

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 6:31-36

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (KJV)

Believers are to live in conformity with the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. The commitment made at Holy Baptism to live in ways pleasing to Jesus Christ is to be honored throughout the remaining days of life.

Each day brings opportunities to conform with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Through continued repentance serious believers discard ways of life that are far from pleasing to Christ.

Upon exiting the baptismal font believers intend to remain pure and live in ways pleasing to Jesus Christ. Sin creeps into believers lives as time passes. The sin requires being addressed.

The Lord Jesus Christ offers forgiveness through Holy Confession for believers choosing to repent and begin life anew in Christ. Repentance and forgiveness bring joyful renewal.

The journey from the time of Holy Baptism until departure from this life can be many years. The Psalmists speaks about life being seventy to eighty years.

(Ps. 89/90:10) Some believers live much longer.

The Christian life requires following the narrow path to God's Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life. (Mt.7:13-14) Today's Gospel teaches that love of enemies and doing good without expecting anything in return is part of that narrow path.

Believers constantly performing self-examinations determine the areas of life failing to be Christ-pleasing. Immediate repentance is necessary when life fails to be pleasing to Jesus Christ.

Growth in Jesus Christ is expected and possible throughout life when the mind is functioning. The Holy Apostle Paul described the unlimited growth possible when writing to the Corinthians.

Holy Apostle Paul wrote about unlimited growth in these words: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor.3:18)

The Lord God is ever-present to guide believers from the Baptismal font to the Heavenly Kingdom. God is within reach through prayer and in the Church. God reveals the paths to follow in the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Prophet Jeremiah offers these guiding words for life: “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Jeremiah 3:16)

The Lord Jesus Christ was very clear that seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness are to be first and foremost in life’s journey. (Mt. 6:33) Careful and critical thinking ensure life’s steps are God-pleasing.

Believers seriously and faithfully praying to God learn to discern the steps for daily life. The Psalmist said: “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.” (Ps.36//37:23)

Serious believers rely on the Holy Prophets for direction. Life’s decisions are not to be hastily made. Consequences can be perilous when patience is abandoned and haste moves to the forefront.

Holy Prophet Isaiah advises patience in decision-making: “... they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)

Intense fog will appear on the road of life from time to time. Serious believers will rely on faith in God when making decisions to go forward in life. The Epistle to the Hebrews serves as a reference on faith.

The Epistle to Hebrews states: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb.11:1) God does not disappoint believers prayerfully seeking guidance on the paths to the Heavenly Kingdom.

God is reassuring (Deuteronomy 31:8) God reveals His presence in daily life for believers to know they are not alone in life’s journey. Believers with eyes to see and ears to hear will see God’s verifying presence each day of life.

The Church is where believers learn to discern life’s paths and the pathways to God’s Kingdom. The Church emphasizes the directions for life. Christ is provided in the Church as the nourishment for life.

Today is the day to thank God for life and for providing the necessities of life’s journey. Doing good to the ungrateful described in today’s Gospel is the way for believers to thank God.

Showing love for one’s enemies and to the unkind people met in daily life are ways to thank God. When believers love enemies, the unkind and ungrateful, believers adhere to Christ’s teachings and demonstrate genuine love for Christ.

Every Gospel message is an important guidepost on the journey to God’s Kingdom. Attentive believers heed the God-provided directions in the Gospel. Thank God for today’s Gospel for the present journey to the Kingdom.

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Hieromartyr Cyrpian of Antioch. Blessed Andrew, Fool-for-Christ. October 2/15, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic