healed the weak, He gave him the "gift of peace" along with his physical health and restored his right to be among the "people of God."

Most of the sick who were healed by Christ belonged to such a part of society rejected by the official church institution: the blind, the crooked, the bleeding, and the lepers. If the official church left these people outside, Christ changed the boundaries of the church, including everyone. In confirmation of His righteousness, He forgave people their sins, thus restoring their membership among God's people.

Dear parishioners, in order to understand the pernicious consequences of sin on human nature, it is necessary to know what sin is. Sin is a moral and spiritual poison that works in the soul, and then in the body, just as the usual poison in the body works. When poison enters the body, extremely severe processes take place in the human body, ending in death. The same thing happens in the soul when a spiritual poison enters it - a sinful thought or a sinful feeling. Terrible excitements of thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions pass in the soul. It seems as if the spirit is burning, as in a flame. The soul falls into this state every time the moral law of God is violated, until the voice of conscience can be silenced.

Because of sin, the soul falls away from God, is deprived of God's Grace, and becomes spiritually dead. As long as the poison remains in the body, death is inevitable. When you free the human body from poison, it is possible to save a person from death. In the same way, if a soul poisoned by sin is not healed, spiritual death is inevitable for it. The only way to save the soul from death is to free oneself from spiritual poison, that is, from sin. And this is possible only through repentance before God in the Sacrament of Confession. Only after the spiritual purification of sins by God, the soul is revived by the Grace of the Holy Spirit and calmed down.

Sin is the wall that separates us from God. This wall was high and impregnable, built by the sins of all people who fenced themselves off and closed behind it, as in a prison. But Christ the Savior broke down this wall with His Cross and Resurrection and brought human souls out of hell. What do we do now, indulging in sin again? We are building a new wall that separates our life from all that is holy and eternal. Only repentance before God can free us from the bondage of sin.

Dear believers! That is why we need repentance and confession of our sins. Without this, our soul will remain dead forever, under the power of the devil. We need to walk constantly in the presence of God. The Apostle John the Theologian says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).