



Seeking the Presence of God With All Our Strength

At that time, when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" They said unto Him, "Yea, Lord." Then touched He their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it unto you." And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, "See that no man know it." But they, when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a demon. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitude marvelled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casteth out demons through the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people (Matthew 9:27-35).



I greet you all, dear brothers and sisters, on this Sunday. Today at the Divine Liturgy we heard the Gospel reading in which the Holy Apostle Matthew tells of how our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ dwelt in the city in which He often abode: Capernaum. This city stood on the crossroads of trade routs on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was a very noisy city, quite populous for those times. The Lord often came to this city, because many of His friends and acquaintances were there. He stayed with them and preached in the city. Those who heard the Savior's words spread these glad tidings not only within Capernaum, but also to the countries from which they had come. The Lord performed many miracles in this city, one of which the Holy Evangelist Matthew describes today.

Two blind men followed the Lord and tried to approach Him, because they had heard that the Lord performed healings. They believed that God's power, if it touched them, could grant them their vision. We know what vision means for man. When someone loses his vision, he loses his spatial orientation and cannot see the world's beauty, which the Lord created. He perceives this world either tactilely or orally.



This is a terrible loss for human life. Yet these people followed Christ.

But the question arises: how could these blind men have followed the Lord and Savior if they could not see anything? How could someone who did not see anything follow Him? But they did. Christ would withdraw and go from home to home, but they followed Him until, finally, He did not stop to preach and they were able to approach Him. These people, being blind, turned themselves into hearing, so to speak. And their hearing was directed only towards hearing where the Lord was. In the large city of Capernaum there were many different sounds, words, and songs. All this reached the ears of the blind men, but they did not pay attention to it. Their hearing was directed towards one thing only: where the Lord was.

Perhaps stumbling, falling, and getting bruised, they followed the Savior's voice in order to receive healing and God's gift. And they did receive this gift, because they had great faith, they labored, and their entire lives were directed towards following Christ. Apart from Christ, they could not imagine life; it would not have been complete. When the blind men approached the Lord, He asked: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Their reply was perfectly natural for them: "Of course we believe, Lord!" And how could they not believe if they had mastered such a path, such a road, in order to reach Christ?



In our modern life we also have an enormous number of different temptations. From the pages of magazines and newspapers, from the radio and television, these temptations pour out upon us in a torrent, calling us to a lush, well-fed, and luxurious life; they call us to self-love, egotism, and a life serving ourselves and our own pleasures rather than other people. These temptations do not accustom people to labor; they do not teach people real love, but rather turn them away from authentic love. In this lies our terrible limitation, since we are unhappy people. Someone cannot be happy who lives his entire life only for himself, acquires things only for himself, and gives nothing to others. These people are most unhappy. Conversely, there are people who are not rich – they may even be poor – but who are generous in their poverty, generous in their soul and in their spiritual qualities, who are ready to share their last piece



of bread with others. And if one compares the former with the latter, the latter are always joyful. Their faces are not darkened; they rejoice and thank God for what the Lord has given them. Why? Because they do not live for themselves, but for the sake of others. There is one more very important quality in these people's lives: their hearing and inner eyes are always directed towards God, because God is the source of their spiritual power.

Today, when we remember the healing of the two blind men who lacked vision, in order to have the fullness of human happiness let us look at ourselves and at our own lives... Even with the satiety, prosperity, and abundance that we have, we often say that we are unhappy. What kind of happiness are we lacking? We lack the happiness of seeing and hearing God in our lives. We lack this spiritual energy, this Divine Power, which would fill our lives and thanks to which – regardless of abundance or wealth – our lives would have the fullness of human happiness. What is the way out of our pitiful spiritual situation into which our entire society seems to be sinking? There is one way out, that of the Gospel: to seek the presence of God in our lives with all our strength. Like the blind men who, when they heard that the Lord was passing by, rushed to Him, so too, when we hear that there are holy things or a church, when we hear the voice of bells and sermons, when we hear the voice of a pious life, should we rush there. God is there; we can encounter Him and receive amendment and healing of our lives. May the merciful Lord also touch our lameness with His Divine Right Hand, with His Divinity, healing and transforming it! For today we have brought our spiritual infirmities into God's church and before His Face, offering them for healing by His Divine holy things. Amen.

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Translated from the [Russian](#).