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Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

September, 4 2011

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel
J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 - 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Thursday is the most solemn feast of the Nativity of the Birthgiver of God. In anticipation, the Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Wednesday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise.

+++ We were unable to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in our parish church last Sunday due to the storm. Large branches on Burke Rd. prevented access and there was no electricity in our building.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We acknowledge the continuing goodness of soul of Eleanor Korba who has steadily been keeping our parish church and hall clean. We ask for God's rich grace to continue blessing her with good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week: Tithe Offering, \$408.00; Candles, \$16.00; Holyday, \$30.00; Food Coupons, \$320.00; Christian Fellowship, \$4.00, for a total of \$778.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Subdeacon Daniel & Marilyn Korba, Robert Gorbich, Anna Zacharyczuk, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida, and Pani Bulezta.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1631.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$109,000.00. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5350.00 on this project to date!

+++ **The Clothing Drive is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.**

+++ We remember only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

LORD



TEACH
US

GOD'S PROMISES

Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever 2 Samuel 7: 16.

The days are coming says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant and I had to show myself their master, says the Lord; But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and kinsmen how to know the Lord. All from the least to the greatest, shall know me, says the Lord, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sins no more Jeremiah 31: - 34.

Through your precepts I gain discernment; therefore I hate very false way Psalms 119: 104.

Those who love me I also love and those who seek me find me, with me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than gold, yes, than pure gold, and my revenue than choice silver. On the way of duty I walk, along the paths of justice, granting wealth to those who love me and filling their treasures Proverbs 8: 18 - 21.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him may not die but have eternal life John 3: 16.

He who obeys the commandments he has from me is the man who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I too will love him and reveal myself to him John 14: 21.

Twelfth Sunday

The enthusiastic young man approaches the Lord. He sees in Christ something phenomenal, more than the outward appearances of inner strength seem to reveal. However ardent his desires seem to be, he ends by rejecting Christ and his values. No doubt the Lord in his human nature is adversely affected because He does in fact wish this man's salvation, but salvation cannot be forced on anyone. No doubt the Lord recalls the insightful advice He offered just a short time before to the disciples, "If anyone does not receive you or listen to what you have to say, leave that house or town and once outside it, shake its dust from your feet. I assure you it will go easier for the region of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than it will for that town" Matthew 10: 14, 15.

Jesus offers us instructions regarding the handling of rejection. He told his disciples, in other words, to "shake it off." Basically He is saying, "Don't let it bother you. Don't let it keep you from doing what I have called you to do." Even a cursory view of the Lord's earthly life among us reveals He was despised and rejected. A thousand years before his earthly appearance, the Prophet Isaiah makes this observation for our benefit, "He was hated and reviled by men; a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom men hide their face, spurned and we held him in no esteem" Isaiah 53: 3. Although this is the case, He never let it bother him. Certainly in his human nature He felt the pain as you and I do when we experience rejection, but He did not let it prevent him from fulfilling his purpose. It was not an excuse for him to give up on us and refuse to continue in his salutary vocation. Instead, He told his disciple not to be concerned about rejection because in reality, people who rejected them, who reject his priests today, who reject us because we are faithful believers, are reality rejecting him. St. Luke records for us, "He who hears you, hears me. He who rejects you, rejects me. And he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me" Luke 10: 16.

The rich young man in today's gospel narrative dug for himself a far deeper hole into which he fell than he realized. He failed to recognize the Lord loves his children, all of them, including the young rich man himself. He did not understand the Lord takes it personally when anyone rejects those whom He sends among us or treats them with contempt. Those who are parents know very well how they feel when anyone mistreats their child. You feel their pain and will do anything possible to prevent it. I am thinking now of a small little second grader who because of a family move had to change schools in a new community. She experienced major rejection from the children in the new

school. As her mother approached and drove by the school playground one day at recess time, she saw her daughter sitting all alone on a bench by herself while the other children were engaged in playful activity. But her daughter, all alone, seemingly alienated, looked so sad and lonely that it just about broke the heart of her mother to see her in such emotional distress. Even as she cried in the evenings because she did not understand why nobody liked her, the mother's pain was increased because there was no reason not to like her. Rejection was something the devil used to make her feel badly about herself as a person. The little girl was a faithful small believer and she talked about Jesus freely in her life. Obviously, the devil did not like her young convictions and attacked her in this way.

