

Homily on the Gospel about Blind Bartimaeus St. Luke 18: 35-43 and 1 Timothy 1: 15-17

- We misuse so many things- clothes, food, hearts, EYES
 - How many have ruined their lives with EYES
 - Look at how strong the allure of graphic advertisements on the television, in magazines, and on billboards. This speaks to the strength of vision in determining our desires and values.
 - Look at how strong the addiction many have to internet pornography, where men and women forsake intimacy with their wives and husbands in favor of graphic images on the WWW
 - I wonder how many people spend time browsing Holy icons on internet? Not many, especially when compared to these other profane icons found at less Godly sights
 - This is evidence that while our physical vision is good, our spiritual vision falters badly
- Which one is more important? Jesus Christ himself answered this question, saying:
 - (Matthew 18:9) ***And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.***
 - He also says (Matthew 13:15): For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
 - Obviously he is speaking of the danger of those who have eyes, but see nothing. Or worse – who have eyes but use them to kill their souls
- Blindness should point us to question the strength of our own sight
 - If there are people who have different degrees of vision (from perfect to blind and many variations in between); SHOULD WE NOT EXPECT TO SEE THE SAME WITH REGARD TO SPIRITUAL SIGHT?
 - How do you know the strength of your own eyes? Think about it.
 - We turn to the one with good eyes and ask “What does that sign say?”
 - Wouldn't you question the wisdom of someone who, when seeing only blurry shapes on a sign on the side of the highway, assumes that the sign was unimportant? Who assumes that if it were important, that they would have been able to read it?
 - But is not this how we treat our lack of spiritual vision in the world? Rather than asking those with good eyes, we just bump around like a blindfolded man in a china shop, breaking things.
- Back to the encounter described in the Gospel: who was blind?
 - Bartimaeus who saw nothing, but knew the Christ (knew prophecy- Jesus of Nazereth)
 - The throng of people who walked before him, but saw him not/thwarted his will
 - This is what the world has become. Surrounding Christ not to worship Him, but to mock him – and keep the desperate from approaching Him.
- Bartimaeus as an example for the rest – knew his blindness and knew the cure!
 - Moreover, his persistence is exemplary! He does not let the world deter him
 - Would that the crowd also saw their own blindness and recognized Jesus as the cure
- So the man who has lived in darkness, is brought by the apostles to Christ. Christ heals him. **“And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God.”**
 - Just as vision is the desire of every blind soul – so is the desire to follow Christ the only response of those who do have “eyes to see.”
- Christ lives within the Holy Orthodox Church. Within the Mysteries and Communion of this parish.
 - He has perfect vision. He will, through His Church, describe the world to You
 - Moreover, He is the great physician who will heal your vision, so that you might see clearly and thus live life more abundantly
- May we have the wisdom and perseverance of Blind Bartimeus so that we might also know his joy in Christ Jesus. Amen.

(St. Luke 18: 35-43) And it came to pass, that as Jesus was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging; and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more: "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him; and when he was come near, He asked him, saying: "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" And he said: "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" And Jesus said unto him: "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God.

(1 Timothy 1: 15-17) This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.