

St. Pantaleimon More Than a Name Change

Objectives

To learn from the story of St. Pantaleimon about how our nature changes when we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ

References

- ❖ Holy Scripture
- ❖ The Synexarium

Scriptural Verse

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Lesson Outlines

(Refer to the story of St. Pantaleimon)

When St. Pantaleimon came to know the Lord Jesus Christ, he changed his name from Pantaleon (like a lion) to Pantaleimon (All merciful). This is what happens when we enter into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, our nature changes from being like a lion to being like sheep, meek and loving. We cannot know Christ without our nature changing.

St. Paul experienced this so well because he went from being a hard hearted Jew who persecuted Christians to an obedient disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ who converted Jews and Gentiles to Christianity. So He tells us that in order to have a similar conversion we must:

1. Unite with the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17. Not just know Him on a superficial level but to actually get into a deep relationship with Him. Being in the Lord Jesus Christ means that we are a new Creation.
2. The work of grace. God realizes that I can only do so much seeking. He realizes that I am weak and feeble and my best compared to His greatness is really absolutely nothing. So He gives a power, and aid that I totally don't deserve and that nothing I can do could help me earn it. This power is called Grace and it is the work of the Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3: 18, 1 John 2:26 -28. Are we allowing Grace to work in our lives?
3. We have to acknowledge that grace is working in our lives. It is actually working all around us, it protects us from snares of the devil, it strengthens our spiritual battle and it protects us from earthly disasters. When we acknowledge that grace is working all around us at all times, we are more likely to use it, to rely on it and ask God for more of it.
4. We must empty ourselves of our ego in order to allow grace to work within us. Grace is a power and that power can never work where there is another power which is the power of the self.

There are certain characteristics of the person who experiences this conversion like St. Pantaleimon or St. Paul.

1. Obligation – If we look at the stories of St. Paul and St. Pantaleimon – we see a commonality after their conversion, they all felt an obligation to let others know about the Lord Jesus Christ. St Paul went on to preach the Word and St. Pantaleimon to healing

the sick and the needy. When one has a relationship with God they cannot contain themselves, they feel like they want to share Him with the world and to use their God-given talents in his service.

2. Confidence - Change does not happen overnight. It is a gradual thing that happens over our entire lifetime. Therefore there is no need for us to be discouraged if we see that we are not changing the way we would like to be, it is a subtle and sublime thing. We must also understand that God started the change in us and He will continue to work in us.
Philippians 1:6

Conclusion

Change in our lives can only come from intimately knowing the Lord Jesus Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit. In order for that to happen we must acknowledge the grace that is working in us and empty ourselves so that the Holy Spirit can work effectively. Change is an ongoing process that will take our lifetime but once it starts to happen we will want to share Him with others through service and we will be confident that He will always work within us.

Activities/Discussion Points

1. What are some barriers that prevent us from knowing God?
2. How does God speak to us and how can we listen to His voice?