



SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE 4TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

July 16

THE GOSPEL READING

Matthew 5:14-19

[Righteousness: The Law Fulfilled]

The Lord said to his disciples, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

THE SERMON

God is light, and in Him there is no darkness. The divine, uncreated light of God is that which permeates our bodies and souls, the energies that work in and through us. Because of this, the theme of light is emphasized by Christ. While the Lord Jesus is teaching at the Temple in Jerusalem, He says, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life" (John 8:12). At the beginning of the work of creation, God said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), as He gave a visible expression of His nature to all creation, for "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).



**GREEK ORTHODOX
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The Lord told us that He is the light of the world. Now He tells us, “You are the light of the world.”

It is by the power of the Holy Spirit working through us that we are the light of the world. When we open ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit, we fulfill the whole of the Law and the Prophets because we become channels of Christ’s love to the world. He is the true light, and we, like a bright full moon reflecting the light of the sun, bring this light of Christ to the world. We become like prisms that receive the light of Christ and diffuse it into the whole of creation through acts of love, compassion, and mercy.

The Lord says that whatever we want others to do for us, we need to be willing to also do it for them. He teaches us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Matthew 22:37). This is the first and great commandment. And the second is also about love: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). All the commandments of God are fulfilled in these two commandments. This is easy to understand in practical terms. When we love God, we commit our lives to Him, and we also love our neighbor. When we love our neighbor, we do good to them, and we never do the things that the Law of Moses prohibited. We do not lie, steal, commit adultery, dishonor, envy, or murder. How could we do those things to the people we love? Therefore, the law of love fulfills all commandments because God is love and He is the source of love.

Our Lord did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them. He refers to the commandment of loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Saint Maximus the Confessor says, “The one who loves God cannot but love everyone as themselves.” Through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit has been given to us, and the Spirit is the One who renews our hearts and enables us to love. In the same way, we cannot truly love God if we do not love our neighbor. If we do not love someone whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen? Also, our love for our neighbor overflows as love for all of creation. Since creation belongs to God, it is His gift to us.

Our neighbor is everyone the Lord presents to us. Whoever we encounter is our neighbor, for that person is made in the image and likeness of God. Our neighbor is our relative, friend, teacher, and even a stranger.

If we abide in our Lord Jesus Christ, who loves us and gives us His Holy Spirit, we become the light of the world just as He is the true Light. As He enlightens every person and the entire cosmos, we also participate in this grace. We become channels of His light through concrete actions of love towards our neighbor.

The love of God and the love of neighbor is our calling as Christians. These two *inseparable* aspects of love are the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. The entire Old Testament, while telling the story of creation and the Prophets, is ultimately about Jesus Christ. Likewise, the Law points to Him and is fulfilled by the Law of Love. The love of God and neighbor overflows to the love of all creation manifested in concrete acts of

love, service, and mercy. Since the light of God enlightens the heart, mind, and soul and enables the hands to serve.

With the light of Christ as the source of our lives, we become light when our life is filled with love, compassion, and grace. Let us continually join ourselves to Christ in love, prayer, the Eucharistic life, and service to one another and all the world. The whole of the Divine Law is fulfilled by love towards God and love towards neighbor. We become the light of the world, for we reflect the light of His love to each other. To serve one another is to love God, and to love God is to shine the light of His love and grace on the world.