

1 Οκτωβρίου 2017

Second Sunday of Luke († Dionysios, Metropolitan of Serbia and Kozani)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



It's a great thing for there to be concord and love in life. Then again, it's a bad thing to have discord and enmity. Through harmony and love we build our life; with discord and hatred we ruin it. Because our life's like a structure and we're the craftsmen building it. Either building it or ruining it, depending on the way we treat people and behave towards them. This treatment and behaviour which builds and constructs us is what the Master Builder of our life and salvation, Jesus Christ, talks to us about today.



Photo by Dimitris Iliopoulos

'As you wish others to do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you,

what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be offspring of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful'.

It would be good to leave it there and not add anything of our own. Not merely because these divine words are simple and we all understand them, but because they're the words of God on a subject we don't want to listen to. The words are simple so that our brain can understand them, but they're not pleasant for our hearts to love. What we want is exactly the opposite of what Christ tells us: He speaks of goodness and we want wickedness; He speaks of love and we whet our knives for the kill. Christ knows this very well, which is why He chooses His words in such a way as to prevent us from being able to say that He's wrong. He makes us look inside our soul, to see what we want others to do for us: the same as we should be doing for them. This is the infallible measure, the golden rule for the social life of humankind, of people who live together because they can't live like wild animals out on the mountains. It's the measure for people who feel that every hour, every minute, they need their neighbours.

It's true that people get on with each other and fit in with them, but not always for the good. It's easier for them to do so when it's a matter of self-interest and doing something bad. You love those who love you and think you're doing something important. Yes, sure. There are also some people who hate those who love them. These are wicked and useless. But you set a limit to your goodness, because, you say, you like things to be fair. You do good to those who do good to you, you lend to those who'll repay- with interest, even- and you help those in need in the expectation of getting something out of it. What's this supposed goodness and what do you expect from God? You're particular about paying your debts here on earth and there's nothing left for God to owe you. If that's all it is, you're doing fine. But there are lots of people deeply in debt to God because of their treatment of others and their behaviour towards them. They appear to do good and expect no return but the opportunity to put their brother out onto the streets, to take his house, to drink his blood. But there's no way you can convince people through the mind or with knowledge, because avaricious people, loan-sharks and all of those who do evil are deeply sick and there's no human medication to help them. We can only remind them of Christ's words and hope that they'll listen, provided they haven't got hearts of stone: 'Behave towards others as you would have them

behave towards you'.

Let's say we have enemies. It's impossible that we won't have, because even Christ had some: those who refused to love Him at any price. And even if we were beyond reproach- we aren't, though Christ was- there'd still be some people who wouldn't want what was good for us. But we're not talking about our enemies here and certainly not about why they might hate us; we're talking about ourselves and the fact that we must love our enemies. And it's not us who say so; it's Christ. Christ wants what's good, without any limits, and for love to spread to such an extent that it embraces our enemies, as well. You'll say that these are hard words, as some people did, indeed, say in the time of Christ. 'I can understand about doing unto others as you would have them do to you, but this here, about loving my enemies, I can't get my brain round, nor can my heart bear it'. Whereas in fact it's the self same thing: if you love your enemies, it means that you're doing what you'd want others, your enemies, to do to you. But I won't be able to convince you, unless you first understand that this is what Christ is saying. When God speaks who are we to discuss and judge His words? We should just remember that, on the Cross, He prayed for His enemies and even now, in heaven, He prays for us, though we're sinners and reprobates.

The world isn't sustained by our sanctity, but by God's goodness. Christ tells us to be like God. Not in wisdom, not in power, but in His goodness. He's good and merciful towards everybody and this is what keeps the world going. Let us be good and merciful towards each other in order to make sound structures of our lives. Goodness builds, love constructs. Let us then have both of them in our lives, for our salvation. Amen.