



## Metropolitan Hilarion: The Lord calls us to active good works

On August 15, 2010, the day of the translation of the first martyr St. Stephan's relics from Constantinople to Jerusalem, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted in Moscow.

After the service His Eminence Hilarion addressed the congregation:

“Dear brothers and sisters, during the reading of the Gospel today, we heard the story about a rich young man who asked the Lord Jesus Christ what good deeds he must do to become to enter the Heavenly Kingdom. The Lord answered by enumerating the Old Testament commandments which were given to Moses as the way to the Kingdom of God. *The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be) perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."* When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions (Mt. 19:20-22).

This Gospel's story is about various levels of spiritual perfection. There is a level on which one is called to observe God's commandments, and if one fulfills them one will inherit the Heavenly Kingdom. If a Christian lives up to God's commandments it means in his life and in his every actions he is guided by the absolute moral law established by God. It is a way of virtuous life which leads to the Kingdom of God.

There is another, a more perfect way – the way of self-denial and self-emptying in emulation of Christ, which was taken by many saints, ascetics, monastics and martyrs throughout the twenty centuries of the Church's existence. It is a special path to which not everyone is called by the Lord. But if He calls one to take this path, then it is a call to special perfection requiring that one abandons all one has in one's earthly life and follow Christ. Monks and ascetics took this path. They did not have great possessions but abandoned all the earthly pleasures and joys of life to follow in the steps of the Lord. This path was also taken by rich people who understood that their richness could serve the poor.

Each Christian himself decides on the degree of spiritual perfection he wishes to attain. The Ten

Commandments is the minimum to be observed by everyone who wishes to enter the Kingdom of God. But if one wishes to take the maximal path of self-denial and self-emptying, then one needs more than that. One needs to abandon all one's interests, to place everything one has at the service of the neighbor and to devote oneself to walking in Christ's steps on the path of obedience and self-denial.

These are the two ways offered by the Lord. There is no third way. A third way is offered by the devil or one's own infirmity. It is a path of sin on which one refuses to observe God's commandments to be guided only by what brings pleasure and enrichment.

The Lord tells the young man how a person must use his wealth – for the benefit of his neighbor. If God gives richness to someone, He gives it because there are many poor people around who need help. The rich are called to help the poor. It is a very simple philosophy of life that the Lord offers to the young man. He should not merely abandon his riches but give them to the poor, as riches should not go waste. One's talent should not go waste. If one is given a talent it should be put to good use. If one is given wealth it should be used for the benefit of the poor. If everyone lived up to these divine commandments we would have no poor and suffering people around us.

Today our country is going through hard times because of the fires. We know from the news how many people have been affected, have lost their homes and have been left without roof and belongings. Many cannot endure heat, smoke, carbon monoxide and find themselves in hospitals. All this happens before our eyes, around to us. The Lord calls every one of you to help the suffering by all possible means.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill has called upon all our churches to raise funds in aid to the victims of this natural disaster. I ask you to make donations for the needs of the victims of fires so that we could do at least something to help these suffering people. The Lord calls us to active good works. It is for this purpose that He has called us to Christian life. Those who share their riches with their neighbours will never grow poor. If the Lord sees that one uses one's richness for the benefit of others, He will replenish his reaches so that the hand of a give may not become empty.

Let us pray to the Lord that He may help us to be truly virtuous Christians, and that all our God-given talents, material and spiritual, may be used for the benefit of our neighbours. Then the Lord will bless each of us and our nearest and dearest, giving all that is necessary for salvation and eternal life. Amen!"

Many parishioners of the church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted responded to Metropolitan Hilarion's call and made donations for aid to the victims of fires.

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/56833/>