

"In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Rom. 8:37



Priest Intro

New Testament Passage

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Discussion questions

As Christians in a modern world, we consistently find ourselves fighting against the flesh and against the ever changing social norms, particularly in a society which prides

PRACTICAL STEPS

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk was a Russian Orthodox monk who lived in the 18th century (1724-1783). He discusses some practical steps to struggle against sin:

- 1) Repent; *"Virtue is not true virtue when it is not within the heart. Therefore, correct your heart and your will and you shall be good and your outward deeds will be good, for the inwards is the beginning of the outward"*
- 2) Listen and obey the word of God
- 3) Arm yourself for the battle through prayer
- 4) Remember the presence of God
- 5) Avoid all occasions that lead to sin
- 6) Meditate upon your own death and final judgement

itself on subjective morality. Often in these times, we feel that we are so different from those around us which can make us feel isolated and can make us question whether or not we want to continue in the narrow path. Yet, we are in a battle in this world – we might not see it and we might forget about it, but it is real and ever present. How do we remind ourselves of spiritual warfare?

What are some struggles we face as Christians in modern day society?

What are some practical ways to overcoming feelings of helplessness in the spiritual struggle?

Another New Testament Passage

Ephesians 6: 10-19

“¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints”

Discussion questions

CHALLENGE

In your mind, choose one sin to avoid and a spiritual replacement whenever this sin comes to mind. Involve your confession father in this matter so that he can hold you accountable*

When St Paul originally wrote this passage, he was using jargon familiar to his audience. What are some modern-day equivalents of the armour of God proposed by St Paul?

How can we utilise each aspect of the armour of God?

Prayer by Fr Matthew the poor:

PRAYER

“The Holy Spirit still speaks in each one of us! The Spirit teaches you how to conduct yourself, how to shake off burdens of your past, how to battle against giants, how to lift up your arms like Moses to defeat the enemy; and God will straightway fight for you. I have hope in Jesus Christ that He will render these words useful to you that we might together be able to cross the great chasm that separates the life according to the flesh from the life according to the spirit. I pray that we might pass from authority and pull off the fleshly desires to submit to the tug of the Holy Spirit. And I pray that we might be filled with power and grace and all the gifts that are given us by Christ. Grant us, O Lord, to be victorious by You and to live for You. Amen”

(Extract from “Words For Our Time – The spiritual words of Matthew the Poor”).

Priest Outro

*Group leader to remind the group about the challenge throughout the month