Evgeny Rubal

THE SAVIOR

Evgeny Rubel
THE SAVIOR

https://litres.ru/74981104
SelfPub; 2026

Аннотация

"THE SAVIOR" by Evgeny Rubel is a thought-provoking literary work that connects timeless biblical history with the moral challenges of today. Stripping away religious formalism, the book examines the true nature of faith, conscience, and human power. Along with the main narrative, this edition includes deep philosophical reflections on eternity, the structure of the Universe, and the eternal confrontation between Light and Darkness. It is a book for those who seek meaning, truth, and honest answers to life's ultimate questions.

Evgeny Rubel
THE SAVIOR

Evgeny Rubel
THE SAVIOR
The Earthly Life, Miracles, and Teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ

2026
THE SAVIOR
The Earthly Life, Miracles, and Teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ
Copyright © 2026 by Evgeny Vladimirovich Rubel
All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the author, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles.
Scripture quotations are adapted and retold from the Holy Bible (the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles).
Synopsis
This book is a vivid, radiant, and accessible narrative of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ—from the quiet night

in Bethlehem and the miracles in Galilee to the Cross of Calvary, His glorious Resurrection, and His Ascension into Heaven. Rooted faithfully in the Gospel account, each chapter is accompanied by a heartfelt Author's Afterword, helping the reader discern the eternal meaning of the Savior's words in the light of the present day. This book is written for everyone seeking living faith, spiritual comfort, and a wholehearted desire to know and love Christ.

First Edition, 2026

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Birth of Jesus Christ and the Meeting with the Elder Simeon

The Infant Messiah, the Flight into Egypt, and the Boy Jesus in the Temple

The Baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan

The Temptation of Jesus Christ in the Wilderness

The First Miracle at Cana in Galilee and the Beginning of the Savior's Ministry

The Healing of the Paralytic and the Authority to Forgive Sins

The Miraculous Catch of Fish and the Supper at Bethany

The Calling of Matthew the Tax Collector and the Parable of the New Wine

The Night Conversation with Nicodemus on Being Born

Again
The Calling of the Twelve Apostles and the Instruction for Preaching
The Testimony Concerning John the Baptist and Striving for the Kingdom of Heaven
A Spring of Water Welling Up to Eternal Life
The Sermon on the Mount
The Healing of the Centurion's Servant and the Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain
The Teaching of Jesus Christ on the Sabbath and the Healing of the Man with a Withered Hand
The Parable of the Sower and the Rich Fool
The Parables of the Laborers in the Vineyard and the Ten Virgins
The Repentance of the Sinful Woman in the House of Simon the Pharisee
The Calming of the Storm and the Healing of the Gadarene Demoniac
The Healing of the Woman with a Flow of Blood and the Raising of Jairus's Daughter
The Beheading of John the Baptist
The Teaching of Jesus Christ on the Sanctity of Marriage and on Children
The Pardon of the Sinful Woman and the Healing of the Man Born Blind
The Feeding of the Five Thousand

Truly the Son of God: Walking on the Water

Peter's Confession and the Teaching on the Cross

The Healing of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter and the Deaf Man with a Speech Impediment

The Feeding of the Seven Thousand and the Warning Against the Leaven of the Pharisees

The Refusal of a Sign to the Pharisees and True Kinship with Christ

The Teaching of Jesus Christ on Prayer and the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Who Is Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven and the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

The Transfiguration of the Lord and the Healing of the Demon-Possessed Boy

The Temple Tax and Healing on the Sabbath

The Healing of the Paralytic at the Sheep Pool

The Parable of Those Invited to the Feast and on Humility

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Boundless Mercy of the Father

The Parable of the Rich Man and Poor Lazarus

Healings in Capernaum and the Cost of Following Christ

Denouncing the Hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Scribes

The Rich Young Ruler and the Reward for Leaving All for Christ

Of That Day Only the Heavenly Father Knows

The Parables of the Two Sons and the Wedding Feast
The Prediction of His Death on the Cross and True Greatness in Service
The Raising of Lazarus, Four Days Dead
The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and the Cleansing of the Temple
The Day of the Last Judgment
The Chief Priests and Scribes Do Not Know of Authority from Heaven
The Parables of the Tares and the Dragnet: The End of the World
The Parable of the Talents and Faithfulness in Little Things
Instruction on the True Vine and the Promise of the Comforter
The Last Supper and the Washing of the Disciples' Feet
The Farewell Discourse and the High Priestly Prayer of the Savior
The Prayer in Gethsemane and the Arrest of Jesus Christ
The Trial Before the High Priests and Peter's Denial
The Trial Before Pontius Pilate and the Death Sentence
The Way of the Cross, Crucifixion, and Death of Jesus Christ on Golgotha
The Descent from the Cross and the Burial of Jesus Christ
The Glorious Resurrection of Christ and His Appearance to the Myrrh-Bearing Women
The Appearance of the Risen Savior on the Road to Emmaus

