

July 5, 2015

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Once again, as we did a year ago, we read the passage from the Gospel about the expulsion of the legion of demons from the two madmen. Again, we are struck by the power of the word of the Son of God, Who was obeyed even by the demons. And yet again we are surprised at the hardheartedness of the inhabitants of the Gerasene region as, having lost their sheep, they beg Jesus to leave their environs.

How clearly we see the choice of these unfortunate people. However, they do not consider themselves unfortunate. They all have arranged their lives, have put everything in its place. They do not have a place for ordeals, upheavals, doubts. They, the inhabitants of the Gerasene region, know what they want in this life. Their choice: earthly happiness. Heaven is foreign to them, unfathomable, hostile. And this is exactly why they beg Christ to leave.

And no matter how deplorable this is, it can be understood from our practical point of view. After all, we also strive for constancy, happiness and peace. Our efforts are directed at the acquisition of means and provisions to achieve such conditions. But then an ordeal comes along. The shaky supports on which we build our lives, such as financial well-being, health, people close to us, begin to wobble and we, along with the faraway Gerasenes, begin to feverishly straighten out these supports or to add new earthly supports. Instead, we should ask ourselves where did these unexpected trials come from? Who sent them to me? But even if we understand that everything is from the Lord, do we not say: "Lord, take all of this from me? Bring back to me my measured and contented life. Lord, go away from me with all of these trials, the meaning of which I don't understand and don't want to understand. Let me be worldly and then I will be fine."

This is how we drive the Lord out of our lives although outwardly we can go to church, go to confession, take communion, pray. But do we pray only about what is worldly? Or thus: do not overshadow the earthly call of our Lord to lift our eyes from earth to heaven?

The Lord is not punishing us when we endure trials, illnesses, losses. He expects that we can break away from everything tenuous and become firmly established in Him.

Christ came to the Gerasene country where he helped the possessed, in order to bring the good news that the Kingdom of God is near, that He Himself is the One Who gives this Kingdom. But the people chose dust, rot.

Christ departed from this land just as He left everywhere from which they drove Him out. He did not try to impose Himself on anyone. He loves but love is alien to coercion. The only ones from this land who followed Christ were the two previously possessed men. They had nothing to lose. They only had everything to gain. They have gained Christ Himself.

How often we fear loss and, as a result, lose God and His presence in our lives. Contemplate this. And try not to forget that everything in this world passes away, but that which we have in our hearts remains with us into eternity. Amen.