“НАШ ПРИХОД“

“Our Parish”

Р҃ccкая Правосла́вная Це́рковь Сре́тенїя Госпо́дня

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РАСПИСАНИЕ БОГОСЛУЖЕНИЙ	Ноябрь	SCHEDULE OF THE SERVICES	November
Неделя 23-я по Пятидесятнице. Празднование в честь Казанской иконы Божией Матери		**Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost. Kazan Icon of the Mother of God**	
3 Суб Всенощная Мф.28:16-20	6:30 ч.в.	3 Sat Vigil. Matt.28:16-20	6:30 PM
4 Вск. Литургия.	**9:30** ч.у.	4 Sun Divine Liturgy.	**9:30** AM
Еф. 2:4-10. Лк. 16:19-31. Флп. 2:5-11. Лк. 10:38-42;11:27-28		Eph. 2:4-10. Luke 16:19-31 Phil. 2:5-11. Luke 10:38-42;11:27-28	
Неделя 24-я по Пятидесятнице.		**Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost**	
10 Суб Всенощная Мк. 16:1-8	6:30 ч.в.	10 Sat Vigil. Mark 16:1-8	6:30 PM
11 Вск. Литургия.	**9:30** ч.у.	11 Sun Divine Liturgy.	**9:30** AM
Еф. 2:14-22. Лк. 8:26-39.		Eph. 2:14-22. Luke 8:26-39.	
Неделя 25-я по Пятидесятнице.		**Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost**	
17 Суб Всенощная. Мк. 16:9-20.	6:30 ч.в.	17 Sat Vigil. Mark 16: 9-20	6:30 PM
18 Вск Литургия.	**9:30** ч.у.	18 Sun Divine Liturgy.	**9:30** AM
Еф. 4:1-6. Лк. 8:41-56.		Eph. 4:1-6. Luke 8:41-56.	
Праздничный обед после литургии по случаю "Дня Благодарения"		**Thanksgiving Dinner in our church hall after Liturgy.**	
Неделя 26-я по Пятидесятнице.		**Twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost.**	
24 Суб Всенощная. Лк. 24:1-12	6:30 ч.в.	24 Sat Vigil. Luke 24:1-12	6:30 PM
25 Вск Литургия.	**9:30 ч.у.**	25 Sun Divine Liturgy.	**9:30 AM**
Гал. 6:11-18 Лк. 10:25-37.		Gal. 6:11-18 & Luke 10:25-37	

Уроки Закона Божьего: **Младшая и Средняя (younger & Middle) группы: 11/XI и 25/XI**
Sunday School (Law of God) **Старшая группа (Older group): 4/XI**

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Дорогие братия и сестры!
Всех приглашаем на традиционный обед по случаю американского праздника **"Дня Благодарения"**. Состоится обед 18-го ноября с.г., в нашем церковном зале после литургии. Приводите Ваших родственников и знакомых отметить с нами этот добрый праздник.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!
All are cordially invited to the traditional **Thanksgiving Dinner**. It will take place on November 18th, in our church hall following the Divine Liturgy. Bring your relatives and friends to celebrate with us this kind holiday**.**

АСКЕТИКА ДЛЯ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ МИРЯН

Священник Павел Гумеров

(Заключение – начало в мартовском номере 2017 г. «Наш Приход»)

Статья 6. Любодеяние /*Продолжение/*

Брань с гордостью

Как же борются с гордыней, презрением ближних, самовозвышением? Что противопоставить этой страсти?

Святые отцы учат, что противоположная гордыне добродетель – любовь. Самая бо́льшая из страстей борется наивысшей добродетелью.

Как стяжать любовь к ближнему?

Как говорится, легко любить все человечество, но очень непросто любить конкретного человека со всеми его недостатками и слабостями. Когда Господа спросили: «Какая наибольшая заповедь в законе?», Он ответил: «Возлюби Господа Бога твоего всем сердцем твоим, и всею душею твоею, и всем разумением твоим: сия есть первая и наибольшая заповедь; вторая же подобная ей: возлюби ближнего твоего, как самого себя» (Мф. 22: 37–39).

