

Homily 48 - Concerning Now We Should Adorn Our Eternal Habitation With Virtue

by St. Paisy of Neamt

St. Paisy of Neamt's homily emphasizes the importance of building our spiritual home with virtues, particularly through the practice of temperance and daily nourishment.

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:6, Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 24:3, Matthew 6:11, Romans 14:17, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Galatians 5:22

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Virtue Building"

Description

St. Paisy of Neamt preaches about the importance of adorning our eternal habitation with virtues, comparing it to the diligence and zeal people have in constructing earthly homes. He emphasizes the need to build a spiritual house composed of virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which will be eternal and receive the Holy Spirit. St. Paisy highlights the fear of God as the beginning of wisdom and encourages the cultivation of virtues like wisdom, courage, chastity, and righteousness to form a holy temple of the Lord. He also addresses the practice of temperance and the balance between nourishing the body and soul to serve God effectively.

Transcript

Concerning Now We Should Adorn Our Eternal Habitation with Virtue

Brethren and Fathers! If anyone who is a layman wishes to construct a large and magnificent home, then he gives himself no rest either day or night, but labors, worries, and endures deprivation until he finishes the building of the house. They have such zeal and diligence in this work that their minds and thoughts, day and night, are occupied with nothing else but only with how the roof might be finished more beautifully and excellently, and so that all below and all the rest might be adorned and done so that anyone who might see it would like to have such a home. And if anyone should desire to keep them from this work, then this would be for them so painful that it would be as if they suffered a great offense.

What is it that I wish to say to your love, respected Brethren? Since each of us builds and sets up for his soul not a house that is tangible and corruptible, which is made of stone and wood, but a heavenly dwelling that is incorrupt and eternal, which is composed of the virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, then tell me, shall we be actually less concerned and more slothful in constructing it than we would be in constructing a temporal house? Would not the loss of it be hard for us to bear? And the more so, since a

house that is corruptible and temporal receives people of the flesh and thereafter when the house has had many owners, it itself grows old, goes to ruin and collapses, but our spiritual house, which is built of the virtues, receives the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says, "Ye are the temple of the living God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (I Cor. 3:16). And when the time comes for us to leave this world, He also follows us into heaven, and we shall be there eternally.

The beginning of building the virtues is the fear of God, as the Divine Scriptures say, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 110:9). And thereafter the four great virtues, that is, wisdom, courage, chastity, and righteousness, and the others with them, each linked to another and forming a union of love, will grow into a holy temple of the Lord. Let us then, Brethren, build this habitation and adorn it with the virtues so that we might have within us the Holy Spirit, and so that we may bring joy to the holy angels and be of benefit to mankind through the accomplishment of the virtues. And since temperance is one of the greatest virtues which we struggle to attain, then let us render glory unto God for having vouchsafed us to complete the span of one holy week. Our faces have changed and become pale, but there shines in us the grace of temperance. From the gall that arises as a result of the fast, we feel in our mouths a bitterness, but our souls are sweetened by the hope and grace of salvation. For these two, that is, the soul and body, by nature battle against one another, and when one grows stronger, the other becomes weaker. And so we shall rejoice, Brethren, in that we have made the better aspect, that is, the soul, much stronger.

It may be that someone will say: Will not eating once a day ruin the perfection of temperance? No, we need not fear this, for if it were so, then Christ would not have commanded us in the prayer "Our Father" to ask for our daily bread; nor would the raven have brought to the Prophet Elias food each day, and likewise the divine Paul of Thebes; and Anthony the Great would not have considered it better to eat a little each day rather than to remain fasting for three, four, or seven days. And it seems to me that the cause for this is as follows: since our bodies are exhausted and weakened from daily work, that God, Who created us as He designed, might strengthen them by daily rations and we might fulfill the commandments of God, and would not be like a man paralyzed, as happens with those who fast for two or three days. They cannot accomplish prostrations, nor become experienced in readings and chanting, as they should, nor fulfill properly the other services; we will not mention what is supernatural. Thus the daily use of nourishment, according to the rule and order indicated, is not something imperfect, but something quite perfect, since all that has been instituted for us by the Holy Fathers is good and pleasing to God. O would that the Lord grant us still more health and strength of soul and body in order to serve the living and true God, and gain the reward that awaits us in the last day, in which may you, with all the saints from the ages, shine like the sun, having received an inheritance in the heavenly kingdom of Christ our Lord, to Whom is due glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages, Amen.

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