

The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 12:16-21

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (KJV)

God's Holy Church is in the Nativity Fast at the present time. Now is the time to seriously prepare for the Feast of the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Examine the soul and personal goals to ensure they conform to Jesus Christ's teachings.

Evaluate personal wealth and determine if it is being used consistently with the way the Lord Jesus would want it used. The world encourages the accumulation of material goods and great financial wealth.

Today in the world we see homes being built bigger and bigger and more luxurious by a large segment of the population. The news reported recently the average price of a home was several hundred thousand dollars.

On the same day the high cost of homes was reported a radio host was lamenting the great extent of homelessness. What if people building bigger and bigger homes would live modestly and share their wealth with the unfortunate?

I have seen with my own eyes a neighborhood where a perfectly good home was destroyed and a bigger and fancier one replaced it. If the owner was content with the initial home and gave his excess funds to charity, his soul would benefit.

People go to thrift stores to find perfectly good clothing and articles that have been discarded. The present society has a segment exceedingly wealthy and living with a mindset of greed.

The present Gospel encourages care of the soul. Today's Gospel is a lesson to heed the handling of personal wealth. Excess accumulation of wealth does not address the hunger in the soul.

Sad stories often are reported of individuals having won the lottery and not having a good ending. Wealth comes from God and is to be used in ways pleasing to God.

Care of the soul is to be the priority of life throughout life. A believer never knows the moment when the last moment of life will occur. Wealth used in accorded with the Lord's teachings will benefit the soul.

As Great Lent approaches each year, the Church addresses the Great and Final Judgment that all will face. Care for the sick and suffering, the needy, and poor is equated with care of Jesus Christ.

Some parishes are very active in addressing the suffering in their locations. Other parishes may flee poor neighborhoods and turn a blind eye to suffering nearby.

Believers do not always take the Gospel seriously and may ignore the poor nearby while spending excess funds frivolously. It is good to remember the Lord Jesus Christ entered the world in humble surroundings.

Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on a simple animal. Today some believers have car collections that boggle the mind in monetary value while the same owners may donate a mere pittance to the poor in their communities.

Food banks are always appealing for funds due to the existence of hunger in the world. At the same time, excess food is often discarded in certain households. Each person is responsible for his or her soul and answers for the use of personal wealth.

The rich man in the present Gospel was not focused on his soul. He was focused on his wealth. When death came unexpectedly the wealth accumulated would do his soul no good.

Had the man in the current Gospel been attentive to the less fortunate, his soul would have been enriched before God. Jesus Christ and the Holy Apostles did not live in great luxury.

The saints of the Church live humbly. Joy lives in the hearts, minds and souls of the saints in their modest surroundings. Too often stories are told of those living in great luxury as suffering from dissatisfaction in life.

Wealth that blinds care for the soul does not lead to satisfaction. Compassion for others less fortunate enriches the soul. The Gospel lessons at each Divine Liturgy intend changes in the lives of the attentive listeners.

In preparing for the Feast of the Nativity, believers have opportunities to live more consistently with Jesus' teachings. Now is the time to repent of any selfish excesses in life.

Today is the day to seriously think about the state of the soul. Assess whether personal wealth is being used in ways pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Be honest to the self in answering if concern for the less fortunate exists in the heart.

Heeding the Gospel leads to God's Kingdom and eternal life. Decisions made each day shape the direction of life. The path followed either leads to God's Kingdom or to damnation.

The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost. The Conception of the Righteous Anna. Serbian Children's Day. December 5//22, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania,
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