

# *The equal to Apostles* **Saint Kosmas the Aetolos**

**The teachings of Saint Kosmas (1714-1779) from Aetolia, Greece, who was a Hieromonk on Holy Mount Athos.**

## **2. Second teaching.**

*Behold a sower went out to sow his seed, and while he was sowing, some seed fell by the roadside and was trampled down., and the birds of the sky gobbled it up. Some fell on the rock, and as soon as it sprouted, it withered because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns and they choked it. Some fell on good soil and grew up and produced a crop, some thirty times, some sixty times, and some a hundred times.' And when he had said this, he called out, 'Let the man who has ears to hear use them' writes Matthew, the holy Apostle and Evangelist, in his holy and sacred Gospel.*



### **The Parable of the Sower**

THERE WAS A FARMER who went out of his house, took seed, And went to plant his fields. And as he planted, some seed Fell on the road, some on stone, some among thorns, and some on good ground. The seed that fell on the road didn't grow because the ground was hard and had been trampled upon, and birds came and ate it. So the road remained barren.

Some seed fell on stone that had some dirt. It sprouted, but as soon as the sun came out, lacking roots, it dried up. And this seed also produced no crop. Some fell among the thorns; it too sprouted, but the thorns also came up and choked it. The seed that fell on good earth was fruitful. For example, he planted a pound and it produced a hundred. Other [seed] fell on inferior soil and it reproduced sixty; some on even more inferior soil produced thirty.

It seems to me that you have understood this parable. But so that you will understand it better, we'll say the following, and take care to listen to the words of the holy Gospel.

Our Lord and God Jesus Christ has many and different names. He's called God, Son of God, Son of Man, wisdom, life, resurrection, and farmer. The Lord, therefore, came out of his house, that is, out of the paternal bosom, by the incarnate dispensation. The Son and Word of God condescended and took on flesh in the womb of our Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, [and became] perfect God and perfect Man.

He was present totally within the womb of the Theotokos and totally everywhere. And just as a man who is God's creation can have his mind totally in the city and totally in his home, and again his mind can be totally within his head, can't God be totally in heaven and totally in every place?

So, my brethren, the Lord came out of his house and took seed to plant his fields, the hearts of people. What is the seed? The holy Gospel; to believe in him and be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to have love for God and for our brethren. What is the road? It's the proud man whose heart is hard and trodden upon by worldly concerns. He hears the word but it doesn't enter his heart, and the demons come and take it away and it remains barren, that is, without any spiritual benefit.

Rock is the heart of the person who hears God's word and accepts it with joy but has little reverence for Christ, and when he's tempted, he denies Christ and goes with the devil.

The thorns represent the person who hears God's word and to whom evil passions later come and choke

and who remains barren. The good earth is the person who is perfect, who brought forth a hundred fold; the middle person who brought forth sixty fold; and the lesser person who brought forth thirty fold. But you haven't understood the hidden mining of the parable, so we should cite an example about part.

### **Manasseh the King**

IN OLDEN TIMES there was a king of the Jews named Manasseh who tormented them with many tortures. The prophets and teachers counseled him to rule the people with gentleness, but listen to the word of God and didn't repent. Seeing his evil mind, what did God do? He raised up a king from the fought him and made him a slave. He locked him inside a large kettle to burn him. What did Manasseh do inside the kettle? He remembered his sins, he wept, he begged him and he would no longer sin.

Seeing his good disposition, God heard his repentance, tears, and sent an angel to free him from that danger. Later, Manasseh sold his possessions, gave alms, and an ascetic life the remainder of his days with fasts, vigils, and prayer. He went to paradise and rejoices forever.

If, my brethren, there's someone among you who is as hard-hearted as Manasseh, let him remember his sins, repent, and weep. Let him be certain that God accepts his repentance as he did Manasseh's.

### **St. Peter**

ABOUT THE ROCK we have a lot to say, but we'll only give one example, that of St. Peter. On Holy Thursday evening, the Lord as God who knows the hearts of men, knowing everything that was to happen and especially knowing the hearts of the Jews and of Judas, sat and taught the holy Apostles varied teachings. Among other things he told them this word: "You should know that one of you will sell me to the Jews for thirty coins and I shall be mocked by the Jews; they will curse me; they will beat me; and they will crucify me. But don't be sad, because I want to be crucified so that I can crucify sin and the devil, and give life to the people. On the third day I will be raised up and will bring joy to you, to heaven, and to earth, and I will poison Hades and the Jews, and especially the devil. Learn this too, my disciples. At that time you will all abandon me and you will flee."