The Appearance of the Risen Christ to the Apostles and the Conviction of Thomas

The Appearance at the Sea of Tiberias, the Restoration of Peter, and the Ascension of the Lord

Author's Closing Word

Introduction

Hello, dear friends! I welcome you to the pages of my book. This work is written for those who wish to transform their lives, understand the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, and love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength. As you read these pages, you will learn about the birth of Jesus Christ and His earthly life. You will discover the miraculous signs of the Savior, the healing of the sick, the raising of the dead, and many other gracious deeds of the Lord. After each reading, you will find yourself returning to this book time and again, uncovering ever new facets of the Savior's teachings.

Read, seek understanding, and may God help you. Amen.

The Birth of Jesus Christ and the Meeting with the Elder Simeon

This took place five thousand five hundred and eight years after the creation of the world. On the night the Savior was born, shepherds were out in the fields near Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks. In the middle of the dark night, a heavenly light shone around them, and an Angel of the Lord appeared before

them. He spoke to the shepherds, saying:

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people on earth: tonight, a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord."

The shepherds said to one another:

"Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

They came to the cave the angel had told them about and found Mary, Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Upon seeing the Child, the shepherds bowed down before Him and told Joseph and Mary everything the angel had announced to them. All who heard it marveled at what the shepherds told them, while Mary treasured all these words in her heart.

On the fortieth day, when the days of purification were fulfilled, the Infant Jesus was brought to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord in the temple. At that time, there lived in Jerusalem an elder named Simeon. He was a righteous and devout man, and the Holy Spirit rested upon him. It had been revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Moved by the Spirit of God, the elder Simeon came into the temple just as the parents brought in the Infant Jesus. Taking the Divine Child into his arms, Simeon blessed God and said:

"Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rising of many on earth"—meaning that all who believe in Him will be saved through Him, while those who do not believe will perish.

When the parents of Jesus had performed everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to their own town of Nazareth. And the Child Jesus grew and became strong in spirit, and the grace of God was upon Him.

Author's Afterword

In the quiet of that Bethlehem night, a great mystery of God is revealed: the Creator of the Universe enters this world not in royal palaces surrounded by guards and nobility, but in a humble cave among simple shepherds and speechless animals. The first to hear the news of salvation are not the proud wise men or the scribes of Jerusalem, but those who kept watch through the night and preserved simplicity of heart. And in the Jerusalem temple, amidst the bustle and rituals, the Infant is recognized only by the righteous elder Simeon, who had spent decades living in anticipation of meeting the Lord.

Look at the modern world: today, just as two thousand years ago, people encounter Christ in different ways. Some are too preoccupied with worldly vanity to notice the heavenly light; others seek outward grandeur and earthly success in their faith, passing by the quiet, humble call of God. Yet the Savior comes precisely where He is awaited with faith, purity, and hope, turning the darkest night of the human soul into the bright morning of salvation.

The true Light of the Gospel is born not in the noise of worldly glory, but in the stillness of a humble heart open to meeting God.

And is your heart ready today, dear reader, like the shepherds

of Bethlehem and righteous Simeon, to leave behind worldly vanity, recognize the Savior, and welcome Him into your life?

The Infant Messiah, the Flight into Egypt, and the Boy Jesus in the Temple

Herod, who was king at the time Jesus was born, was deeply troubled when he heard of the Child's birth. Gathering all the chief priests and scribes, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They answered him:

"In Bethlehem, our King of Judea, the Infant Messiah is to be born."

In a fierce rage, Herod sent soldiers to Bethlehem and its surrounding regions, ordering them to put to death all male infants who had recently been born. By doing so, he calculated that in the general slaughter, the newborn Jesus would also be killed—for Herod feared Him greatly, suspecting that the newborn King would overthrow his dynasty from the throne of Judea.

An Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said:

"Arise, take the Child and His Mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him."

Joseph took the Child and His Mother and departed for Egypt by night. There they remained until Herod died.

Weeping and groaning rose up in Bethlehem. Soldiers burst into homes and mercilessly killed the children right in their mothers' arms. Thus, about fourteen thousand innocent infants were put

to death. Some time later, Herod, struck by a tormenting disease, died.

When Herod was dead, an Angel of the Lord appeared again to Joseph in a dream, saying to him:

"Arise, take the Child and His Mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead."

Joseph set out for the land of Israel, but along the way he learned that Herod's son was reigning over Judea. Afraid to go to Bethlehem, he withdrew into Galilee and settled in the town of Nazareth. Thus was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophets, that He would be called a Nazarene.

Every year, the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When the days of the feast were over, everyone was returning home. Joseph and Mary did not notice that Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem, assuming that their Son was traveling further back with relatives or acquaintances.

