

## **The Twenty Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**

Luke 13:10-17

And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. (KJV)

We are blessed in God's Holy Church to be nourished consistently. The hunger in our souls is addressed in the Divine services and teachings of the Church.

The Church is a witness to the world of the presence and greatness of the Lord. The Church has endured and thrived through the centuries. The Church has spread around the world from a very small beginning.

Today we learn about the Lord Jesus Christ healing a woman with an infirmity that afflicted her for eighteen years. Satan had bound the woman. Jesus Christ freed the woman from Satan's hold on her.

How many of us know friends or family members who are bound by Satan with alcoholism, drug additions, or criminal behavior? How many of us know persons that want to do good but are unable to overcome Satan's bonds?

Today's Gospel gives hope to everyone bound by Satan. The miracle working power of the Lord Jesus Christ is explicit in the present Gospel. Jesus healed the woman of her long-standing infirmity.

Each of us has behaviors that are contrary to the ways of the Lord God. Each of us says or does things that put our soul in peril. We are captivated by Satan to a certain degree by our own sinfulness.

The Lord Jesus Christ will make a difference in our lives if we firmly turn to Him in faith and repentance. The Church provides the Nativity Fast at this time of the year to transform our lives in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity.

The Lord Jesus Christ took on human flesh and changed the world forever. The Nativity Fast is a period to seriously consider Jesus Christ's birth and the meaning for the world and our personal lives.

The period leading to the Feast of the Nativity is not a time for focusing on commercial or social activities. This is a time to consider the unparalleled event of Jesus Christ taking on human flesh.

Jesus Christ's birth transformed the world in order for humans to be transformed and freed from sin. Today is the day for us to take the initiative to be free of the sins that plague us.

Personal honesty and repentance are necessary to acknowledge personal sins and draw closer to Christ. Today is the day to open the heart, mind and soul fully to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sin must be firmly and resolutely rejected. Sin is repelled and conquered only when we live in Christ. The Church affords believers the opportunity to draw near to Christ and be healed.

Today many people feel imprisoned and bound by fears resulting from the coronavirus. The Lord Jesus Christ is greater and stronger than the coronavirus. Believers placing firm faith in Christ will have their fears allayed.

Order and peace prevail in the hearts and minds of believers fully centered on Christ. The hunger of the soul is fully satisfied in the Church. Jesus Christ heals the afflicted bound by fear.

Repentance and Holy Confession free a person from sin. The Precious Body and Blood of Christ unite the believer and fill the believer with Christ. Believers need only repent, trust in the Lord and have resolute faith.

God's Holy Church brings the present Gospel to believers each year as a firm reminder of Christ's healing power. Daily concerns and interest cause believers to stray from the narrow path to the Kingdom of God.

The Church offers the Gospel at each Divine Liturgy to draw believers back from the perilous roads to eternal death. The Gospel offers direction to eternal life. God's love is ever present to heal, give comfort and strength.

The time of earthly life is limited. Each moment is to be cherished and used wisely. The Church is a constant opportunity for believers to experience the fullness of life as God intends.

Coming to Church and living in Christ is a purely voluntary act. There is no better way to live earthly life. There is no better place to seek eternal life. God's Holy Church offers Christ without compromise.

The confessors, saints and martyrs through the centuries have shown the wisdom of following Christ in the Church. Today is the day to cast off the bonds of sins and experience freedom in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ will cut the shackles of our sins and free us to live in peace and joy. We need only to heed the Gospel teachings and follow Jesus Christ as known in God's Holy Church.

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The Twenty Seventh Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostle Andrew. November 30/December 13, 2020. St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church, Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic