

Scripture Reading - A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew (*Matthew 7:21-23*)

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection - Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.. (*Ephesians 4:30*)

I never knew you. Away from Me, you evil doers! This line has come as a shock to those who are reading this passage for the first time, in view of the context of the preceding lines. One may reasonably ask how is it possible for believers who had prophesied in the Lord’s name, cast out demons in His Name and performed many miracles not to be saved themselves! What went tragically wrong? Wasn’t there anyone around them to give them the warning signs? Were there warning signs but they were blind to them? Why were they blinded? What happened to their conscience – the inner part of their being where they are convicted of their wrong doings? Obviously, their conscience was dead. The Holy Spirit was no longer active in them. They have grieved the Holy Spirit to the extent that all the actions of the Holy Spirit were hindered in them. *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).* In what ways have I grieved the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth?

Neglect of the truth. Do I take my faith for granted? Do I strive to continually grow in the knowledge of and love for God? If the Word of God is so important for my sanctification, am I zealously spending time studying and meditating it? How does my time spent on reading and meditating the Bible compared to time spent on other non-essential trivial publications? How is my mind to be edified by such publications? How can I expect to know and have a close fellowship with God if I do not read His Word? How can I expect to walk in the way of the Lord if I do not try to learn His ways? Am I one of those called ‘lukewarm’ that caused so much agony to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane that He wanted to spit it out of His mouth?

Levity / Triviality of mind, conduct and conversation grieves the Holy Spirit. Am I a trifler? Do I waste time doing trivial and trifling things? Am I in the habit of indulging myself for hours in trifling activities or hobbies. Am I overly concerned about my health, my appearance, etc. and spend an inordinate amount of time on it? Vain conversation grieves the Holy Spirit. Christ says, “*Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.*” (*Matthew 5:37*). Too much work, study, or involvement in those matters that have no direct reference to the sanctification of our souls, grieves the Holy Spirit. Are my mind and energy swallowed up day in, day out by my study, my work, my trivial pursuits? Do I spend my days wisely in the eyes of God? How would I spend my days if I know it would be my last? *Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12).*

Love for money and attachment to material things grieve the Holy Spirit. When I hold something more important than my duties and obligation to God, that something becomes my false god. Christ has warned us against the love of money. *No servant can serve two masters.....You cannot serve both God and money. Luke 16:13.* Am I too busy with my work to make God first in my life, as He has commanded me to do so? Do I forget that it is God who provides for me?

Self gratification grieves the Holy Spirit. All forms of self-interest and pride hinder the holy truth and violate God’s command to love. What are the underlying motives of my desires, intentions and plans? Do they usually serve the aim of self-gratification? Do I direct my time, energy, resources to my own pleasure and enjoyment? Neglect of my duties, responsibilities and obligations to God, my family, my work and others around me saddens the Holy Spirit. Unforgiveness, resentments and bitterness greatly grieve the Holy Spirit and hinder the heart from being able to receive graces. Impurity of mind, heart, body and soul grieves the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love and of truth. Anything which violates holy love and holy truth grieves Him and hinders His sanctifying action in our souls.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I am sorry for having grieved Your Spirit. You put Your Spirit of Truth in my soul for my sanctification. May my comfort not be Your discomfort. When I look for comfort, Lord, please take the lead. I petition the heart of our Eternal Father to wash my poor heart in the cleansing water of His Divine Will. Show me anything in my heart which opposes holy truth and help me cast it out forever. I understand that all truth is based on holy love. Only through love and humility can I live in holy truth. Through this truth which I hope to abide in now, help me to accept any illumination of conscience You choose to send me. Come, Holy Spirit, I need You. You are my Teacher, Guide, Counsellor and Comforter. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.