

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

# ORTHODOX FAITH

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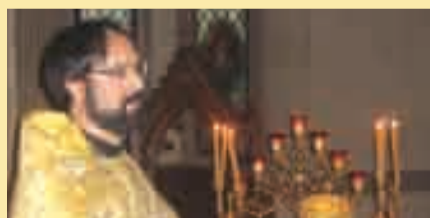
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# YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!

Christ's disciples are told that they are «the salt of the earth» (Mtt.5.13), and the «light of the world» (Mtt.5.14). The disciples are therefore people who keep the covenant of God: «And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou allow the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt» (Lev.2.13). By remembering to fulfill His commandments the disciples give a right character and flavour to the world. As well, in keeping their bond with God, they allow His light, the light of the Holy Spirit, to shine in the world. This light helps and encourages us all to look toward God and His Kingdom. This is the light of which Saint John the Theologian speaks: «In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it» (Jn.1.4-5).

When we read the Holy Gospel we should remember that we Christians are the spiritual heirs of the disciples, and that everything that applies to them applies to us. The question then is «how can I be the salt of the earth and the light of the world»? In the Beatitudes, or the Sermon on the Mount, Christ is speaking directly to us, and gives us an answer to this question. They describe a way of living that leads believers towards the Kingdom of Heaven. Some have described this as «The Righteousness of the Kingdom». Saint John Chrysostom discusses the meaning of our Lord's words in his homily on Chapter 5 of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. Saint John's teaching (Mtt.5.2-12) is presented here in a condensed form.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven: This describes those who humble themselves personally by choice to follow God's will. Christ means here those who are awestruck, and tremble at the commandments of God; this is why He says «poor in spirit» rather than «humble».

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. This refers to those who mourn because of sins. As St Paul said: «For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death» (2 Cor.7.10). When



we mourn not only for our own sins, but for the sins of the world, God will grant consolation in His love for us.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. This teaching is basically the same as «But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you» (Mtt.6.33). Those who seek to do God's will, shall lack nothing they need to live happily in this world.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Christ means either the whole of virtue, or that particular virtue which is opposed to covetousness. We should not allow ourselves to be enamoured of food or drink, or any other worldly possession. When we seek spiritual benefits diligently, we shall have no need to fear poverty or hunger.

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