The next day, they realized He was missing and began searching for Him among their relatives and friends, but they could not find Him anywhere. So they returned to Jerusalem and continued searching for Him there for three days, until at last they found Jesus in the temple. He was sitting there in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All who were in the temple were amazed at His understanding and His answers. Upon seeing Jesus in the temple, Mary, His Mother, said:

"Child, why have You treated us so? Behold, Your father and I have been searching for You in great distress for all three days."

And Jesus answered them:

"Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in the things that belong to My Heavenly Father?"

Yet His parents did not understand the words He spoke to them. Jesus went down with them to Nazareth and lived there in quiet seclusion until He was thirty years old. His Mother treasured all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and in favor with God and people, remaining at all times in strict obedience to His Mother Mary and His adoptive father Joseph, sharing in their labors, their joys, and their sorrows.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 2:1–23; Luke 2:41–52.

Author's Afterword

In these events, we witness two entirely different responses to the Divine Child. King Herod, upon hearing of the Messiah's birth, is filled with fear and fury: to preserve his earthly power, he is willing to shed the blood of thousands of innocent children. Righteous Joseph, on the other hand, leaves his home at the first call of the Angel and sets out for distant Egypt, entrusting his life and the life of the Divine Infant without murmur to the providence of God. Meanwhile, Jesus Himself, growing up in Nazareth, sets for us an example of the greatest humility: He whom the Angels worship spends thirty years in quiet obedience to His Mother and adoptive father.

Does this invisible struggle not continue in our own days? In

the heart of every person, a "Herod" awakens at times—pride, the fear of losing control over one's own life, and an unwillingness to yield the throne of one's soul to Christ. At the same time, modern people find simple obedience and patience so difficult: we want everything at once, and we grow weary of quiet labor and humility, forgetting that even the Savior Himself walked the path of meekness and obedience before stepping out into His great ministry.

The true Light of the Gospel protects those who trust God unreservedly and learn meekness and obedience from Christ in everyday life.

And to whom does the throne of your heart belong today, dear reader: to the proud fear of losing what is yours, or to humble trust in God, ready to follow Him even into the unknown?

The Baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan

The Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to John the Baptist to ask him:

"John, are you the Christ?"

John answered them plainly that he was not the Christ. Then they asked him again:

"Who are you, then? Are you Elijah, or the Prophet?"

He answered them with restraint:

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

"Why then are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" those who had been sent continued to

ask.

John answered them with dignity:

"I baptize you with water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. Even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to stoop down and untie, has been ranked ahead of me, because He existed before me."

This took place at the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

The next day, Jesus came to the Jordan River to John. Seeing Jesus coming toward him, John said:

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who ranks before me, because He was before me.' I myself did not know Him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to Israel."

Jesus approached and expressed His desire to be baptized by John. John tried to prevent Him, saying:

"I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"

Jesus answered John:

"Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

When Jesus Christ had been baptized, He went up immediately from the water. And behold, the heavens were opened to Him, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from heaven—the voice of God the Heavenly Father:

"You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Scripture Reference: Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke

3:21–22; John 1:19–34.

Author's Afterword

On the banks of the Jordan, the greatest human humility meets boundless Divine condescension. John the Baptist—of whom the Savior Himself would say that among those born of women there has arisen no one greater—confesses with trembling his unworthiness even to untie the strap of Jesus's sandal. Meanwhile, the Sinless Son of God, who has not the slightest sin, enters the waters of repentance alongside sinners in order to take upon Himself the sins of the whole world and fulfill all righteousness. And in response to this supreme humility, the heavens are opened and the voice of the Heavenly Father resounds.

Look at our lives: how often do we strive to exalt ourselves above our neighbors, prove ourselves right, and hide our mistakes behind pride and self-justification! We find it hard to bow our heads even before God, hard to admit our weakness and offer sincere repentance. Yet the example of Christ and John the Baptist reveals to us an unchangeable spiritual law: heaven opens only over the one who knows how to humble himself, and the grace of God descends not upon the proud, but upon the meek and pure in heart.

The true Light of the Gospel illumines the human soul when it leaves pride behind and humbly enters the waters of repentance and renewal.

And are you able today, dear reader, like John, to humble yourself before the Lord and receive His grace with a pure, contrite

heart?

The Temptation of Jesus Christ in the Wilderness

After His baptism, Jesus withdrew into the wilderness, where He fasted and prayed for forty days and forty nights. When the forty days had ended, He felt hunger. Then the devil approached Him and began tempting Him with enticements:

"Jesus, if You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread, and You will be satisfied."

Jesus answered the devil with dignity:

"It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Unsatisfied with this answer from Jesus, the devil took Him up to a high mountain, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, and said:

"If You will worship me, everything You see will be Yours. I will give You authority over all these kingdoms and peoples and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish."

