



KYPIAKH

A BRIEF SERMON



«I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet» (Rev. 1:10)

Published by the Holy Womens' Coenobitic Monastery of St. Augustine Florina Greece —ph. (+30) 23850-28610 —imaaflo@yahoo.gr

Translation from
the Greek Leaflet #825

Tenth Sunday of Luke
Sunday 8 December 2024

(†) Bishop
Augustinos Kantiotēs

Like Animals and Even Worse

... and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up

(Lk. 13:11)

Today's Gospel reading, my beloved, describes the **miracle of the woman bent by Satan**.

In Christ's time, there lived a woman who had an infirmity. Her infirmity wasn't due to a natural cause, such as from a virus, but was from Satan! Satan bent her spinal cord, so that her head touched the ground. Whoever saw her, thought that she walked on four legs. She **resembled an animal**.

She didn't go out, she remained at home. Only on the **Sabbath** (Saturday), which was the day of worship in Israel, she would go to the **synagogue**, to church.

Perhaps you might say:

—**And what did she gain?** She went infirm, and returned infirm. She entered hunched over, and left hunched over...

No, it's not like that. She believed in God. She never complained against Divine Providence. And one day she was **made worthy to see Christ**.

Christ went to that humble synagogue and opened the Scriptures, explaining them, and the woman drank in His sweetest teachings. **It was then that Christ performed the miracle**. He saw her, had compassion on her, and said to her, *Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity* (Lk. 13:12). And immediately her bent body sprang upward and became as **straight** as a cypress tree.

Everyone saw this and **marveled**.

This is the miracle in today's Gospel reading, my beloved. This passage is a set of scales that will judge all of us. Because **we are that woman**. She is our mirror, our photograph.

—Our photograph? you'll ask.

Indeed. Pay attention, and you'll be convinced.

Out of all the animals that God created, man is the only one who walks on two legs; all the other animals walk on four legs. It's not a coincidence. They have their heads bent low, because they were created for the earth. Only one being was not created for the earth but for the heavens. And for that being, the ancient Greek language found the most suitable word to express its greatness: **human!** (Gk: *anthropos*). It is a compound word; it means he who **looks to the heavens**, to the heights. You were created, Oh man, for the heavens, to see the stars. The animals don't see the stars. Only man was created upright. "Let us lift up our hearts," "Wisdom, upright" (Div. Lit.); not just upright in body, but more than anything, upright in soul.

It is obvious that man is upright in body, but how will we know if a man is upright in soul? The soul is invisible, it can't be seen. However, we can make conclusions as to what condition the soul is in, by some indications it gives us. One of these is our **thoughts**. Tell me what you think about, and I will tell you what you are. Do you think about the angels, the All-holy Theotokos, your forefathers, your homeland, or about lofty things? Then you are a human being. Perhaps you don't think of those things, but your thoughts incline to things debased, to things miserable and wretched? Then you stop being a human and become a four-footed animal, whose nous is focused on earthly things. *Man, though in honour, does not remain; he is like the beasts that perish*

(Ps. 48/(49):12). In other words, King David says that man doesn't recognize what an honour he has been given, but imitates the irrational animals and becomes like them. And this characterization is true in every way.

St. John Chrysostom says, "**How can I call you a human**, when you are full of animal-like instincts?"¹ And the doctor and philosopher Carrel says that if people took on the form that suited them, the earth would be filled with animals. These are harsh words, but true. If we look into the depths of our hearts, we'll see that a beast exists there, even if externally we appear to be educated and civilized, being armed with knowledge and skills.

It would be a good thing to stay at the level of a beast. We didn't remain at the level of a human being. We didn't remain at the level of a Greek. But we didn't even remain at the level of a beast - we are lower than the animals.

—**Lower than the animals?** you'll protest.

Do you have doubts? I'll give you one, two, three, four **examples**, and then finish.

✓ Have you heard of the **turtle-doves**? Those birds have a rare quality. If one of them dies, either the male or the female, the other doesn't pair-up with another bird. It remains in its tree and from that moment on, croons sadly, crying for its mate. That's why poets have said, "that couple love each other like turtle-doves." It's a rare thing for a human to show such loyalty. Oh, how nature teaches us!

Someone wanted a divorce because he wanted another wife, when his wife became ill. He wanted to kick her out while she was still alive, before she even died! And a huge racket was created. I take a stand against divorces, even if people threaten me. And then you tell me that those people are human?

✓ Do you want another example? It's not mine, a great English politician said it. What did he say? Those of us who are from villages, retain images from agricultural life. You've heard about the donkey, how cautious and sensible it is! If it slips in a certain place and falls into a ditch, it won't fall a second time there, it learns its lesson. And when it approaches that same place, it walks around it, giving it a wide berth, as if to say: I fell once, I won't fall again. But man? Oh man! WWI was in 1918, mankind fell into the ditch. And after 20 years, in 1940, it fell into the same ditch, WWII. And now mankind is preparing for WWII so that it can once again fall into the same ditch.

So that politician was right, when he said, "Man is the most difficult of all animals to teach," despite his intelligence.

✓ Yet another example. Politicians have voted-in laws to legalize abortion. So just as a woman goes to the dentist to have a rotten tooth extracted, with the same ease she removes the life budding within her, her child. In nature, **what animal** does that?

✓ Do you want to hear something even worse? It's obscene, but I must say it. What is it? Read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and you'll see. An animal has decency, it doesn't act outside of the natural limits that its Creator set for it. Allow me, my beloved, to speak with the tongue of the Apostle Paul and say: a male animal doesn't join with another male animal, and a female animal doesn't join with another female animal. You won't see that in nature - it's unnatural, it's unheard of. And yet this sin exists in humans! Although at one time, these immoral people could be counted on your fingers, now there are masses of them. They even created an association of homosexuals and seek protective measures for themselves!

My beloved, aren't you moved? Don't you hurt? **What has become of us?** And then they say "human." What human? Not even an animal! Because the animals don't do those things.

Oh Hellas, Oh the Parthenon, Oh Church of the Holy Wisdom (Agia Sophia), Oh tombs of our ancestors! What have we become? Who am I speaking to? To stones? No - to Greek hearts and souls. And I want to believe that you sympathize with me. I am moved and sigh deeply for this wretchedness. I beg of you, go home and **pray to God**. This wave of evil needs to be opposed. A revolt is needed. Not a revolt with tanks, but within our souls. We need to raise an impenetrable wall against this beastly situation that has befallen our society.

May our Lord Jesus Christ, through the prayers of our holy fathers, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

1. St. John Chrysostom, 4th sermon on the Gospel of Matthew. P.G. 57, 48 etc.