

## From the Teaching of Elder Efraim Katounakiotis (Ephraim of Katounakia)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



A dialogue between a disciple and his elder (Elder Efraim Katounakiotis):

‘Elder, I say the prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me”, but I don’t understand anything’.

‘You might not, but the devil does. It burns him and he flees. Ah, well, son, you want to see a miracle through prayer, through the Jesus Prayer?’

‘Of course I do’.

‘Very well, then, I’ll pray to God to show you a miracle so you can understand the power of the prayer – the prayer “Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me”, to which all the Patristic books refer, but particularly the Filokalia’.

The Elder prayed and kept a three-day fast with only a little water.

‘Come here now, son’, he said to him after the three days, and gave him a basket. ‘Go and fill it with water’.

‘Forgive me, Elder, for the little brain I’ve got, the little sense. How can I fill it with water? Can anyone fill a basket with water? You can wet, it, certainly, but fill it?’.

‘Look, son, did you want to see a miracle or not?’.

‘Yes. I did’.

‘And to see the power of the prayer”? What power “Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me” has? Because the power of the prayer derives from our Almighty God, because our Lord, Jesus Christ is both the saviour of the world and the true God from the True God. Now, do you want to see this power?’

‘Of course’.

'Then do as I say, but say the prayer all the time. Go and come back saying the prayer. Continuously: "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me"'.

'As you wish'.



He

put the basket under the faucet. The water filled it and didn't run out! Not a drop escaped from either the sides or the bottom. But he continued to say the prayer the whole time: 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me'.

It goes without saying that, at the same time the Elder was praying in his cell that God would show his disciple a miracle. Well, he filled the basket. As soon as he saw it, he dashed off to show his Elder, to tell him that the basket was full and the water wasn't running out.

As he was covering the fifty metres or so back to the kelli, the devil appeared to him in the form of a man. Like a monk.

‘Where are you off to, monk?’

‘To my Elder’

‘What’s your name?’

‘George’

‘How many years have you been here?’

‘Five or six’.

‘And what do you do? What’s your obedience?’

‘We make seals’.

As they were talking, the basket emptied and all the water seeped out of the bottom. He’d been chatting idly and forgotten the prayer. He went to his Elder with an empty basket.

‘What happened, son? Why are you bringing me an empty basket?’

‘Well Elder, it was like this.’

‘Never mind. You stopped saying the prayer, son. And you got to talking and the person you were talking to wasn’t a person at all, but the devil. If you hadn’t spoken, the basket would still have been full. But you did, you stopped saying the prayer and the water ran out. So you see: as long as you were saying the prayer, the basket held the water. When you stopped and began chatting, the water drained away. Prayer, the prayer-rope with “Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me” is alms-giving, and spiritual alms-giving- because that’s what the Jesus Prayer is- brings down the mercy of God. There’s no sin greater than God’s mercy (that is, God’s mercy can expunge any of our sins). His mercy’s great’.