

Two extremely tragic cases (Georgios Patronos)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)

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In the Gospel reading for the 7th Sunday of Matthew (9, 27-35) we have two events. The first is the cure of two blind men and thereafter that of the man who was both mute and possessed. Both cases are extremely tragic, as Saint Matthew presents them, not only because of the bodily suffering involved, but also because of the deeper, spiritual dimension given to their illnesses. The reading concludes by telling us that Jesus 'went about all the cities and towns' with one essential soteriological aim: teaching, preaching and curing every disease and every weakness. Christ's work is composite and multi-dimensional.



The meaning of 'to cure'

The third feature of the Lord's work was the cure of 'every disease and every weakness' which are present in the life and history of a people. The meaning of the

mission and of the incarnation of the Word is not exhausted by His teaching and preaching efforts, by a kind of theoretical understanding of the revelation of the plan for the divine dispensation. The miracles He performed complete the picture we have of the mission of Christ as Redeemer and Saviour of each of us and of the whole of humankind.

Typically, after every missionary effort and at the end of every homily, the sick and suffering would come to be cured. The miracle almost always comes as confirmation of Jesus' authority over the body and the soul, over human beings and nature. This is precisely what happens in the Gospel reading for the 7th Sunday of Matthew. After the sermon and the teaching comes the miracle: 'As Jesus went on from there' two blind men appeared, 'crying loudly and saying "Have mercy on us, Son of David"'. And again, 'after they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him'.

The way our attention is concentrated especially on these two cases of sickness, blindness and muteness, especially under the direct influence of possession by a demon is of great importance. But the result of all this teaching and these miracles was always, in the end, the consolidation of the new Gospel message and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God.

The work and mission of Jesus Christ was completed through preaching, teaching and miracle-working. Any effort to split up these three basic features or any preference for one over the others is not merely a great error, but distances us from the proper understanding and experience of the Lord's work of salvation. Alas, many people think of Christianity as a teaching and educational Institution which plays an important cultural role in the history of the human race. Others believe that the Christian faith is enshrined particularly in theological dogmas and moral rules of life.

Indeed, in extreme cases, many people believe that the Christian religion can be validated only through forms of wondrous actions and acts of asceticism linked to impressive charismatic efforts. These one-sided views certainly lead to delusion. It is only in the unity and service of teaching and preaching, as well as faith and experience of the miracles on the part of each of us that the truth of Christ is to be found.

(Source: Georgios P. Patronos, Emeritus Professor of the University of Athens, *Κήρυγμα και Θεολογία*, [Preaching and Theology] vol. I, pp. 80-87, excerpts)