We do know rejection is one of satan's favorite tools to use against people. The pain of rejection often causes people to function in fear rather than in the boldness of holiness. The young second grader was innocent in her faith commitment but she soon learned that when she talked about Jesus the other children made fun of her and it adversely affected her for a long time.

If we begin our life rooted in rejection, it is equivalent to having a crack in the foundation of our house. Those whose homes do not have a firm foundation, a crack in their basement walls or footing, soon experience major problems each time storms or heavy rains occur. People who experience rejection in their lives are like such a house. Each time there is a storm, everything becomes a mess, including them. They try different methods to find security, but nothing ever works. They may try people-pleasing to find acceptance. Often they become approval addicts. They live with the emotional pain of rejection or the fear of being rejected, which is often worse than rejection itself.

A solid foundation is the most important part of a building. Without a solid foundation, the building will not last. The rich young man apparently inherited his wealth and never appreciated how hard someone else had to work to provide him with some security. He took it for granted and as just deserts for the blessing of his birth. He was not prepared or disposed to live a truly prosperous life even though money was not a problem. But money does not buy completion or fulfillment or peace of mind and soul as anyone of you can testify.

Everything concerning the building is built on a foundation. Everything concerning the character of the rich young man was built upon his privileged status. If the foundation is weak or cracked, any thing that is built on it is unsafe. It can crumble or fall apart

any time, especially if stress is placed on it by something like a storm or earthquake. We all suffer storms and even earthquakes in our emotional and spiritual lives.

God's revelation to us teaches us people must build their lives on a solid rock, a secure foundation, not sand. The person who hears the Word of God and lives it seriously is like the man who in building his house dug down deeply and laid a foundation on solid rock in the earth. When the flood waters rose up, the torrents broke against the house they could not move it because it was securely founded on the security of a firm foundation. Our Lord taught us, "Anyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like the wise man who built his house on a rock. When the rainy season set in, the torrents came and the winds blew and buffeted his house. It did not collapse; it had been solidly set on rock. Anyone who hears my words but does not put them into practice is like the foolish man who built his house on sandy ground. The rains fell, the torrents came, the winds blew and lashed against the house. It collapsed under all this and was completely ruined" Matthew 7: 24 - 27.

If we try to build our lives on what people say and think of us, how they treat us, how we feel, or our past mistakes, we are building on sinking sand. Before we can experience the healing and affirming power of Jesus Christ our Lord, we have to change the foundation of our faith commitment. Our lives cannot be like a house built on shifting sand rather than solid rock. Our foundation cannot be weak. It cannot be allowed to remain insecure. We do not like ourselves if we are not secure in our identity as followers of Christ. We cannot permit ourselves to be filled with guilt and shame because we have the remedy of the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation to lift our spiritual burdens. We cannot be rooted in rejection and abuse. Every relationship in our lives we attempt to establish will be built on the remnant of rejection and abuse. Every decision we try to make will be colored by it. We will always fear the pain of rejection and need to learn we can survive with Christ and only through him.

By the grace of God, we can trade in our old cracked foundation home, our own ill-founded lifestyle. We can gladly accept a life based on the values of Christ and his assuring love. We can be rooted securely in him. Our heavenly patron, St. Paul the Apostle prayed for us when he said, "That is why I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name and I pray that he will bestow on you gifts in keeping with the riches of his glory. May he strengthen you inwardly through the working of his Spirit. May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, and may charity be the root and foundation of your life. Thus you will be able to grasp fully, with all the holy ones, the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love and

experience this love which surpasses all knowledge, so that you may attain to the fullness of God himself" Ephesians 3: 14 -19.

Think about your beginning life because it represents your roots, your foundation. Did you get a good start in living? If not, thank God you can be uprooted and replanted in Christ. The rich man missed this opportunity offered in today's gospel by the Lord. We may not have had a good beginning, but we can all, because of Christ, have a good finish!



MAKING DECISIONS

WILLIAM MCKINLEY, THE 25TH U.S. PRESIDENT, once had to choose between two equally qualified men for a key job. He puzzled over the choice until he remembered a long-ago incident.

