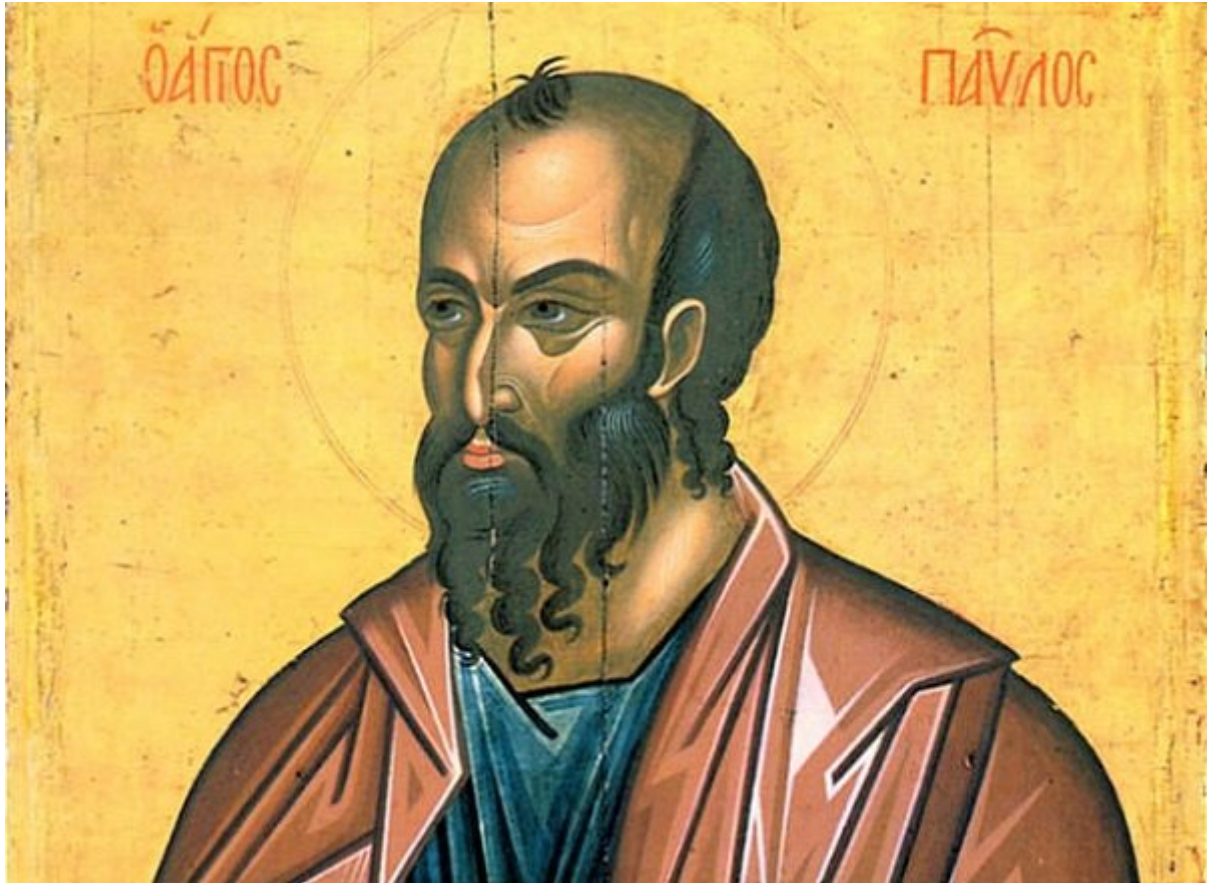


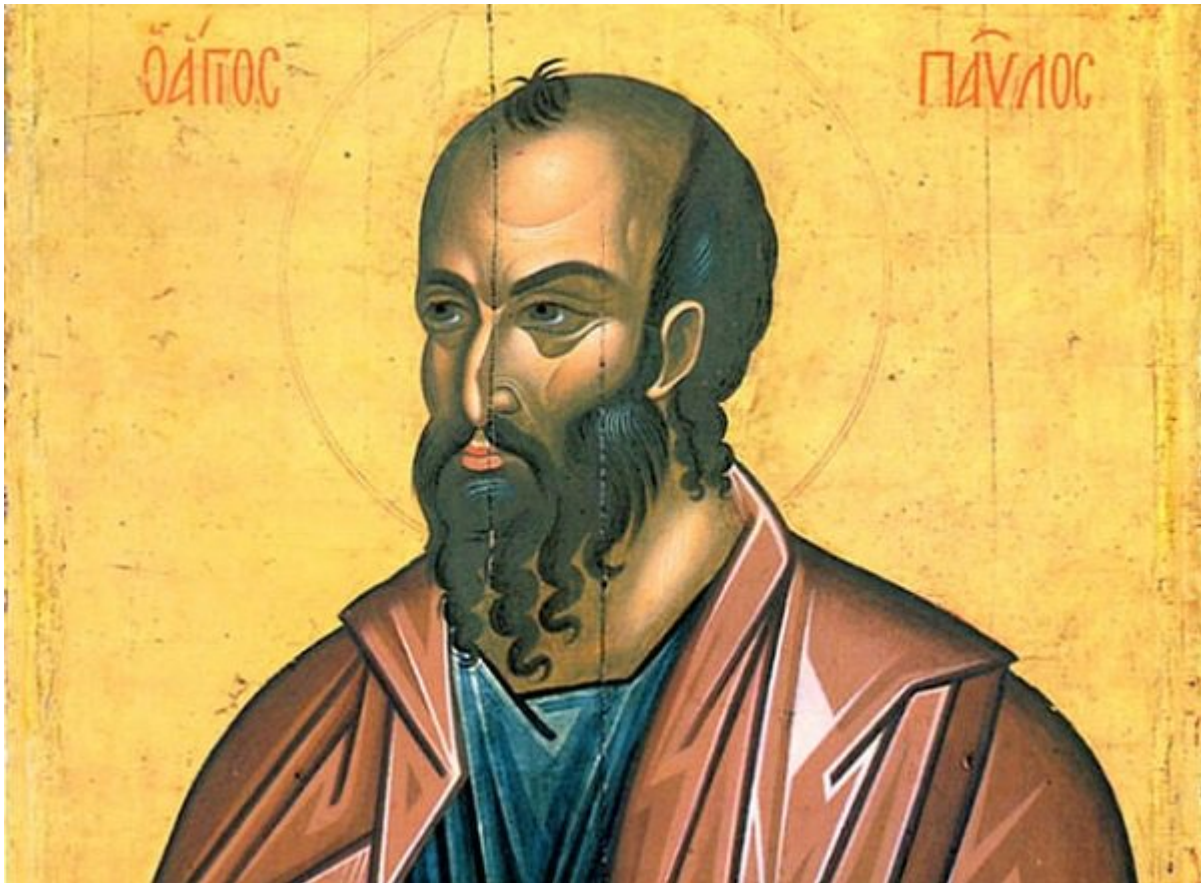
Sermon on the Apostolic reading for the 5th Sunday of Luke - Ephesians 2: 4-10 (Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



The Apostle Paul, in this present passage from his Epistle to the Christians of Ephesus in Asia Minor, presents us with the great love of God for humanity: “God is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us “(verse 4). Then, the inspired Apostle describes how God manifested this vast love. This follows of course, because “God is Love,” as the Evangelist John the Theologian teaches us, and the student of love affirms (1 John 4:16).

Have we deeply felt in our souls this truth that God, through His divine nature, is all love and only love? That every energy of God comes from love? That God does nothing without love? Have we realized that God extends His love to the whole world, whom He has created only by love? This being for all people of every race, no matter who they are, be they good or bad; holy or sinful.



Sometimes parents say to their children: “Be careful; if you do this, God will not love you.” This is very wrong. Or what some others may say: “God has punished him.” Woe to us if God ever ceased to love us when we sin, and punished us when we disobey His will! The Psalmist says: “If You, O Lord should mark transgression, who would stand?” (Psalm 129[130]:3)

Nowhere in the Holy Gospel will you find anything showing our Lord and God Jesus Christ to be an oppressor. On the contrary, they are full of acts of love that our Lord Jesus Christ shows even to people who have committed great sins. Let us remember the attitude of Jesus towards the sinful woman who He saved from stoning by the Pharisees: “I do not condemn you,” Jesus said to her, “go and sin no more” (John 8:11). Jesus Himself declared: “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47).

