



Orthodox Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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The Great Physician November 4, 2024

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today's Gospel lesson shows the Great Physician, our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, healing the sick and raising the dead. Today's lesson reveals the essence of our faith; knowing that we are sick and dying, physically and spiritually, we must turn to God for healing and salvation. Our faith is not a faith centered around condemning and judging others because that is not what God did when He came down to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ came to bring salvation to the world. Understanding this, we not only turn to Him for our own salvation, but we seek to bring others to Him with the hope of their salvation.

Doctors and medicine can be a great source of healing, but they will never be the end-all cure for every sickness and disease. Sickness and death came when mankind turned away from God in the garden of Eden, and the only ultimate healing is for our turning back to God. The woman with the issue of blood was well-aware of this. She had spent all her livelihood on physicians and was no better for it. The flow of blood this woman

had made her unclean according to the Law of Moses. She was required to remain at home and was forbidden from touching anyone. Having heard of the miracles and wonders of Christ, with faith, she was willing to break Jewish law, leave her home, and receive healing from Him. If she were noticed by the crowds, an angry commotion would ensue as well as her condemnation since she would be making others unclean by her mere presence. So, she tried to go unnoticed. She had faith that if she even just secretly touched His garment, she would receive healing. And sure enough, she did. She was frightened when Christ called her out, but he gave a beautiful word, one which we all would wish to hear. "Be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace." Her faith in God led her to touch Christ's garment, and through this faith, God healed her.

Another character in today's Gospel lesson is Jairus. Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue. A ruler of a synagogue would be somewhat akin to a member of a parish council. They were well-respected laymen in their community who would look after the synagogue building, its upkeep, assist in organizing a schedule of worship, and things of that nature. Although they were not religious leaders, they certainly would have been close to them and thought highly of among the people. Many religious leaders at this point in the Gospel were horrified and angered by what Christ was doing. Christ ate with tax collectors who stole from their fellow Jews, He broke the fasts, He broke the sabbath laws by healing on the sabbath, and He made blasphemous statements such as when he forgave the sins of a paralyzed man. Crowds still flocked to Him, but many of the religious leaders rebuked Him. Jairus, however, did not follow the example of the religious leaders, as other rulers of synagogues may have been tempted to do. Jairus' love for his daughter and his faith in God led him to fall at Jesus' feet and beg Him to heal his daughter. Through this act of intercession, Christ came to Jairus' daughter who at this point was dead and raised her back to life.

As Orthodox Christians, we are called to be like the woman with the issue of blood and like Jairus. We must have the faith of the woman by recognizing our sicknesses, our sins, our weaknesses, and reach out to God for our healing. And we must have the love for our fellow man as Jairus did for his daughter, fall down on our knees, and beg God for their healing and salvation. What happiness can we have in our own salvation if we see our neighbor who doesn't know the love of God lose their salvation? We are to intercede on our neighbor's behalf in the hope of their salvation just as the saints in heaven intercede on our behalf in the hope of our salvation.

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