On a rainy night, McKinley had boarded a crowded streetcar. One of the men he was now considering had also been aboard, though he didn't see McKinley. Then an old woman carrying a basket of laundry struggled into the car, looking in vain for a seat. The job candidate pretended not to see her and stayed put. McKinley, however, gave up his seat to help her.

Remembering the episode, which he called "this little omission of kindness," McKinley decided against the man on the streetcar. Our decisions—even the small, fleeting ones—tell a lot about us.

*We've all denied Jesus at one time
or another, through what we've said
or done—or what we've left
unsaid or undone.*



*What keeps you from faithfully and
boldly standing up for Jesus?*

The Faithfulness of God

Jesus answered them and said, 'Have faith in God' Mark 11: 22.

Some of the words of Jesus to his disciples about having faith in our heavenly Father leave many wondering if they can ever exercise that level of trust and confidence in prayer. No one can recall telling a mountain to relocate itself into the ocean and subsequently being a witness to it happening.

We often forget that these words of the Lord can also be understood or translated into "hold on to the faithfulness of our God." Faith is precisely holding on, never departing from the fidelity of our God to us as his choice creation. As long as we recognize and believe faithfully God will never abandon us and will always uphold his promises to us, we cannot go wrong. Faith does not look at the difficulties in our lives...Faith is manifestly interested only in God and speaks only of God...Faith does not look at itself or at the person who is exercising it. Faith simply keeps its eyes on God our Father and praises God and extols the virtues of God because that is what keeps alive in us our fidelity to him.

The measure of an individual's faith, always, is ultimately the measure of his knowledge, understanding and love for God. He knows God well enough to know and understand that is enough. Even what little it may amount to, if it keeps him faithful to God's promises, if he does not swerve from trusting in God,, what little his understanding, will serve him well as a son of the Father.

And it is the prayers of such a man that are answered. It is because he simply believes in God, believes what God says, what God expects of him for full and everlasting life. Life is not always fair, but our God is always faithful.

*"Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations
Psalms 119: 89, 90.*

Trust in him, you chosen ones, forever;
He is faithful, changing never;
Neither force nor guile can sever
those He loves from him.

Did You Know That ...

...like a compass, Scripture always points in the right direction?

...righteous in heart produces beauty in character?

...joy comes from the Lord who lives in us, not from what is happening around us?

...to lead others out of the darkness of sin, permit them to see the light of Christ in your life?

...affliction for God's people is the pruning knife preparing us for greater fruitfulness?

...no one is hopeless whose hope is in God?

...a little spark of encouragement can ignite great endeavors?

...obedience is faith in action?

...it is a great thing to be faithful in little things?

...those possessed of fear of God need never fear death?

...time spent with God is always well invested?

...while government has authority, it is only because of the ultimate authority of God?

...Jesus hears our faintest cry?

...we can walk through the darkest trials when we walk in Christ's light?

...Godly exercise is the key to godly character?

...disregarding God's orders leads only to disorder?

...for the Christian, the fear of death gives way to fullness of life?

...no life is more secure than that surrendered to God?

...they do not truly love who do not show their love?

"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART . . . "

The life and death of the Martyr Markella of Chios is a story that, even in our modern era where very little surprises us, would be considered most shocking. Markella was born in the 16th century on this small Greek island. It was said that her physical appearance was stunning beyond description. Still, Markella's true beauty was found in the depth of her soul, for she exhibited purity and gentleness at all times. Her family was prominent and wealthy - her father was the local mayor - but Markella was much more interested in developing a spiritual relationship with the Lord than in material gain.

When her mother died, Markella totally immersed herself in service to Christ. Her father, however, was not a believer, and soon Markella found herself abused by him both verbally and physically. Finally, after thwarting his perverted, amorous advances towards her, Markella attempted to run away. As her infuriated father chased her, she attempted to hide in a thorny bush. Discovering her place of concealment, the crazed man set fire to the bush, forcing her out from her hiding place. She continued to run, but was soon felled by an arrow. Trapped now between two rocks, Markella was brutally murdered by her father - her lifeless body cut into pieces.

After her death, the villagers found a spring of water flowing from the rocks at the location where Markella had died. The waters from it were found to have miraculous powers of healing. A small chapel was erected on the site in memory of this lovely young martyr named Markella.