Любовь – это великое чувство, которое роднит нас с Богом, ибо «Бог есть любовь». В любви единственное счастье, она способна помочь преодолеть нам все трудности и победить гордость и эгоизм. Но не все правильно понимают, что такое любовь. За любовь часто ошибочно принимают те приятные ощущения, которые мы получаем, когда к нам хорошо относятся, но это не любовь. «Если вы будете любить любящих вас, какая вам польза? Не то же ли делают и мытари?» (Мф. 5:46). Очень легко и приятно любить человека, находиться рядом с ним, когда он нас только радует. Но когда общение с ближним нас чем-то не устраивает, мы тут же меняем свое отношение к нему, часто до диаметрально противоположного: «от любви до ненависти один шаг». Но это значит, что мы любили не настоящей любовью, наша любовь к ближнему была потребительской. Нам нравились те приятные ощущения, которые были связаны с ним, а когда они исчезали, исчезала и любовь. Получается, что мы любили человека как вещь, нужную нам. Даже не как вещь, а как продукт, вкусную пищу, потому что о любимой вещи мы все же заботимся, например полируем кузов любимой машины, регулярно обслуживаем ее, покупаем всякие украшения и т.д. То есть даже в вещь, если мы любим ее, мы вкладываем свою заботу и внимание. И только пищу мы любим за ее вкус, не более; когда она съедена, она больше не нужна нам. Итак, истинная любовь **дает**, а не требует. И в этом и есть настоящая радость любви. Радость от получения чего-то – радость материальная, потребительская, а в дарении кому-то – истинная, вечная.

Любовь – это служение. В этом дает нам великий пример Сам Господь наш Иисус Христос, когда Он умыл ноги апостолам на Тайной вечери, сказав: «Итак, если Я, Господь и Учитель, умыл ноги вам, то и вы должны умывать ноги друг другу. Ибо Я дал вам пример, чтобы и вы делали то же, что Я сделал вам» (Ин. 13: 14–15). И Христос любит нас ни за что-то (потому что нас не за что особенно любить), а просто потому, что мы Его дети. Пусть грешные, непослушные, духовно больные, но ведь именно больного, слабого ребенка родители любят больше всего.

Чувство любви не может существовать без наших усилий. Его нужно воспитывать в своем сердце, возгревать день за днем. Любовь – это сознательное решение: «Я хочу любить». И нужно делать все, чтобы это чувство не погасло, иначе наше чувство долго не протянет, оно станет зависеть от множества случайных причин: эмоций, нашего настроения, обстоятельств жизни, поведения ближнего и т.д. По-другому выполнить слова Христа невозможно, ведь нам заповедана любовь не только к близким – родителям, супругам, детям, но и ко всем людям. Любовь стяжается ежедневным трудом, но награда за этот труд велика, ибо ничто на земле не может быть выше этого чувства. Но в начале нам приходится буквально понуждать себя к любви. Например, пришел домой усталый, не жди пока тебе сделают приятное, сам помоги, помой, скажем, посуду. Одолело плохое настроение – понудь себя, улыбнись, скажи ласковое слово, не срывай раздражение на других. Обиделся на человека, считаешь его неправым, себя невиновным – понудь себя, прояви любовь и первым пойди примиряться. И гордость побеждена. Но тут очень важно не возгордиться уже своим «смирением». Так, воспитывая себя день за днем, человек дойдет когда-нибудь до того, что уже не сможет жить по-другому: у него будет внутренняя потребность дарить свою любовь, делиться ею.

Очень важный момент в любви – видеть ценность каждого человека, ведь в каждом есть что-то хорошее, просто нужно изменить свое часто предвзятое отношение. Только воспитывая в своем сердце любовь к ближнему, меняя свое отношение к нему, научаясь видеть в нем хорошие стороны, мы будем шаг за шагом побеждать в себе гордость и превозношение. Любовь побеждает гордость, ибо гордость есть недостаток любви к Богу и людям.

