



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

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THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

EPISTLE The Reading is from St Paul's Letter to the Galatians [2:16-20]

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not. For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

EXPLANATION: This is the only New Testament letter which St Paul addressed to the group of Churches in Galatia, in an attempt to make them understand that man is justified (that is, made righteous), not merely by works of the Law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the faith of Christ – His belief, His trust, His obedience that justifies us, not the Law or simply doing good works. The view of the Jews was that one becomes righteous by fulfilling the requirements of the Law. St Paul tells them to be justified they must imitate Christ's faith which is seen in His entire life on earth, and

not just in His more spectacular good works. God introduced the works of the Law to protect mankind until the time when our union with the Son of God became possible. The purpose of divine sonship is for us to become like God and to enter heaven. Whereas Israel was under the Old Covenant, wherein righteousness and salvation came through faith as revealed in Law, the Christian Church is under a New Covenant. That is, salvation comes through faith in Christ Who fulfils the law, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us through Baptism, and leads us to the knowledge of God the Father. Today, the Protestants of the Reformation period experienced a rediscovery of “faith in Christ”. Their slogan of salvation became “solafides” (Latin) meaning justification was by “faith alone”. That is, salvation depended on accepting Christ as your Saviour and human works of merit, and not upon the mercy of God. Orthodoxy emphasizes that it is first God’s mercy, not our faith, which saves us. Through God’s mercy we are justified by faith and empowered by God for good works of righteousness which bring glory to Him. For Orthodox Christians, faith is living, dynamic, continuous – never static or merely point in time. Faith is not something a Christian exercises only at one critical moment, expecting it to cover all the rest of his life. True faith is not just a decision, it’s a way of life. This is why the modern evangelical Protestant question, “Are you saved?” gives pause to an Orthodox believer. For him the answer can only be – “I have been saved, being joined to Christ in Baptism; I am being saved, growing in Christ through the sacramental life of the Church; I will be saved by the mercy of God at the Last Judgment. Nowhere does the Bible say that we are justified by faith “alone”. On the contrary, “faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead”. (James 2:17) **(2:16)** St Paul explains that once the Jew is **“in Christ”**, he discovers that such faith is not only necessary, but also sufficient for righteousness. He then sees that the Law is, after all, not necessary at all. But Paul foresees that the Jews will say that “in seeking to be made righteous in Christ, we will become lawless like the **“Gentile sinners”** who do not have the Judaic Law and Christ will have a defacto function for us as an agent of sin. But Paul says, **“by no means”**, for in Christ you are all sons of God through faith. It was the absolute authority of the Law that was **“torn down”** in Christ. It was our guardian until Christ, but now that faith has come, we no longer need it. For if Paul were to attempt

now to restore the law, he would prove himself a **“transgressor”**. That is, having destroyed the “works of the law” (that is, proving their ineffectiveness for salvation), he would be a transgressor if he tries to reinstate the Jewish Law. **(2:17-18)** There is no contradiction between law and Christ’s gospel. The Law is holy and good, but it is now obsolete because it is fulfilled in the gospel in Christ Himself. We voluntarily **“die to the law”** and become alive to the law of the Spirit, through Baptism and union with Christ. **(2:19)** To be **“crucified with Christ”** means to mortify our sinful passions and desires. Then one begins a new life in Christ and no longer lives under the dominion of sinful passions. **“Christ lives in him”** and man achieves the aim of Christian life – union with Christ. **(2:20)**

GOSPEL The Reading is from St Luke [8:41-56]

And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus’ feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, *“Who touched Me?”* When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, *“Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, “Who touched Me?”* But Jesus said, *“Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.”* Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, *“Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”* While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying to him, *“Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.”* But when Jesus heard it, He answered him saying, *“Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.”* When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, *‘Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.’* And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, *“Little girl, arise.”* Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her

parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

EXPLANATION:

Jesus was approached by a certain “**ruler of the synagogue**”, a man who was neither poor nor insignificant, but the foremost of society. Despite his prominence, in his great need this man falls down before Jesus and begs Him to cure his little daughter of 12 years, his only child who lay dying. Jairus came to Jesus with two things: a profound sense of his own helplessness, and, a conviction that Jesus could cure his child. His words speak powerfully of Jairus’s faith. If Jairus had only a sense of helplessness, the result would be despair and pessimism. People today have half the necessary condition for coming to Christ, namely, a sense of helplessness. But they fail to link up their powerlessness with the divine power Jesus offers us in prayer and especially in every Liturgy through His presence in the Eucharist. This is why there is so much despair. Jairus’s helplessness led him to Jesus. This is where our helplessness should lead us both in good times and in times of affliction. **(8:41-42)** And Jesus went with him to his house. But along the way a woman came along and interrupted everything. He stopped to heal that woman. But that little interruption was just enough to cause time to run out, and the little girl died. Jesus tested Jairus’s faith by the interruption. Jairus could have given up on Christ when he heard the messenger say, “**Your daughter is dead. Trouble not the Teacher.**” “It’s too late now.” But is it too late for God? Should we ever place a limit on what God can do? The interruption brought for greater blessings to Jairus for not giving up on Jesus. It was then that Jesus said, “**Don’t be afraid. Only believe.**” This interruption was for the glory of God as well as for someone in need. Because of this interruption, a greater miracle was performed for Jairus; he saw the hand of God raise the dead, and because of that, salvation came to his house. God tests us that we may trust Him. But most of us give up too easily and too quickly. Jairus came to Jesus with faith and he was not disappointed. Like Jairus, may we also never hesitate to approach Our Lord in all our sorrows and sicknesses of life. For Christ is a God Who loves and cares and heals and strengthens. A God Who has never ceased to perform miracles where there is strong faith.