



■ † Second Sunday of Great Lent - St. Gregory Palamas

The Seal of Christ is Imprinted, on the Entire Nature of a Christian*

Epistle

(Hebrews 1:10-2:3)

Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment. And as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail. But to which of the angels said He at any time, "Sit on My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation? Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard Him..

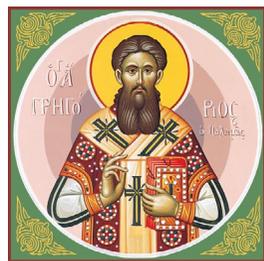
Gospel

St. Mark 2: 1-12)

Jesus again entered into Capernaum some days later, and it was reported that He was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not even about the door; and He preached the Word unto them. And they came unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, who

was borne by four. And when they could not come nigh unto Him because of the throng, they uncovered the roof where He was. And when they had broken through, they let down the bed wherein the one sick with the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the one sick with the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." But there were certain of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" And immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, "Why reason ye these things in your hearts: whether is it easier to say to the sick with the palsy, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk'? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the one sick with the palsy,) "I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw it in this fashion!"

I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved (St. John 10:9). The Lord says the same in another place: No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me (St. John 14:6). He even more succinctly confirms this when he says: Without Me ye can do nothing (St. John 15:5).



A Christian is a person who is wholly in Christ and whose every good quality is from Christ. His justification is by Christ, and his body is also of Christ. He who is being saved is being saved because he is **clothed in Christ**.

The Father is accessible to him only when he is in this state. We have fallen away from God and are therefore subject to His wrath. Only when we draw near in Christ, for Christ's sake, does God's judgment recede and His mercy reach out to us and accept us as we draw near.

The seal of Christ is imprinted on the entire nature

of a Christian, and he who carries this seal will walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil (cf. Psalm 22:4).

In order to become this way we have the Mysteries—Baptism and Holy Communion—for which Confession acts as a “mediator” for those who sin after Baptism.

But this is from the Lord. We must do our part to cultivate: **1)** a spirit of acceptance: faith which confesses “I am lost and can be saved only by the Lord Jesus Christ”; **2)** love which fervently strives to devote all to the Lord and Savior, sparing nothing; **3)** hope that does not hope in itself, but only in its assurance that the Lord will not abandon us and will help us in every way, both internally and externally throughout all of our life, until our hope takes us to the place where He Himself abides.



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God*.