If Jesus had not come, driven by His great love to save us, our salvation would be impossible. For our part, we humans-without Christ-can do nothing for our salvation. As the Apostle Paul writes in his Epistle: “we were dead in trespasses” (verse 5). The dead are not capable of anything. But Christ came, and while we were dead, God “made us alive together with Christ.” With His grace we have been saved. Not only did God save us, but he also honored us in an amazing way. God the Father, who has accepted us again as His loved ones, has given us the

opportunity to sit together with His Son, Jesus Christ in heavenly places! How is this achieved? With our faith. When we believe in Jesus Christ, and struggle to live according to His will, God will bring us to Heaven. It makes us citizens of His reign. He accepts us as members of His Holy Church, beginning here on earth and reaching up to Heaven itself!

Let's also address something that the Apostle Paul added. The salvation that God has given us, and the glory and honor that surrounds us, is not our own achievement, but God's gift. We are not saved by our own efforts; that is why we cannot boast about it. "By grace you have saved through faith...it is the gift of God" (verse 8).

My brothers and sisters, after what the divinely inspired Apostle revealed to us, we should not only thank the Triune God for His great love in giving us salvation, but trust in Him completely. Let us accept everything that He gives us in our lives, even if it is unpleasant. To do so in the belief that the One Who loves us is doing so for our sake, and in our best interest. For our part, we should pay special attention to one thing: to be in constant communion with Him, and to respond to His love with something greater than just our simple, cordial love. To love Him, not to fear Him. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). Let us therefore, love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength (see Mark. 12:30).