Peter answered and said: "Lord even if everyone denies you, I'll never deny you."

The Lord said to him: "Peter, don't boast."

"No, Lord, I'm ready to shed even my blood for your love."

The Lord replied: "Fine, Peter. Time will tell."

Peter responded: "May it never be, Lord, that I'll ever deny you."

The Lord said to him: "You who say you love me will deny me tonight; before the rooster crows twice you will deny me three times."

For the Lord knew Peter's heart better, than he did himself.

"No Lord," Peter said again, "all others may deny you but I won't."

The Lord answered: "When the sun beats down upon the wheat and it doesn't dry up, then it can be said to have struck roots."

It is the same with every Christian; when he is tempted and he doesn't deny Christ, then he's a true Christian.

The time came and the Lord voluntarily surrendered to the Jews; the Apostles left immediately as the Lord said they would. The Jews took Christ and brought him to the palace of Annas and Caiaphas and began to question him about his origin.

Peter went and stood afar to see our Christ's passion. A Jew came up to him and said: "Are you also with

Christ?"

Peter answered: "No. I don't know the man."

Do you hear, brethren, what Peter did? He denied Christ went with the devil. Earlier he stood by to see what they doing to Christ; later he looked for a door to escape.

Another came and said to Peter: "You too are with Christ."

Peter replied again: "I don't know what you're saying."

When he approached the door to leave another Jew caught to him and said: "Are you also his disciple?"

Peter said: "May I be damned if I know the man."

Do you hear, brethren, he who said that he would shed his blood for the love of his Christ, denies him now. And as he the third time, behold the miracle! The rooster crowed as the Lord said it would. Hearing the rooster, Peter the Lord's word and went outside and wept the rest of his life, whenever he heard a rooster crow, he wept remembering his denial.

Christ was crucified. He rose on the third day and appeared to the myrrh-bearing women and said to them: "Go and tell s and Peter that I have risen and I await them in Galilee."

Why did he single out Peter? So that Peter would learn Lord had accepted his repentance and had forgiven him.

The Apostles went to Christ and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter went too but was downcast. The Lord said "Do you love me, Peter?"

And he asked him three times to correct the three denials to bring him back to his former self.

Later Peter traveled throughout the East and West and made thousands of Christians. He was apprehended by an emperor in Rome who asked him to deny Christ and to worship idols.

Peter said to him: "I won't deny him."

So they crucified him with his head down, and he surrendered his sacred soul into our Christ's hands and went to Paradise.

### **Mary of Egypt**

LET US SAY something about the thorns. Blessed Mary of Egypt was twelve years old when she fell into the hands of the devil. She lived in sin day and night. But the merciful God enlightened her and she abandoned the world and went into the desert. There she led a hermit's life for forty years. She was cleansed and became like an angel. God wished to give her rest, so lie sent the holy ascetic Zosimas to hear her confession and to give her holy communion. Then He received her holy soul into paradise, where she rejoices with the angels. If there is anyone here like Blessed Mary, let him immediately weep and repent, now that he has time, and let him be assured that he will be saved as was Blessed Mary.

### **St. Paraskeve**

LET US SAY something about the good earth. St. Paraskeve was a twelve-year-old maiden from a noble house. Left an orphan, she divided up all her possessions among the poor, and with these she purchased paradise. In place of cosmetics, she wore tears, remembering tier sins. In place of earrings, she kept her ears open to hear the sacred Scriptures. In place of a necklace, she fasted often, which made her neck shine like the sun. In place of rings, she acquired calluses on her fingers from the many prostrations she made. In place of a golden belt, she had her virginity which she guarded all her life. In place of a dress, she was covered by modesty and fear of God. This is how the saint decked herself.

If there is any maiden who wishes to adorn herself, let her consider what this saint did and let her do the same if she wishes to be saved.

