

2025-11-09: Be Blessed and Be A Blessing

Visual Aid

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/bezvods5bpc8jfcgkf67/Blessing.pptx?rlkey=2e50hbowsm7lvhi9008b3q8ju&dl=0>

Introduction

Today is the 5th Sunday of the Month of Paope

5th Sundays don't fall in the regular cycle of the Liturgical Calendar. 5th Sunday only comes a couple of times in the year - usually three times.

52 Sundays in the Year

- $12 \times 4 = 48$

- 1 Sunday of Little Month

= 3 Sundays

So when we have an extra Sunday, it is considered to be a blessing. It is considered as the Lord has multiplied our weeks this month.

So the Church arranges for us to read the feeding of the multitude to see how the Lord multiplies for us.

The Gospel of the 5th Sunday is about feeding the multitude. In the first 6 months of the Coptic Year, we choose the Gospel reading from John. In the second half of the year, we choose the Gospel reading from Luke. The principal is that this is a week of blessing and the meaning is blessing.

Blessing

- Blessing comes from the greater to the lesser
 - Today's Pauline Epistle about Melchizedek
- So what about when we say "Bless the Lord" (e.g. in Tasbeha):
 - Definitely we are not giving God blessing, because blessing comes from greater to lesser
 - When it's from us to God - we praise the Lord (ἑὸν ἕνεκεν = praise or bless).
- When it's from God to us - give us peace, joy, earthly blessing, heavenly blessing, etc.
- In the Old Testament - specific meaning

- Jacob took the blessing instead of Esau and Esau said "do you only have one blessing?"
- Yes.
- The Blessing in the Old Testament meant "from your seed, the Messiah will come."
- When Esau came and asked for the same blessing, Isaac could not give it because he already gave it to Jacob
- Some people are blessed by God. Some people (like Abraham) are not just blessed by God, but also they are a blessing to others
 - Genesis 12
 - "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3) when the Lord told Abram to leave his country and his family and his father's house and go to the land of Canaan
 - Abraham is a blessing to Lot - when Lot is taken captive, it is Abraham who takes his men and defeats the kings and their armies and rescues Lot.
 - When Abraham meets Abimelech, they say to him "God is with you in all you do" and they make a covenant of peace with him
 - Abraham was accustomed to receiving strangers and being hospitable to them, he would be a source of blessing to them.
 - If you meet a godly person, after you meet with him, you say "I received a blessing" or you feel that you are blessed - even just by meeting with him, he prays for you, etc.
 - As Christians, we should be a blessing to others
 - "You are the salt of the earth"
 - Salt preserves things from corruption
 - Christians in the world preserve the world from corruption, and in this way they are a blessing in the world
 - Sodom and Gomorrah - "If I find 10 persons in this city, I will not destroy it." - having just 10 people in this wicked city can preserve it from destruction. Those 10 people would be a blessing to that city

To Be Blessed

- Psalm 1
 - Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly and has not stood in the way of the sinners and has not sat in the seat of the evil men
 - His will is in the law of the Lord
 - He shall be like the tree which is planted by the streams of water, which shall yield its fruit in its due season, and its leaf shall not scatter, and in everything he does he prospers
 - Not so are the ungodly not so but rather they are like the chaff which the wind scatters upon the face of the earth
 - Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment nor the sinners in the council of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish

- Heavenly Blessings
 - Peace
 - Joy
- Earthly Blessings
 - God provides goodness
 - Deliverance from hardship
 - God gives grace in the eyes of others
 - E.g. Joseph in the Old Testament - God gave him grace in the eyes of Potiphar, grace in the eyes of the prison keeper, grace in the eyes of Pharaoh

Sources of Blessing

1. The Presence of God

- Imagine if you have this great multitude... 5000 besides women and children (even if you assume wife + two kids... that's 20k people)
- If these 20k people were there, and the 5 loaves and 2 fish are there, would they have eaten and be filled? Definitely not
- The Presence of God is the source of blessing
 - When you have God in your life
 - When you start your day with prayer
 - When you have God with you in every step, decision of your life
 - In your school, work, leisure time, with your family, in your house
 - "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man."

