

## Apostle Luke Sunday October 18, 2015

93. According to St Paul (cf. Rom. 15:16), you 'minister' the Gospel only when, having yourself participated in the light of Christ, you can pass it on actively to others. Then you sow the Logos like a divine seed in the fields of your listeners' souls. 'Let your speech be always filled with grace', says St Paul (**Col. 4:6**), 'seasoned' with divine goodness. Then it will impart grace to those who listen to you with faith. Elsewhere St Paul, calling the teachers tillers and their pupils the fields they till (cf. 2 Tim. 2:6), wisely presents the former as plowers and sowers of the divine Logos and the latter as the fertile soil, yielding a rich crop of virtues. True ministry is not simply a celebration of sacred rites; it also involves participation in divine blessings and the communication of these blessings to others.

*[V4] 232 St Gregory of Sinai On Commandments and Doctrines, Warnings and Promises; On Thoughts, Passions and Virtues, and Also on Stillness and Prayer: One Hundred and Thirty-Seven Texts*

15. No one can learn the art of virtue by himself, though some have taken experience as their teacher. For to act on one's own and not on the advice of those who have gone before us is overweening presumption - or, rather, it engenders such presumption. If the Son does nothing of His own accord, but does only what the Father has taught Him (cf. John 5:19-20), and the Spirit will not speak of His own accord (cf. John 16:3), who can think he has attained such heights of virtue that he does not need anyone to initiate him into the mysteries? Such a person is deluded and out of his mind rather than virtuous. One should therefore listen, to those who have experienced the hardships involved in cultivating the virtues and should cultivate them as they have - that is to say, by severe fasting, painful self-control, steadfast vigils, laborious genuflexions, assiduous standing motionless, constant prayer, unfeigned humility, ceaseless contrition and compunctionate sorrow, eloquent silence, as if seasoned with salt (cf. **Col. 4:6**), and by patience in all things. You must not be always relaxing or pray sitting down, before it is the proper time to do so, or before age or sickness compels you. For, as Scripture says, 'You will nourish yourself on the hardships of your practice of the virtues' (cf. Ps. 128:2. LXX); and, 'The kingdom of heaven is entered forcibly' (Matt. 11:12). Hence those who

diligently strive day by day to practice the virtues that we have mentioned will with God's help gather in the harvest at the appropriate time.

*[V4] 274 St Gregory of Sinai On Stillness: Fifteen Texts Different Ways of Psalmody*

119. Do you see how the enemies of our salvation make us fall by means of their fantasies, deceits and empty promises? Satan himself was cast down like lightning from the heights because he fancied himself to be the equal of God (cf. **Luke 10: 18**); and he sundered Adam from God by making him fancy that he could be of divine rank (cf. Gen. 3:5). In the same way the lying and crafty deceives all who fall into sin.

*[V1] 183 St Hesychios the Priest On Watchfulness and Holiness Written for Theodoulos*

86. The Lord himself declares that Satan fell from heaven like lightning (cf. **Luke 10:18**); this was to prevent him, in his hideous-ness, from looking on the dwelling-places of the holy angels. But if he may not share the company of the righteous servants of God, how then can he dwell in the intellect of man together with God Himself? It will be said that this is possible because God recedes a little and makes room for him. But this explanation is inadequate. For there are two different ways in which God recedes. First He recedes in order to educate us. But this receding does not by any means deprive the soul of divine light. As I have said, all that happens is that grace often hides its presence from the intellect, so that the soul may advance through resisting the attacks of the demons by seeking help from God with great humility and fear; and in this way it gradually comes to know the wickedness of its enemy. A mother does much the same when she finds her child rebellious over feeding: she pushes it away for a moment so that, being alarmed by the sight of some animals or rough-looking men, it will return crying with fright to her breast. The second kind of receding is when God withdraws altogether from the soul that does not want Him; and this indeed delivers the soul captive to the demons. We, however, are not children from whom God has withdrawn - heaven forbid! We believe ourselves to be true children of God's grace, which nurses us by briefly concealing its presence and then revealing itself once more, so that through its goodness we may grow to our full stature.

*[V1] 286 St Diadochos of Photiki On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination One Hundred Texts*

69. 'God does not want us to be lying idly on our backs; therefore He does not effect everything Himself. Nor does He want us to be boastful; therefore He did not give us everything. But having taken away from each of the two alternatives what is harmful, He has left us what is for our good.' Truly does the psalmist say: 'Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain' (Ps. 127:1). For it is impossible to tread on the asp and basilisk and trample on the lion and dragon' (Ps. 91:13. LXX), unless you have first cleansed yourself as far as you can, and have been strengthened by Him who said to the apostles: 'See, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and on all the enemy's power' (**Luke 10:19**). It is on this account that we have been commanded to entreat the Master not to 'lead us into temptation, but to deliver us from the evil one' (Matt. 6:13). For if we are not delivered from 'the fiery arrows of the evil one' (Eph. 6:16) through the power and help of Christ, and found worthy of attaining dispassion, we are laboring in vain, thinking that through our own powers or efforts we shall accomplish something. Therefore, he who wishes 'to stand against the wiles of the devil' (Eph. 6:11) and render them ineffectual, and to share in the divine glory, ought day and night to seek God's help and divine succor with tears and sighs, with insatiable longing and fire in his soul. He who wishes to share in this glory purges his soul of all worldly pleasures and of hostile passions and desires. It is of such souls that God Speaks when He says: 'I will dwell in them' (2 Cor. 6:16). And the Lord said to His disciples: 'if a man loves Me, he will keep My commandments; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and take up Our abode with him' (John 14:23).

*[V2] 29 St Theodoros the Great Ascetic A Century of Spiritual Texts*

33. According to the Gospel, the person who is simply a man of faith can remove the mountain of his sin through the practice of the virtues (cf. Matt. 17:20), thus freeing himself from his former attachment to the restless gyration of sensible things. If he has the capacity to be a disciple he receives fragments of the loaves of spiritual knowledge from the hands of the Logos and feeds thousands of people (cf. Matt. 14:19-20), demonstrating by his action how the power of the Logos is increased and multiplied by the practice of the virtues. If he also has the strength to be an apostle he cures every disease and infirmity: he casts out demons

(cf. Matt. 10:8;**Luke** 10:17), that is, he banishes the activity of the passions; he heals the sick, through hope restoring a state of devotion to those who have lost it, and through his teaching about judgment stiffening the resolve of those who have been softened by sloth. For, since he has been commanded 'to tread on serpents and scorpions' (**Luke 10:19**), he destroys the beginning and end of sin.

*[V2] 121 St Maximos the Confessor Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God Written for Thalassios First Century*

77. The subjugation of the passions is not sufficient to ensure spiritual happiness for the soul unless the soul also acquires the virtues by keeping the commandments. Scripture says, 'Do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you,' that is, the operations of the passions, but 'because your names are written in heaven' (**Luke 10:20**), having been transferred to the place of dispassion by the grace of sonship gained through the virtues.

*[V2] 130 St Maximos the Confessor Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God Written for Thalassios First Century*