

6 - Smyrnaeans

by Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius of Antioch writes to the Church of Smyrna, emphasizing the importance of faith, love, and obedience to the bishop and presbytery.

Duration: 11:08

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 1 Corinthians 14:40, 2 Corinthians 9:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, 1 Timothy 5:17, Hebrews 10:35-36, James 1:27

Topics: "Audio Books"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker warns the audience about the presence of false teachers and urges them to be cautious and avoid them. He emphasizes the importance of repentance and turning to God. The speaker also highlights the significance of honoring the bishop and recognizing God's authority. He expresses gratitude to the audience for their support and encourages them to endure all things for the sake of attaining God. The sermon concludes with a reminder of Jesus' suffering and resurrection, emphasizing the belief in his physical presence after the resurrection.

Transcript

Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ the grace, being filled with faith and love, and lacking in no grace, most reverend in bearing holy treasures, to the church which is in Smyrna of Asia, in a blameless spirit, and in the word of God abundant greeting. I give glory to Jesus Christ, the God who bestowed such wisdom upon you, for I have perceived that ye are established in faith, immovable, and that ye are the children of being as it were nailed on the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, in flesh and in spirit, and firmly grounded in love in the blood of Christ, fully persuaded as touching our Lord that he is truly of the race of David, according to the flesh, but son of God by the divine will and power, truly born of a virgin, and baptized by John, that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him, truly nailed up in the flesh for our sakes under Pontius Pilate, and inherit the tetrarch, of which fruit are we, that is, of his most blessed passion, that he might set up an ensign unto all the ages through his resurrection, for his saints and faithful people, whether among Jews or among Gentiles, in one body of his church. For he suffered all these things for our sakes, that we might be saved, and he suffered truly, as also he raised himself truly, not as certain unbelievers say, that he suffered in semblance, being themselves mere semblance, and according as their opinions are, so shall it happen to them, for they are without body, and demon-like.

For I know and believe that he was in the flesh even after the resurrection, and when he came to Peter and his company, he said to them, Lay hold and handle me, and see that I am not a demon without body. And straightway they touched him, and they believed, being joined unto his flesh and his blood. Wherefore also they despised death, nay, they were found superior to death.

And after his resurrection he both ate with them and drank with them, as one in the flesh, though spiritually he was united with the Father. But these things I warn you, dearly beloved, knowing that ye yourselves are so minded. Howbeit I watch over you betimes to protect you from wild beasts in human form, men whom not only should ye not receive, but if it were possible, not so much as meet them, only pray ye for them, if happily they may repent.

This indeed is difficult, but Jesus Christ, our true life, hath power over it. For if these things were done by our Lord in semblance, then am I also a prisoner in semblance, and why then have I delivered myself over to death, unto fire, unto sword, unto wild beasts? But near to the sword, near to God, in company with wild beasts, in company with God. Only let it be in the name of Jesus Christ, so that we may suffer together with him.

I endure all things, seeing that he himself enableth me, who is perfect man. But certain persons ignorantly deny him, or rather have been denied by him, being advocates of death rather than of the truth, and they have not been persuaded by the prophecies nor by the law of Moses, nay, nor even to this very hour by the gospel, nor by the sufferings of each of us severally, for they are of the same mind also concerning us. For what prophet is it to me, if a man praiseth me, but blasphemeth my Lord, not confessing that he was a bearer of flesh? Yet he that affirmeth not this doth thereby deny him altogether, being himself a bearer of a corpse.

But their names, being unbelievers, I have not thought fit to record in writing, nay, far be it from me even to remember them, until they repent, and return to the passion, which is our resurrection. Let no man be deceived, even the heavenly beings, and the glory of the angels, and the rulers visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, who is God, judgment awaiteth them also. He that receiveth, let him receive.

Let not office puff up any man, for faith and love are all in all, and nothing is preferred before them. But mark ye those who hold strange doctrine, touching the grace of Jesus Christ which came to us, how that they are contrary to the mind of God. They have no care for love, none for the widow, none for the orphan, none for the afflicted, none for the prisoner, none for the hungry or thirsty, they abstain from Eucharist, thanksgiving, and prayer, because they allow not, that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins, and which the Father of his goodness raised up.

They therefore that gainsay the good gift of God, perish by their questionings. But it were expedient for them to have love, that they may also rise again. It is therefore meet that ye should abstain from such, and not speak of them either privately or in public, but should give heed to the prophets, and especially to the gospel, wherein the passion is shown unto us, and the resurrection is accomplished.

But shun divisions, as the beginning of evils. Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the apostles, and to the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment. Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the church apart from the bishop.

Let that be held a valid Eucharist, which is under the bishop, or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be, even as where Jesus may be, there is the universal church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop, either to baptize, or to hold a love-feast.

But whatsoever he shall approve, this is well pleasing also to God, that everything which ye do may be sure and valid. It is reasonable henceforth that we wake to soberness, while we have still time to repent and turn to God. It is good to recognize God and the bishop.

He that honoureth the bishop is honoured of God. He that doeth aught without the knowledge of the bishop rendereth service to the devil. May all things therefore abound unto you in grace, for ye are worthy.

Ye refreshed me in all things, and Jesus Christ shall refresh you. In my absence and in my presence ye cherished me. May God recompense you, for whose sake, if ye endure all things, ye shall attain unto him.

Philo and Reus Agathopis, who followed me in the cause of God, ye did well to receive as ministers of Christ God, who also give thanks to the Lord for you, because ye refreshed them in every way, nothing shall be lost to you. My spirit is devoted for you, as also are my bonds, which ye despised not, neither were ashamed of them, nor shall he who is perfect faithfulness be ashamed of you, even Jesus Christ. Your prayer sped forth unto the church, which is in Antioch of Syria.

Whence, coming a prisoner, in most godly bonds, I salute all men, though I am not worthy to belong to it, being the very last of them. By the divine will was this vouchsafed to me, not of my own complicity, but by God's grace, which, I pray, may be given to me perfectly, that through your prayers I may attain unto God. Therefore, that your work may be perfected both on earth and in heaven, it is meet that your church should appoint, for the honour of God, an ambassador of God, that he may go as far as Syria, and congratulate them, because they are at peace, and have recovered their proper stature, and their proper bulk hath been restored to them.

It seemed to me, therefore, a fitting thing, that ye should send one of your own people with a letter, that he might join with them in giving glory for the calm which by God's will had overtaken them, and because they were already reaching a haven through your prayers. Seeing ye are perfect, let your counsels also be perfect. For if ye desire to do well, God is ready to grant the means.

The love of the brethren which are in Troas saluteth you. From whence also I write to you by the hand of Burrus, whom ye sent with me jointly with the Ephesians your brethren. He hath refreshed me in all ways, and I would that all imitated him, for he is an ensample of the ministry of God.

The divine grace shall requite him in all things. I salute your godly bishop in your venerable presbytery, and my fellow servants the deacons, and all of you severally, and in a body, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in his flesh and blood, in his passion and resurrection, which was both carnal and spiritual, in the unity of God and of yourselves. Grace to you, mercy, peace, patience always.

I salute the households of my brethren with their wives and children, and the virgins who are called widows. I bid you farewell in the power of the Father. Philo, who is with me, saluteth you.

I salute the household of Gavia, and I pray that she may be grounded in faith, and love both of flesh and of spirit. I salute Alce, a name very dear to me, and Daphnes, the incomparable, and Eudicnus, and all by name. Fare ye well in the grace of God.

To the Smyrnaeans.

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