Как научиться любви к Богу? Полюбив Его творение – человека. Человек – это образ Божий, и невозможно любить Первообраз и без любви, неуважительно относиться к иконе, изображению Бога. Недаром апостол Иоанн Богослов пишет нам: «Кто говорит: “Я люблю Бога”, а брата своего ненавидит, тот лжец: ибо не любящий брата своего, которого видит, как может любить Бога, Которого не видит? И мы имеем от Него такую заповедь, чтобы любящий Бога любил и брата своего» (1Ин. 4:20).

Вместо заключения: «Царство Небесное силою берется»

Путь борьбы со страстями нелегок и тернист, мы часто изнемогаем, падаем, терпим поражение, иногда кажется, что сил больше нет, но снова встаем и начинаем бороться. Потому что путь этот единственный для православного христианина. «Никто не может служить двум господам: ибо или одного будет ненавидеть, а другого любить; или одному станет усердствовать, а о другом нерадеть» (Мф. 6:24). Невозможно служить Богу и оставаться рабом страстей.

Конечно, ни одно серьезное дело не делается легко и быстро. Воссоздаем ли мы храм, строим дом, воспитываем ребенка, лечим тяжелобольного человека – всегда требуются очень большие усилия. «Царство Небесное силою берется, и употребляющие усилие восхищают его» (Мф. 11:12). А стяжание Небесного Царства невозможно без очищения себя от грехов и страстей. В славянском переводе Евангелия (всегда более точном, образном) вместо глагола «берется» употребляется слово «нудится». И действительно, духовная работа требует не просто приложения усилий, но принуждения, понуждения, преодоления себя.

Человек, ведущий борьбу со страстями и побеждающий их, венчается за это от Господа. Однажды преподобного Серафима Саровского спросили: «Кто в нашем монастыре выше всех предстоит перед Богом?». И преподобный ответил, что это повар с монастырской кухни, по происхождению из бывших солдат. Старец сказал также: «Характер у этого повара от природы огненный. Он готов в запальчивости убить человека, но его непрестанная борьба внутри души привлекает к нему великое благоволение Божие. За борьбу ему подается свыше благодатная сила Святого Духа, ибо непреложно Божие слово, которое говорит: “Побеждающему (себя) дам место сесть с Собою и облеку в белые одежды”. И, наоборот, если человек не борется с собой, то доходит до ужасного ожесточения, которое влечет к верной гибели и отчаянию». ■

Гумеров, свящ. Павел. Православная энциклопедия Азбука веры 2016. https://azbyka.ru

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Unseen Warfare

enhanced by Saint Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, and Saint Theophan the Recluse

(*Continued – beginning in March 2017 issue of* “Our Parish”)

Chapter 19. How to struggle against bodily passions

In struggling against bodily passions, my brother, a different method should be used than in struggling against the others. If you want things to proceed in the right order, know that you should do one thing before you are tempted by these passions, another thing during temptation and yet another when it is over.

Before temptation, attention should be concentrated on the causes, which habitually give birth to temptation or which excite passion. The rule here is to use every means to avoid all occasions, which may upset the calm of your body, especially meeting people of the other sex. If you are forced to converse with such a person, let the conversation be short, and preserve not only modesty but a certain sternness of countenance; let your words be friendly, but reserved rather than forthcoming. “Never trust thine enemy” (Ecclesiasticus xii. 10) says the wise Sirach. So never trust your body; for as iron produces rust by itself, so the corrupted nature of the body produces evil stirrings of lust. “For like as iron rusteth, so is his wickedness’ (Ecclesiasticus xii. 10). I repeat again, do not trust yourself in this respect, even if you no longer feel and have not felt for some time this sting of your flesh. For this thrice-cursed wickedness sometimes achieves in one hour or one moment what it has not done for many years, and always makes its preparations for attack silently. Know that the more the flesh pretends to be your friend and gives no cause for suspicion, the greater the harm it inflicts later, and often strikes to death.