Jesus answered the devil:

"Get away from Me, Satan! For it is written in Scripture: 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"

Attempting to tempt Jesus Christ a third time, the devil led Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said:

"If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down, for it is written in Scripture: 'He will command His angels concerning You to guard You,' and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You

strike Your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to the devil in response:

"It is also written: 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

After all these temptations, the devil left the Lord and departed from Him. And then angels came to Jesus and ministered to Him.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13.

Author's Afterword

Forty days in the waterless wilderness show us that the path of serving God always begins with spiritual warfare. The devil approaches Christ at a moment of extreme physical weakness and offers Him the very same three temptations with which he has ensnared the human race for centuries: to reduce spiritual life to a concern merely for earthly bread, to trade faithfulness to God for power and worldly glory, and to replace faith with the proud testing of God for the sake of a miracle. Yet to every deceitful whisper of the enemy, the Savior responds not with an argument, but with the firm, unshakable Word of God—and the tempter retreats in disgrace.

In the modern world, these three temptations resound even louder than in the ancient wilderness. Every day we are told that the meaning of life comes down to comfort and having our fill, that one may compromise with conscience for the sake of success and influence, and that faith ought to immediately fulfill all our whims. A person who does not know Scripture and is not

strengthened by prayer easily falls into these traps. Yet the one who holds fast to the Word of God as a spiritual sword gains the strength to withstand any onslaught of evil.

The true Light of the Gospel gives a person the wisdom to recognize the lies of the tempter and the steadfastness to remain faithful to the One God.

And how do you answer the temptations of this world today, dear reader: with compromises for the sake of earthly bread and glory, or with the firm Word of God and faithfulness to Christ?

The First Miracle at Cana in Galilee and the Beginning of the Savior's Ministry

Jesus Christ returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and from that time He began to preach and teach:

"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

Jesus Christ began His ministry when He was about thirty years of age.

In Galilee, not far from Nazareth, there was a town called Cana. A wedding celebration of a man of modest means was being held in that town. Among others, Jesus Christ, His Mother, and His disciples were invited to the festive table.

At the height of the wedding feast, it was noticed that the wine intended for the guests had run out. Learning of this, the Mother of Jesus Christ turned to her Son with a request:

"Jesus, the hosts of this house have no more wine, and the feast is still at its height."

Christ answered her:

"Woman, what does this have to do with Me and you? My hour has not yet come."

Yet Mary still said to the servants:

"Whatever My Son tells you, do it immediately."

Six stone water jars stood near the entrance of the house, each holding two or three measures. Jesus went over to the servants and told them to fill the jars with water. The servants did so, filling them up to the brim. Then Jesus said to the servants:

"Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast."

The servants did just as Jesus told them. The master of the feast, not yet knowing where this wine had come from, tasted it and immediately spoke to the bridegroom:

"Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now."

Thus Jesus Christ began His signs at Cana in Galilee and manifested His glory there, and His disciples believed in Him.

From that very time, Jesus Christ went throughout all Galilee, teaching the people in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction among the people, and He was glorified by all. Report of Him spread throughout all the surrounding lands.

People regularly began bringing to Him from everywhere those who were weak, oppressed by various diseases and seizures, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics—and He laid His hands on each one of them and healed them.

And great crowds followed Jesus from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, and from beyond the Jordan. People living around Tyre and Sidon, hearing of the deeds of Jesus, came to Him in large multitudes, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the mute, and the maimed.

Jesus Christ healed everyone without exception. Seeing the mute speaking, the blind seeing, the lame walking, and the maimed made whole, the people marveled and glorified the God of Israel.

Many who suffered from plagues pressed toward the Savior just to touch the edge of His garment, for great healing power went out from Him. And whenever unclean spirits saw Jesus Christ, they fell down before Him and cried out:

"Jesus, You are the Son of God!"

Yet the Savior strictly forbade them to make Him known.

Scripture Reference: John 2:1–11; Matthew 4:17, 23–25; Mark 3:7–12.

Author's Afterword

The Savior performs His first miracle not in a public square before crowds of onlookers and not at the demand of noble rulers, but at a modest wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, responding to the quiet, faith-filled request of His Mother. Jesus turns ordinary water into fine wine, showing that with the coming of Christ, an insipid, meager earthly life is filled with joy, meaning, and grace. And immediately after this miracle begins His great ministry of mercy: the Lord goes through cities and villages, healing every disease and infirmity, turning away no sufferer who touches the

edge of His garment in faith.

Look around: how many people today live in spiritual emptiness, when the "wine" of earthly joys has long run out and the soul languishes from illnesses, anxieties, and loneliness! People seek comfort in worldly vanity, empty amusements, or human help, yet a single touch of Christ can transform ordinary life into a triumph of faith and heal the deepest wounds of the heart. To receive this, only one thing is needed—to hear the words of the Most Holy Mother of God: "Whatever My Son tells you, do it immediately."

