

SERMON on the Healing of Two Blind Men, July 26, 2020 - Matthew 9:27-35

(Based on a homily given by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Dept. of External Church Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church)

Today we heard in the Gospel the account of our Savior healing two blind men. The Lord asks them if they believe that He can do this and they both answer in the affirmative. The Lord responds by saying, "According to your faith be it done to you," and they are healed. There are two options open to us. We can have spiritual sight and faith, or we can be spiritually blind and have no faith, or as the Russians say, be a non-believer. A non-believer is incapable of seeing the reality of the spiritual world. Spiritual blindness is the inability to see the hand of God in one's life. A man who is spiritually blind ascribes all good things in his life to himself and thinks that if he has succeeded in anything, it is solely due to his own talents, abilities and resources, or that it was just plain luck. When such a person experiences a trial or sorrow in his life, he desponds, because this doesn't fit into his idea of happiness and success. Likewise, he sees this simply as bad luck. A spiritually blind man does not see his own shortcomings and it seems to him that everything is alright in his life, that he always acts appropriately, and if some problems arise in his relationship with others, the other people are always to blame. He says to himself, "I did everything correctly, they are against me and they did things wrong." A man who has spiritual sight sees the hand of God in everything. He understands that life is not just a matter of chance or luck but that the Lord guides him like parents who are fond of their children and guides us to the Kingdom of Heaven. Such a person, when difficulties arise in his relationship with others, will ask himself, "Did I do or say something wrong? Did I make a mistake?" A man who has spiritual sight understands that the cause of many of his troubles and sufferings lies within himself. When he scores a success in life, he immediately thanks God, because he knows that all good things come from God. And even if he has contributed to his success with personal talents and abilities, isn't it the Lord who has blessed him with the health, strength and talents to accomplish these things?

This is the difference between the man who is spiritually blind and the man who has spiritual sight. These people surround us, move in the same circles that we do and work in the same office where we work, but they look at things quite differently than we do. One has sight and one is blind, one has faith and believes and one has no faith and is a non-believer. One can see the miracles of God in his life so that his faith may be stronger, the other, when witnessing a miracle, says that it is just a coincidence or just the luck of the draw like in a game of poker, there is no miracle. God has opened our eyes so that we may contemplate His beauty and be guided in our actions by God's Divine commandments. We should live our lives in such a way that we are an example to the non-believer that God exists, that God is not far away but here among us, that God is not indifferent to us but actively participates in our lives, helping us in every good task, protecting us from many troubles and sorrows and guiding us to the Kingdom of Heaven.

May the Lord grant spiritual sight to all of us and may we never fall into spiritual blindness. Let us remember that if the Lord has opened our eyes, we should be especially attentive to ourselves and how we conduct ourselves and how we treat our neighbors. May those who have no faith see the reality of God in our lives and by our example be inspired to change from non-believers into believers and may the Church grow and bring more and more people to the faith, that people may turn from spiritual blindness and have spiritual sight. Amen.