All must fear people of the other sex, communion with whom is regarded as good in ordinary life, either because they are relatives, or because they are pious and virtuous, or because they have done you a favour and you feel under the obligation to express your gratitude as often as possible. You should fear this because, without fear and attention to yourself, such communion is practically always mixed with the pernicious sensory lust which, gradually and insensibly, steals into the soul to its very depths and so obscures the mind that a man thus infected begins to disregard all the dangerous causes of sin, such as passionate glances, sweet words on both sides, seductive movements and postures of the body and the pressing of hands. Thus he finally succumbs to the sin itself and to other snares of the devil, from which at times he never manages to extricate himself completely.

So, my brother, flee this fire, for you are gunpowder, and never dare to think in your conceit that you are damp gunpowder, moistened with the water of a good and firm will. No, no! Better think that you are as dry as dry and will catch fire as soon as you are touched by that flame. Never rely on the firmness of your resolve and your readiness to

die rather than to offend God by sin. For, although it can be assumed that this resolve makes your gunpowder damp, frequent communication and sitting together in private will gradually dry the moisture of your righteous will by bodily fire, and you will never notice how you are set aflame with bodily love to such an extent, that you will cease to be ashamed of men and to fear God, and will disregard honour, life and all the tortures of hell in your longing to commit sin. So avoid in all possible ways:

(a) Communion with people, who can be a temptation to you, if you sincerely desire to escape the captivity of sin and paying its wages, which is death of the soul. The wise Solomon calls a man wise, who fears and avoids the causes of sin; and he calls foolish a man who, with great self-reliance, confidently neglects to avoid them, saying: "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident" (in his actions) (Prov. xiv. 16). Did not the Apostle point this out when he advised the CORINTHIANS: "Flee fornication" (I Cor. vi. 18).

(b) Flee idleness and laziness; stand on guard watchfully, in all things peering closely at your thoughts, and wisely arranging and conducting the activities, demanded by your position.

(c) Never disobey your spiritual teachers and fathers, but obey them willingly in everything, executing their orders quickly and readily, and especially those which can teach you humility and go against your own will and inclination.

(d) Never allow yourself boldly to judge your neighbour; judge and condemn, no one, especially for the particular bodily sin of which we are speaking. If someone has manifestly fallen into it, rather have compassion and pity for him. Do not be indignant with him or laugh at him, but let his example be a lesson in humility to you; realising that you too are extremely weak and as easily, moved to sin as dust on the road, say to yourself: "He fell today, but tomorrow I shall fall." Know that, if you are quick to blame and despise others, God will mete out a painful punishment to you by letting you fall into the same sin for which you blame others. "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. vii. 1); you will be condemned to the same punishment, in order to learn from it the perniciousness of your pride and, thus humbled, to seek a cure from two evils: pride and fornication. Even if in His mercy God protects you from downfall and you keep the chastity of your thought inviolate, stop blaming others if you were blaming them, and instead of relying on yourself, be still more afraid and do not trust your own steadfastness.

(e) Pay attention to yourself and watch over yourself. If you have gained some gift or another from God, or find yourself in a good spiritual state, do not in your vainglory accept vain illusions. About yourself, thinking that you are something and .imagining that your enemies would not dare to attack you that you abhor and despise them so much that you will immediately repulse them, if they dare to come near you. As soon as you think thus, you will fall as easily as an autumn leaf from a tree. That is what you must do before the temptation of bodily passion assails you.