The true Light of the Gospel transfigures the simplest human life, filling it with the joy of healing and the living presence of God.

And are you ready today, dear reader, to touch Christ in faith and obey His word so that He may turn the water of your life into the gracious wine of salvation?

The Healing of the Paralytic and the Authority to Forgive Sins

Jesus Christ came to Capernaum. Word of this quickly spread throughout the entire city and its surrounding areas. Immediately, crowds began gathering from everywhere. Some people brought a paralyzed man lying on a bed, trying in every possible way to carry him into the house to lay him before Jesus. Yet because of the great crowd, they could not get near the Lord.

So they climbed up onto the roof of the house, uncovered the roofing, and, having dug an opening through it, lowered the bed

on which the paralytic lay right down into the middle, in front of Jesus. When the Savior saw their faith, He said to the paralytic:

"Son, your sins are forgiven you."

Now some of the scribes and Pharisees were sitting there. Hearing the words Jesus spoke to the sick man, they began reasoning among themselves: "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can actually forgive sins except God alone?"

At that very moment, Jesus Christ perceived in His spirit what they were thinking within themselves and said to them:

"Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—Jesus turned to the sick man—"I say to you, rise, take up your bed, and go to your home."

At that very instant, the paralytic rose, picked up his bed before them all, and went home glorifying God. Everyone present was amazed and glorified God, saying:

"We see extraordinary things today; we have never seen anything like this before!"

Scripture Reference: Matthew 9:2–7; Mark 2:1–12.

Author's Afterword

In this Gospel event, the great power of living, active faith and friendship is revealed before us. Four men did not retreat in the face of crowds and obstacles: they tore open the roof of a house

just to bring their helpless friend to Christ. And the Lord, seeing their shared faith, heals not only the paralytic's body, but first and foremost his soul, forgiving his sins. Meanwhile, the scribes standing nearby, whose hearts were closed by pride and distrust, saw in this supreme act of mercy only a reason for condemnation.

Look at our own lives: how often we stop at the slightest obstacle on the path to God, and how rarely we are willing to bring before Him in our prayers those who have grown weak in soul and cannot take the first step themselves. At the same time, much like the scribes of Capernaum, people often look for a reason to judge their neighbor or doubt the power of God, failing to notice that the root of many human infirmities lies in unrepented sins.

The true Light of the Gospel breaks through every barrier wherever people seek healing from the Savior with faith and love.

And are you ready today, dear reader, to overcome the barriers of worldly vanity and little faith in order to bring to Christ not only your own weaknesses, but also the pain of suffering neighbors?

The Miraculous Catch of Fish and the Supper at Bethany

Jesus Christ was standing by the lake. The crowd was pressing in on Him, eager to hear the Word of God. Two boats were moored right at the shore of the lake. The fishermen had stepped out of them and were washing their nets of seaweed. Noticing the boats, Jesus got into one of them, which belonged to Simon Peter, and asked him to put out a little from the land. Simon

obediently fulfilled Jesus's request. Christ sat down in the boat and began teaching the people. When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon:

"Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a large catch."

Simon answered:

"Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! Yet at Your word, I will let down the net once more."

When they had done this, after a short time they enclosed such a huge number of fish that their net began to break. There were so many fish that they could not all fit into the boat. So the fishermen signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Seeing this, Peter fell down at Jesus's knees and said:

"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man and unworthy of You."

He spoke this way because sheer awe had seized him and all who were with him at the extraordinary catch of fish they had taken, including his partners, James and John, the two sons of Zebedee.

Jesus answered Peter:

"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

When they had brought their boats to land, Peter, James, and John left everything and followed Jesus.

Jesus Christ came to Bethany, and there a supper was prepared

for Him in the house of Simon the leper. At the table was Lazarus, whom Jesus would later raise from the dead.

Martha served, while Mary brought an alabaster flask filled with costly ointment of pure nard. Approaching Jesus, she poured the ointment on His head, anointed His feet, and wiped them with her hair.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus's disciples, saw this and began saying to the other disciples:

"Why was this wasted? It would have been better to sell this ointment for a great sum—three hundred denarii—and give the money to the poor."

Judas said this not because he truly cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. Having charge of the moneybox with donations intended for distribution to the needy, he was stealing from those funds.

Yet the Savior, who knew Judas's greed very well, said:

"Why do you trouble the woman? She has done a beautiful thing to Me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have Me. In pouring this ointment on My body, she has prepared Me for burial. Truly I say to you, wherever this Gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

Scripture Reference: Luke 5:1–11; Matthew 26:6–13; John 12:1–8.

Author's Afterword

Two Gospel images in this chapter show us how true devotion to Christ is born. Simon Peter the fisherman toiled all night in vain, yet the moment he trusted the Savior's word, his empty nets were filled to the brim—and Peter himself, recognizing his sinfulness before the majesty of God, left everything and followed the Teacher. In much the same way, Mary in Bethany did not spare what was most precious—costly ointment—pouring it over the Savior as a sign of boundless love and gratitude, whereas the cold calculation of Judas saw in it nothing more than a needless waste.

