

The Reading is From the Holy Gospel According to St. Luke (18:35-43; Eph. 5:8-19)

+ In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit +

Although physically blind, the man in today's Gospel has spiritual sight. He knew that man does not have power to restore sight, but that such a thing is from God alone. And so as St. Cyril of Alexandria says, the blind man "was set free therefore from double blindness; not only did he escape from blindness of the body, but from that of the mind and heart as well..."ⁱ

So although the blind man called out to Jesus using his legal name and title, "Son of David," he did so with true sight; "for he would not have glorified Him as God, had he not possessed spiritual vision..."ⁱⁱ

But we mustn't over look a crucial element in the blind man's spiritual vision. That element is repentance. The blind man calls out "Jesus, Son of David, *have mercy on me!*" This is a Jesus Prayer, and its lesson is crucial for us, because it teaches that true vision of God is impossible without repentance. What then is repentance?

Repentance is the heart's deep sorrow for sin, and confession is the fruit of that sorrow. Repentance is a change of mind, and a turning toward God. Repentance is the ongoing and dynamic work of commending ourselves and each other and our *whole life* unto Christ our God. Just as there is no water without a well, so too there is no vision without repentance.

St. Paul is right. The days *are* evil. We need to make the most of the time; we need to redeem the time. This we do by gathering together as the Body of Christ, united to Him, worshiping God by the Holy Spirit. We redeem the time whenever we take something in our lives, our time, our effort, our priorities, and we orient them toward God.

To redeem the time we deal and trade in virtuous works for Christ's sake; distributing the gifts of Holy Spirit to others. We illumine others with the light we have acquired like a flame

lighting other candles without diminishing its own light.ⁱⁱⁱ But to light our lives and distribute light to others we first need to burn the wick of our hearts with repentance.

We need to awaken through repentance, because a sleeper stinks with the sweat of the day, just as a dead man stinks. Awaken because a sleeper's eyes are closed and a dead man's are in darkness. Awaken because a sleeper is inactive and a dead man doesn't move.

The blind man had spiritual vision. Spiritual vision. And isn't this what we are all about? Having spiritual vision; spiritual illumination, and by the grace of God possessing the fullness of the faith that has awoken us to Light. And receiving light we move others who are not yet of the fold to become fellow sheep of the Good Shepherd, just as the blind man "...became the means of others giving Him glory, for all the people it says, gave glory to God."^{iv}

The blind man and the reaction of the people are that part of the beatitudes made manifest: "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to the all who are in the house. Let your^v light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." This is who we are, and what we are about, by the grace of God.

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ⁱ St. Cyril of Alexandria quoted in *The Bible and the Holy Fathers*, ed. Johanna Manley. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1984. p. 596-97.

ⁱⁱ St. Cyril of Alexandria in *The Bible and the Holy Fathers*, ed. Johanna Manley. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1984. p. 596-97.

ⁱⁱⁱ Adapted from St. Seraphim of Sarov in *The Bible and the Holy Fathers*, ed. Johanna Manley. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1984. p. 553.

^{iv} St. Cyril of Alexandria quoted in *The Bible and the Holy Fathers*, ed. Johanna Manley. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1984. p. 596-97.

^v Not that it is our light, but the light of Christ that we partake of.