At a time of actual temptation, do as follows: hasten to discover the cause which provoked the attack and sweep it away immediately. This cause may be internal or external. External causes may be: undisciplined eyes, words sweet to the hearing, songs which delight your ears by their content or melody, fine garments made of soft materials, perfumes pleasing to the nose, free behaviour and conversations, physical touch and pressing of hands, dances and many other things. Remedies against these are: simple and humble attire, the will not to see, hear, smell, say or touch anything which may produce this shameful impulse, and especially avoidance of all intercourse with people of the other sex, as has been already said above. Inner causes are, on the one hand, ease and comfort of the body, when all bodily desires find full satisfaction; on the other—shameful thoughts, which either come of themselves brought by memories of things seen, heard and experienced, or which are excited by evil spirits. As regards a life of physical ease and comfort, it should be hardened by fasts, vigils, sleeping rough, and especially by a great number of bowings and prostrations to exhaust the body, and by various other voluntary mortifications of the flesh, as advised and counseled by our wise and experienced holy fathers. The remedy against thoughts, no matter whence they come, is various spiritual exercises, compatible with your present state and dictated by it, such as: reading of holy and salutary books, especially of St. Ephrem the Syrian, St. John of the Ladder, the Philokalia and others of the same kind, devout meditations and prayer.

When shameful thoughts begin to assail you, pray thus: immediately raise your mind to our Lord, crucified for us, and call on Him from the bottom of your heart: "My Lord Jesus! My sweetest Jesus! Hasten to help me and do not let my enemy ensnare me!" At the same time embrace mentally (and also physically if there is one near you) the life-giving cross upon which your Lord was crucified, kiss often His wounds and say to Him with love: "Most beautiful wounds, most holy wounds, immaculate wounds! Wound my wretched and impure heart and do not let me offend and shame Thee by my uncleanness." During the time when shameful thoughts of bodily lust multiply in you, your reflections must not be directed straight against them, though many advise this. Do not attempt to picture in your mind the uncleanness and shame of the sins of bodily lust, nor the remorse of conscience which follows upon them, nor the corruption of your nature and loss of your pure virginity, nor the besmirching of your honour, and other similar things. Do not attempt, I say, to think of these things, for such reflections are not always a reliable means of overcoming bodily temptations and may only give strength to the attacks and, at times, lead to your downfall. For, although your mind remonstrates with the lust and

mentally upbraids it, yet the thought dwells on its objects, to which the heart feels such predilection. So it is not surprising that while the mind is lavishly pouring out severe condemnations of these things, the heart delights in them and consents to them—which means inner downfall. No, you must think of such subjects as would screen off these shameful things and completely distract your attention from them, things which, by their nature, would have a sobering effect on your heart. Such subjects are the life and passion of our Lord Jesus, Who took on flesh for our sakes, the inevitable hour of our death, the terrible Day of Judgment and the various aspects of torment in hell.

If, as often happens, shameful thoughts should persist in spite of this, and should attack you with special force and impetuosity, fear not, do not stop reflecting as we have said, and do not attempt a direct attack on them to expose their shameful nature, Refrain from this, but continue to direct your whole attention to reflections upon the sobering and awe-inspiring subjects indicated above, without bothering about the shameful thoughts, as though they were not your own. Know that no better means exists of driving them away than disregarding and neglecting them. As often as possible, interrupt your meditation by this or a similar prayer: “Deliver me, my Creator and Saviour, from my enemies, to the glory of your passion and your infinite mercy.” Conclude your meditation by a similar prayer, Take care not to cast the eye of your mind upon this bodily uncleanness, since merely visualizing it is not without danger; and do not pause to converse with these temptations or about them, in order to find out whether consent to them had occurred in you or not. Although such analysis may appear good, in actual fact it is a trick of the devil, who strives by this means to weigh you down, to cast you into faintheartedness and despair, or to make you dwell on these thoughts as long as possible, in order thus to drive you to sinful action, of this kind, or some other.

Instead of all such investigations of the thoughts which trouble you, go, confess all in detail to your spiritual father, and thereupon remain undisturbed in your heart and thought, untroubled by any questions, but content with the ruling of your father. Only, you must reveal to him everything, which has troubled and is troubling your mind and feeling in this temptation, concealing nothing and not letting your tongue be tied by shame, but humbling yourself in self-abasement. For if, to gain victory, we need profound humility in all struggle with our enemies, how much more so at moments of warfare of the flesh? For in this case the very temptation is mostly either born of pride or is a reproof and punishment for it. Therefore St. John of the Ladder says that he who has fallen into fornication or some other sin of the flesh, had previously fallen into pride; and that his fall into sin was allowed, to humble him. “Where a downfall has happened, there pride has dwelt before it; for pride comes before a fall.” And again, “Punishment for the proud is to fall” (Chapter 23). When shameful thoughts are at last subdued and temptation ceases, you must do the following: however much you are convinced that you are now free from attacks of the flesh, and however sure you are of yourself, take every care to keep your mind and attention away from things and people, who were the cause of this up surging of temptation. Do not satisfy the impulse to see them, under the pretext that they are your relatives, or that they are devout and your benefactors. Admonish yourself with the thought that this too is a sinful blandishment of our corrupt nature and a net of our cunning enemy the devil, who assumes here the form of an Angel of light, in order to cast us into the darkness of which St. Paul speaks (II Cor. xi. 14).

Chapter 27. A warrior of Christ should use all means to avoid worries’ and agitations of the heart, if he wishes really to overcome his enemies

Just as it is a pressing duty of every Christian when he loses his peace of heart to do all he can to restore it, so is it no less obligatory for him to allow no accidental happenings of life to disturb this peace; I mean illness, wounds, death of relatives, wars, fires, sudden joys, fears and sorrows, memories of former sins and errors, in a word everything which usually troubles and agitates the heart. It is indispensable in such cases not to allow oneself to feel worry and agitation, for, having succumbed to them, a man loses self-possession and the capacity to understand events clearly and see the right way to act, each of which gives the enemy the possibility to agitate a man still more and push him to take some step, that is difficult or quite impossible to remedy.

I do not mean to say you must not admit sorrow, for this is not ill our power. What I mean is—do not let sorrow take possession of your heart and agitate it; keep it outside the bounds of your heart and hasten to soften and restrain it, so that It may not prevent you from reasoning soundly and acting rightly. With God’s help this is in our power, if religious and moral feelings and dispositions are strong in us.

Each affliction has its own peculiarities and each requires its own remedies; but I speak now about them in general, having in view their common quality—to trouble and agitate the soul, and having in mind a general remedy against them. This remedy is faith in the good Providence, which arranges the course of our life with all its accidental happenings, for the good of each of us, and a serene compliance with God’s will, expressed in our attitude, in accordance with which we call from the bottom of our heart: Let God’s will be done! As the Lord wills, so let it be, and be for our good.

This good is realized and felt differently by different people. One realizes: this goodness of God leads me to repentance; another feels: it is because of my sins that the Lord has sent me this trial, to purify me of them; I am

bearing God's penance; a third thinks: the Lord is testing me, whether I serve Him sincerely. Those who look from outside at a man subjected to afflictions may think the fourth: this is sent him, that the works of God may be revealed in him. But such a verdict can be in place only when affliction is ended, and when God's help is evident in the soul of the afflicted man. Only the first three feelings should have place. No matter which of them enters the heart, each has the virtue and strength to still the rising storm of sorrow and establish peace and good cheer in the heart.

And here is a general means for making peace in the heart when some affliction tries to disturb it: with all your strength make firm your faith in the goodness of God's Providence towards you and revive in your soul a devoted submission to God's will; then introduce into the heart the reflections mentioned above and urge it to feel that the affliction you suffer at this moment is either a means by which the Lord puts you to the test, or a purifying penance He imposes on you, or that He thus presses you to repent, either in general, or particularly in connection with some wrong action of yours, which has remained forgotten. As soon as the heart begins to have one such feeling, the pain immediately abates and these two other feelings also can come in. All these together will very quickly establish such peace and good cheer in you that you cannot but cry out: 'Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever!'

These feelings in the troubled heart are as oil on the waves of the sea: the waves are stilled and there is a great calm. Thus bring peace to the heart, in whatever degree it be troubled. But if by long effort on yourself and by many spiritual endeavours you implant these feelings in your heart, so that it is always filled with them, then no affliction will ever trouble you, for this disposition will most effectively prevent them. I do not mean that feelings of sorrow will never assail you: they will come, but will at once retreat, as waves from a mighty cliff.

/*To be continued*/

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