Look at the modern world: how much energy people spend in vain, relying solely on their own experience, their own calculations, and their own hands, without inviting Christ into the "boat" of their lives! And how often today people try to measure love for God by worldly profit, forgetting that true faith spares neither time, nor strength, nor the sacrifice of the heart.

The true Light of the Gospel fills the empty nets of human life when a person trusts the word of God and gives Christ the very best they possess.

And have you invited the Savior into the boat of your life today, dear reader, and are you ready to offer Him what is most precious to you without looking back at earthly calculation?

The Calling of Matthew the Tax Collector and the Parable of the New Wine

Going out again from Capernaum, Jesus walked beside the

sea. A great crowd followed Him. As He passed by, Jesus noticed a tax collector named Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax booth, and said to him:

"Follow Me, Levi."

Levi, also called Matthew, left everything, rose up, and followed Him.

Overjoyed that Christ had turned His attention to him, Matthew held a great banquet in his house. A large crowd of tax collectors and sinners gathered there. Seeing that Christ was eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners, the people grumbled and began saying to Jesus's disciples:

"Why does your Teacher eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

Overhearing this conversation, Jesus Christ said:

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus:

"Why do the disciples of the Pharisees fast often, while Yours do not fast?"

Jesus Christ answered their question with a question:

"Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. Yet the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment.

If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. Instead, new wine must be put into fresh wineskins; then both the wine and the wineskins are preserved. And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is better.'"

Scripture Reference: Luke 5:27–39; Matthew 9:9–17.

Author's Afterword

In the eyes of the people, Levi Matthew was a despised tax collector—a man from whom devout keepers of the Law turned away in disgust. Yet Christ looks not at a person's past, but at a heart ready to answer the call of God. Just two words from the Savior—"Follow Me"—transform a tax collector into an apostle and evangelist. And in Matthew's house, the Lord reveals the great truth of His coming: He entered this world as the Physician of souls, to heal and save those who recognize their sinfulness and thirst for renewal.

Are there not people today who consider themselves "well" and righteous, looking down with disdain upon neighbors who have stumbled? Or those who try to sew a "patch" of outward piety onto an old, unrepented life without wishing to change their hearts? Yet the grace of the Gospel is new wine, which requires a new heart renewed through repentance.

The true Light of the Gospel disdains no repentant sinner, but heals and renews every soul that answers the call of Christ.

And do you consider yourself well today, dear reader, or do you hasten in repentance to the Heavenly Physician so that He may renew your heart for a new life?

The Night Conversation with Nicodemus on Being Born Again

Christ came to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. In Jerusalem, there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and began a conversation:

"Rabbi, we know that You are a Teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered him:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Nicodemus was perplexed:

"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus, seeking to convince him, said:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus asked Jesus:

"How can these things be?"

The Savior continued:

"Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, We speak of what We know, and bear witness to what We have seen, but you do not receive Our testimony. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed, because they are evil. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

Scripture Reference: John 3:1–21.

Author's Afterword

The night conversation between Christ and Nicodemus reveals the very essence of the Christian life: to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, earthly lineage, scholarship, or the observance of rituals is not enough—a person must be born from above, of

water and the Holy Spirit. And in these very words resounds the central message of the Gospel concerning the boundless love of the Heavenly Father, who gave His only begotten Son for the salvation of every one of us. God came not to judge and punish, but to bestow eternal life; it is the human being alone who passes sentence upon himself by choosing between light and darkness.

Look around you: how many people today, much like Nicodemus, respect Christ as a great Teacher, yet fear stepping out of the shadow of human opinion to truly be reborn in spirit! People often cling to the familiar darkness of their passions and self-justifications, dreading that the light of the Gospel will expose their unrighteousness—even though it is this very Light that brings true freedom and eternal life to the soul.

The true Light of the Gospel came into this world not for condemnation, but to regenerate every believer unto eternal life.

And toward what are your steps directed today, dear reader: into the darkness of familiar excuses, or toward the Light of Christ that renews the soul?

The Calling of the Twelve Apostles and the Instruction for Preaching

In those days, Jesus Christ went up onto the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. When day came, He called His disciples to Himself and chose twelve from among them to remain with Him constantly, assisting Him in teaching the people and preaching.

Those chosen as Apostles were: Simon, whom He named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John, the sons of Zebedee; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

To the twelve chosen Apostles, Jesus Christ gave authority in His name to perform miracles and preach the Gospel. He instructed them on how they were to carry out the work of preaching entrusted to them.

He said to them:

"Go and proclaim as you go, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it, saying, 'Peace be to this house.' And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men,

for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven. Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever receives you receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

Scripture Reference: Matthew 10:1–42; Luke 6:12–16.