2. Prayer

- The Lord Jesus took the loaves and looked up to heaven and prayed
- Prayer invites God to be with us - Presence of God is a source of blessing. How do we invite Him?
 - **In the beginning of your day to ask God to bless your day**
 - **In the beginning of your work to ask God to bless your work**
 - **In the beginning of your studies to ask God to bless your studies**
- Nehemiah
 - Nehemiah was sad about what was happening in Israel and, being the king's cupbearer, the king asked him what's wrong? What do you request?
 - "So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king" - let me go to Judah to rebuild it
 - This is a short prayer - the king asked him a question but before he answers, he prays.
- **Imagine if you have an interview and you get asked a question - lift your heart to the Lord and ask Him to give you the answer, and THEN answer.**
- **It's also a blessing to pray for someone - today's Synaxarion "The blessing of the prayers of St Mark be with us all amen."**

3. Doing our Part

- If the boy didn't give his 5 loaves and 2 fish, the multitude would not have been fed - not because the Lord couldn't, but because He wants us to do our part

- In the raising of Lazarus, the Lord told them to move the stone. Definitely, He could move the stone (as in His Resurrection).
- Whatever you can do, God will never do it for you. Whatever you cannot do, God will do it for you.
- Peter can go to the deep and cast his net. God will never do it for him. But Peter can't get the plenty of fish in his net. God did it for him.
- **I need to study for my exams. I need to prepare for my interviews. I need to be faithful in my role at work. I need to work hard in my marriage. I need to be active in my kids' lives - spend time with them, take them out, involve them in activities, help them with their homework, be aware of what's going on at school.**

4. Teamwork

- Imagine if we had 20k people taking communion - how long would it take? The Lord gave the disciples, and they distributed to each group of 50 - probably each group had a leader, and that leader would give his group.
- Sometimes we don't know how to work as a team
 - Quote/Joke: "The best committee is the committee of three people where one is always sick and the other is always absent"
 - Maybe because of pride or ego. Teamwork needs love and humility
- "Two are better than one" (Ecclesiastes 4)
- **When two work together, what they can do is GREATER than the sum of what they can do individually**

5. Organization

- Groups of 50
- I might have a sense of Entitlement - "I am above the rules" - when any rule is set (e.g. by church, by work, by government), there are always a few people (a minority) that feel they are above the rule and that leads to struggle
 - Imagine if someone said "no I'm not gonna sit in groups of 50 - who are you to put us in these groups? I will go and see Jesus. I'm gonna eat by myself. I don't wanna be in this group, put me in another group." - Can you imagine how long would it take to solve all these problems?
 - This happens in our churches whenever there's a new rule or a new order
- **Having Order makes things go smoothly**

6. Giving

- This lad gave all that he had: 5 loaves and 2 fish.
 - Maybe he's worried - if I give it, then at the end I won't have anything... there are 20k people who need to eat.
 - But this lad was listening to the Lord's preaching for three days, he was touched by the Lord's words and he trusted the Lord - so he gave without reluctance.
- **"It is more blessed to give than to receive"**

7. Generosity

- "as much as they wanted"

- Being generous in giving is also a source of blessing

8. Contentment

- When the disciples collected the fragments, no one said "I wanna keep the fragment for myself, I will take it to my house" - again, this is struggle.
- Some people they are not content, they always need more
- Contentment brings blessing

9. Gathering the Fragments

- Sometimes we don't pay attention to the leftovers
- Leftover money
 - I come to the end of the month, I have given my tithes and my offerings. I have saved a little bit of money. I have paid all my bills. I have paid for my expenses and my needs. And there is something leftover. I may see this as a blessing to go and treat myself to a fancy dinner or to go and waste it - but this is an opportunity the Lord is giving me to bless someone. To get a gift for someone and show them my appreciation. To contribute to a service. To perform an act of mercy or charity. Let me gather the fragments and bring them to the Lord
- Leftover time
 - If I gather all of the minutes in the day between things - between two meetings at work, while I'm walking from class to class in school, the drive home from work and the ride home from school - these are fragments of time. Let me gather these and offer them to the Lord. To offer up prayers. To send someone a text message and ask about them. To call someone and check on them.

Conclusion

At the end of every church service, there is something called the Short Blessing. The deacons say "Amen Alleluia Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit..." and at the end "Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord bless us. Amen. Bless me. Bless me. Lo the Repentance. Say the blessing." - they are speaking to Abouna "Say the blessing!" - that's why if Abouna is not there, we don't sing this concluding hymn. And Abouna's response is... to say the blessing - it's called the Short Blessing (but it's not that short). It's usually said inaudibly.

May God have compassion upon us, bless us, manifest His face upon us, and have mercy on us. O Lord save your people, bless your inheritance, shepherd them and raise them up forever. Exalt the horn of Christians through the power of your life-giving cross. Through the supplications and prayers of... St Mary, the Heavenly Orders, St John the Baptist, St Mark, the Martyrs, the Cross-bearers, the wise virgins and the angel of this blessed day. May their holy blessing, their grace, their power, their gift, their love, and their help be with us all forever. Amen.

May the Lord bless all of us, may we be a source of blessing for the whole world - "salt of the earth" and "light of the world."

Glory be to our God. Amen.

Revision #4

Created 2025-11-09 10:14:29 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba

Updated 2025-11-30 17:58:30 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba