

Great Lent: Sunday Bible Reading Week 4

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Today's Gospel (Mark 9:17-31, see sidebar), read on the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent (Sunday of St. John Climacus) brings together a number of themes that we have highlighted throughout our Great Lent: Sunday Bible Reading initiative.

Faith, specifically faith in the God-man (Theanthropos) Christ; the importance of discipleship; the performing of miracles by Christ proving His divinity; and, new for this week, the importance of "prayer and fasting," two essential virtues for every Christian.

Consistent with our previous articles, today we will again focus on only a few words from the Bible reading: I believe; help my unbelief! These are the five words that the father of the troubled child "cried out" to Christ before He "rebuked the unclean spirit."



Last week we wrote: “Cooperation and synergy between creation (man) and Creator (God) are required for our salvation, although as we read in the Bible God does not force anyone to cooperate with Him.”

Now, let us use the father’s five words as a springboard to expand on the importance for us to develop a robust relationship with our Creator, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Orthodox faith is not human-centric. When we pray, for example, we are not conversing with a faceless “God” or an unknown person. We are speaking with Christ, who took on flesh and was made Man that we might be made god (St. Athanasios).

St. Gregory the Theologian says: “Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us become God’s for His sake, since He for ours became man. He assumed the worse that He might give us the better.”

We can, in fact we are called, to have an intimate relationship with Christ, which is cultivated, among other things, by our strong faith. Faith like that shown by the four friends of the paralytic man we read about on the Second Sunday of Great Lent (Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas), as well as the faith we heard today from the father whose son was troubled from childhood.

What does Jesus tell the father: “All things are possible to him who believes.”

Let us ponder upon this profound statement for a moment. Let us think about what our responsibility is, namely, to believe. But believe in what exactly? In Christ – to worship God in Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our relationship with Him propels us to live a truly Orthodox life. To have communion with God. To have faith in His healing – as we saw in today’s Gospel – and in His miracles and forgiving power. To believe that we are not alone on this earth, that our Creator loves and nourishes all of humanity, and that through Christ’s Resurrection, our faith and our belief are not in vain.