Author's Afterword

Before choosing twelve simple fishermen and laborers for the great work of the world's salvation, the Son of God Himself spends an entire night in solitary prayer on the mountain. And as He sends His disciples out to preach, Christ promises them no

easy road, no honor, and no earthly wealth: He sends them out "as sheep in the midst of wolves," calling them not to fear human threats, but to remain faithful to God and remember that every hair on their heads is numbered by the Heavenly Father.

In the modern world, a believer often faces the very same choice: to keep silent about their faith for the sake of comfort and the approval of others, or to confess Christ steadfastly through their life and words. Fear of public opinion, attachment to earthly comfort, and dread of losing one's well-being frequently bind the soul—yet the Savior's words remind us of what matters most: God protects everyone who fearlessly entrusts their life to Him and places love for Christ above all earthly things.

The true Light of the Gospel turns simple and weak people into fearless witnesses of the Truth, guarded by the Providence of the Heavenly Father.

And are you ready today, dear reader, to confess Christ fearlessly before others and entrust your life to the care of the Heavenly Father?

The Testimony Concerning John the Baptist and Striving for the Kingdom of Heaven

John the Baptist lived as a strict ascetic in the wilderness, feeding only on locusts and wild honey, and wearing a garment of coarse camel's hair. Going into all the region around the Jordan, John proclaimed to the people the imminent coming of the Savior and preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness

of sins.

"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" he said.

Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to John and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, John said to them:

"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

When John the Baptist heard of the deeds of Jesus, in order to confirm his own disciples even more strongly and convincingly that Jesus was indeed the true Messiah, shortly before his martyrdom he sent two of his disciples to ask Him:

"Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

Now when John's disciples came to Jesus with this question, at that very hour Jesus Christ healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind He bestowed sight.

The Savior said to the arriving disciples of John:

"Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf

hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them."

Yet because the crowd could not know the true purpose behind the embassy of John's disciples, many thought that John —who had borne such abundant witness to Jesus—had changed his mind and was now doubting whether this was the coming Messiah or another.

To dispel their troubling thoughts and show that John had neither abandoned nor altered his former conviction concerning Him, after John's disciples had departed, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John the Baptist. He pointed out that they themselves had witnessed his steadfastness not merely in words, but in his very deeds.

Jesus said:

"What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet."

Having declared that John was more than a prophet, Jesus Christ also revealed the reason why he was greater than a prophet:

"This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You'"—that is, by reason of John's closeness to the One who had come.

Jesus Christ also spoke His word concerning John's dignity:

"Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he."

And as if in confirmation of all that had been said about John, and at the same time to awaken faith, Jesus continued:

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John."

If everything was fulfilled up to the coming of John, Jesus seemed to say, then I am indeed the One who is to come. Jesus Christ offered yet another proof, saying:

"And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Scripture Reference: Matthew 3:1–12; 11:2–15.

Author's Afterword

John the Baptist was not "a reed shaken by the wind," but an unyielding voice of truth in the wilderness of human indifference. He sought neither soft garments nor royal palaces, boldly exposing hypocrisy and calling people not to boast of the glorious past of their ancestors, but to bear living, good fruits of repentance. And the Lord Himself testifies that the Kingdom of Heaven is not granted without inner effort: it is "taken by force," meaning it demands daily exertion from a person over their own passions and spiritual sloth.

Look at the modern world: today, just as in the days of John, many rely solely on the bare title of being a believer, forgetting

that a tree is known by its fruits. At times we want an easy path to God—without repentance, without battling our sins, without spiritual effort. Yet the call of the Forerunner resounds across the centuries with undiminished power: the axe is already laid to the root of the tree, and only the fruits of genuine repentance and love make the soul alive before God.

The true Light of the Gospel is revealed to those who are not swayed by the wind of vanity, but press onward toward the Kingdom of Heaven with firmness and spiritual effort.

And what fruits of repentance do you bring to the Lord today, dear reader, and are you ready to exert spiritual effort for the sake of the Kingdom of God?

A Spring of Water Welling Up to Eternal Life

Jesus Christ was traveling from Judea to Galilee; weary from His journey, He sat down beside a well to rest. It was about twelve o'clock—noon; the day was hot, and Jesus was thirsty. His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. At that time, a Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her:

"Give Me a drink."

The Samaritan woman answered Him:

"How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Hearing these words, Christ answered her:

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to

you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

The woman said to Him:

"Sir, You have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do You get that living water?"

Jesus Christ said to her in response:

"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

By living water, Christ meant His Divine teaching and the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Samaritan woman did not understand Him and exclaimed:

"Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

The Savior said to her:

"Go, call your husband, and come here."

"I have no husband," the Samaritan woman answered.