In this way, brethren, St. Paraskeve acquired learning and became very wise. Because of her purity, God found her worthy to perform miracles. She cured the blind, the deaf she raised the dead. Two Jews, sons of the devil, seeing the saint perform miracles, envied her and betrayed her to King Antoninus as Christian. So the King summoned her and asked her to deny Christ and to worship the gods and she would become queen.

The saint replied: "I am not foolish like you to deny my Christ and to go to the devil; to leave life and go to death. you leave the darkness and come to the light." you hear, my brethren, how outspoken a young girl a king?

Whoever has Christ in his heart fears nothing in the world. If we too wish not to fear either people or demons, let us have God in our hearts.

King said to the saint: "I'll give you three days to obey; if you don't you'll be put to death."

The saint replied: "O King, what you wish to do in three days time, do it now, for I will not deny my Christ."

The King then ordered a big fire to be lighted and over it was placed, filled with tar and sulfur. Seeing the pot, the saint rejoiced, for she was to depart from this false world and to go to that which is real and eternal.

The King ordered the saint to be put into the pot to be boiled. The saint made the sign of the Cross and got in the pot. The king waited two, three hours and seeing she was not being boiled, he said: "Paraskeve, why aren't you burning?"

The saint said: "Because Christ cooled the water and I don't burn."

The King replied: "Sprinkle me with the water so I can see whether it burns or not."

The saint took some water in her two hands and threw it, into his face, and immediately behold the miracle - he became 'blind and his face was flayed. The King then shouted: "Great is the God of the Christians. In him I also believe. Come Out and baptize me."

The saint got out and baptized him and his entire kingdom. 'Later another king beheaded her and she went to paradise to rejoice forever. This woman yielded a hundred, according to the Lord's word.

### **SS. Andronikos and Athanasia**

LET US SAY something of him who yielded sixty. On October 9, our Church celebrates the feast of St. Andronikos and his wife Athanasia. God had given them two male children. One day they both died. While crying over her children Athanasia was visited by an angel of the Lord who said to her: "Why are you crying, Athanasia? Your children are rejoicing in paradise and you will enjoy them during the second coming, so don't be sad."

In this way he comforted her. Athanasia then said to Andronikos: "Master, thousands of men and women have preserved their virginity for their entire lives. We got married and have enjoyed physical pleasure. Why don't we join a monastery and work for our soul? We'll also go to paradise."

The blessed Andronikos answered her and said: "Sister, may God's will be done."

From that time on they lived as brother and sister. They gave away their possessions and both entered monasteries and lived by fasting and mortification and went to paradise. They produced the yield of sixty because first they enjoyed physical pleasure and then spiritual. They, of course, are inferior to St. Paraskeve. If any of you wishes to produce a yield of sixty, let him strive as St. Andronikos and St. Athanasia and he'll be saved. Again, if you can't produce sixty, imitate him who produced thirty.

### **A Priest Named John**

IN THE EAST there was a priest named John who was married and had twenty children. One day a bishop visited his home and saw the children and asked whose they were.

"Mine," said the priest, "God gave them to me."

The bishop asked him: "How long have you been married?"

"Eighteen years," answered the priest.

The bishop replied: "You've had twenty children in eighteen years? You should be unfrocked."

"Allow me to explain to you, bishop," the priest answered, "and if then you find it proper [to unfrock me], let God's will be done."

The priest began his story: "I, bishop, have had some education. At the age of eighteen I became a reader, at twenty-five a deacon, and at the age of thirty a priest, without paying a dime. I married in accordance with the divine canons. First, my wife and I went to confession, then we went church and were married and received holy Communion. After three days we came together. As soon as my wife became pregnant, we separated until she gave birth. We came together again only after the forty-day churching service."

"Again we separated after she became pregnant and came together after the forty-day churching. In this way, your Sacredness, we had twenty children."

The bishop then said: "May you be forgiven and blessed. Go ahead have fifty and even a hundred children."

So the Blessed John taught his children their letters and instructed them with counsel. He lived well here [on earth] paradise. He produced thirty [fold]. Do you, my brother, also want to produce thirty?

This is the meaning of the parable. The Jews are the road and they are destined for hell, the ungodly are the rock, and the pious Orthodox Christians are the earth and are saved. But how are they saved? Each, according to whether he has done good or evil, goes to paradise or hell.

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