Christ replied to her:

"You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

Seeing that Jesus knew her entire life, the Samaritan woman said:

"Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will

tell us all things."

Jesus said to her:

"I who speak to you am He."

Then the woman left her water jar, went away into town, and began saying to everyone:

"Come, see a Man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"

At the woman's word, many Samaritans went out of the town, came to Jesus, and believed in Him. They asked Him to stay with them for a while; Jesus Christ remained there two days, and many more believed in Him because of His word.

Scripture Reference: John 4:1–42.

Author's Afterword

At Jacob's well in the heat of noon, an encounter takes place that shatters every human wall of hostility and pride. Jesus is the first to speak to a despised Samaritan woman—a woman with a broken life—and reveals His Divine mystery to her even before revealing it to the scribes of Jerusalem. The moment she heard the word of Truth, which did not condemn her in malice but touched her soul with love, she left behind her earthly water jar and hastened to share the joy of Christ with the entire town.

Look at the modern world: how many people today carry within their souls an unquenchable thirst for meaning, peace, and love, trying to quench it at drying wells of earthly pleasures, wealth, or human praise! Yet every earthly water dulls thirst only for a moment, leaving the soul empty once again. Only the living

water of Christ's grace can become an inexhaustible spring of joy and eternal life within the human heart.

The true Light of the Gospel does not turn anyone away because of past falls, but quenches the deepest thirst of the soul and makes it a messenger of God's love.

And at which well do you draw water today, dear reader: at earthly springs after which thirst returns anew, or from Christ, who grants living water unto eternal life?

The Sermon on the Mount

His disciples and a great multitude of people from Galilee, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan came to Jesus Christ. The people gathered around Him, eager to listen. Then Christ went up on the mountain and began His sermon:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven."

Continuing His Divine teaching, He said to His listeners:

"I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. Truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Then Jesus Christ explained the true meaning of the commandments of the Law:

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother without cause will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother by calling him 'Raca' will be liable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw

it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is His footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

To the law of vengeance, the Savior opposed the commandment of merciful love:

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may

be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in

all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

The Savior further commands His listeners to treat sacred things with reverence and to ask everything from God with faith and hope:

"Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this

is the Law and the Prophets."

Finally, He impresses upon His listeners that confessing the Lord with lips alone cannot bring one into the Kingdom of Heaven—one must fulfill the will of God:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Scripture Reference: Matthew 5–7; Luke 6:17–49.

Author's Afterword

The Sermon on the Mount is the moral law of the Kingdom of Heaven, in which Christ shifts the center of human spiritual life from outward rules into the depths of the heart. The Lord teaches that it is not enough merely to refrain from killing with one's hand—one must uproot anger and malice from the soul; it is not enough to avoid committing sin in action—one must guard the purity of one's thoughts; it is not enough to pray and give alms for show—true righteousness is accomplished in secret before the face of the Heavenly Father, who sees every movement of

the soul.

Look at the modern world: today, more than ever, humanity lacks this very Gospel height—the ability to forgive offenses, not to repay evil for evil, not to judge a brother for a tiny speck while ignoring one's own log, and to rely on Divine Providence rather than perishable earthly treasures. Many readily call Christ Lord in words, yet when worldly storms and trials strike, only that house of the soul endures which is built upon the solid rock of keeping God's commandments.

The true Light of the Gospel kindles the law of merciful love in the human heart and makes one's life an unshakable house built upon the rock.

And upon what are you building the house of your life today, dear reader: upon the shifting sand of worldly vanity and mere words about faith, or upon the solid rock of fulfilling the commandments of Christ?

The Healing of the Centurion's Servant and the Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain

After finishing the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior returned to Capernaum. In that city, a Roman centurion had a servant who was dear to him, and who was at the point of death. Having heard about Jesus Christ, the centurion sent elders of the Jews to Him, asking Him to come and heal his poor servant.

The elders came to Jesus Christ and pleaded with Him earnestly, saying:

"This centurion is worthy to have You do this for him, for though he is a Roman, he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue."

Jesus went toward the sick man to help him. When He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to meet Christ, saying:

"Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy to have You come under my roof. Therefore I did not presume to come to You myself. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When the Savior heard these things, He marveled at the centurion's faith. Turning to the crowd that followed Him, He said:

"I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

And when those who had been sent by the centurion returned to the house, they found the sick servant already completely well.

From Capernaum, Jesus Christ, accompanied by His disciples and a great crowd, went to a small town called Nain. As He drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a dead man was being carried out for burial. He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Amidst the crowd accompanying the funeral procession, the Savior turned His attention to the mother of the deceased. Looking upon her, He had compassion on her and said:

"Do not weep."

He came closer and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. Everyone present pressed in toward the coffin to see what would happen. An undisturbed silence swept over the crowd. The Savior spoke loudly:

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «Литрес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, купив полную легальную версию на Литрес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.