

Exposition on Psalm 35

by St. Augustine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's help and rejoicing in His salvation, and warns against the consequences of sin and the wicked.

Topics: "Divine Justice", "Righteous Living"

Description

St. Augustine preaches on the Psalms, highlighting the significance of the Psalms to Christ, who overcame death and promised eternal life. He delves into the themes of surrendering to God, seeking divine justice against enemies, and the need to pray and praise God continually. St. Augustine emphasizes the importance of staying righteous in the face of persecution, trusting in God's judgment, and finding ways to praise God through our daily actions.

Transcript

1. ...The title of it causes us no delay, for it is both brief, and to be understood not difficult, especially to those nursed in the Church of God. For so it is, To David himself. The Psalm then is to David himself: now David is interpreted, Strong in hand, or Desirable. The Psalm then is to the Strong in hand, and Desirable, to Him who for us has overcome death, who unto us has promised life: for in this is He Strong in hand, that He has overcome death for us; in this is He Desirable, that He has promised unto us life eternal. For what stronger than that Hand which touched the bier, and he that was dead rose up? Luke 7:14 What stronger than that Hand which overcame the world, not armed with steel, but pierced with wood? Or what more desirable than He, whom not having seen, the Martyrs wished even to die, that they might be worthy to come unto Him? Therefore is the Psalm unto Him: to Him let our heart, to Him our tongue sing worthily: if yet Himself shall deign to give somewhat to sing....

2. Judge Thou, O Lord (says he), them that hurt me, and fight Thou against them that fight against me Psalm 34:1. If God be for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31 And whereby does God this for us? Take hold (says he) of arms and shield, and rise up to my help Psalm 34:2. A great spectacle is it, to see God armed for you. And what is His Shield, what are His Arms? Lord, in another place says the man who here also speaks, as with the shield of Your good-will have You compassed us. But His Arms, wherewith He may not only us defend, but also strike His enemies, if we have well profited, shall we ourselves be. For as we from Him have this, that we be armed, so is He armed from us. But He is armed from those whom He has made, we are armed with those things which we have received from Him who made us. These our arms the Apostle in a certain place calls, The shield of Faith, the helmet of Salvation, and the

sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Ephesians 6:16-17 He has armed us with such arms as you have heard, arms admirable, and unconquered, insuperable and shining; spiritual truly and invisible, because we have to fight also against invisible enemies. If you see your enemy, let your arms be seen. We are armed with faith in those things which we see not, and we overthrow enemies whom we see not....

3. Pour forth the weapon, and stop the way against them that persecute me Psalm 34:3. Who are they that persecute you? Haply your neighbour, or he whom you have offended, or to whom you have done wrong, or who would take away what is yours, or against whom you preach the truth, or whose sin you rebuke, or whom living ill by your well living you offend. There are indeed even these enemies to us, and they persecute us: but other enemies we are taught to know, those against whom we fight invisibly, of whom the Apostle warns us, saying, We wrestle not against flesh and blood, Ephesians 6:12 that is, against men; not against those whom you see, but against those whom you see not; against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the world, of this darkness....The whole world lies in wickedness; therefore the Apostle explained of what world they were rulers, he said, of this darkness. The rulers of this world, I say, are the rulers of this darkness....

4. And what follows? Let them be confounded and put to shame, that seek after my soul Psalm 34:4: for to this end they seek after it, to destroy it. For I would that they would seek it for good! For in another Psalm he blames this in men, that there was none who would seek after his soul: Refuge failed me: there was none that would seek after my soul. Who is this that says, There was none that would seek after my soul? Is it haply He, of whom so long before it was predicted, They pierced My Hands and My Feet, they numbered all My Bones, they stared and looked upon Me, they have parted My Garments among them, and cast lots for My Vesture? Now all these things were done before their eyes, and there was none who would seek after His Soul....

5. ...Many have been confounded to their health: many, put to shame, have passed over from the persecution of Christ to the society of His members with devoted piety; and this would not have been, had they not been confounded and put to shame. Therefore he wished well to them....Let them not go before, but follow; let them not give counsel, but take it. For Peter would go before the Lord, when the Lord spoke of His future Passion: he would to Him as it were give counsel for His health. The sick man to the Saviour give counsel for His health! And what said he to the Lord, affirming that His future Passion? Be it far from You, Lord. Be gracious to Yourself. This shall not be to You. He would go before that the Lord might follow; and what said He? Get behind Me, Satan. Matthew 16:22-23 By going before you are Satan, by following you will be a disciple. The same then is said to these also, Let them be turned back and brought to confusion that think evil against me. For when they have begun to follow after, now they will not think evil against me, but desire my good.

6. What of others? For all are not so conquered as to be converted and believe: many continue in obstinacy, many preserve in heart the spirit of going before, and if they exert it not, yet they labour with it, and finding opportunity bring it forth. Of such, what follows? Let them be as dust before the wind Psalm 34:5. Not so are the ungodly, not so; but as the dust which the wind drives away from the face of the earth. The wind is temptation; the dust are the ungodly. When temptation comes, the dust is raised, it neither stands nor resists. Let them be as dust before the wind, and let the Angel of the Lord trouble them. Let their way be darkness and slipping Psalm 34:6. A horrible way! Darkness alone who fears not? A slippery way alone who avoids not? In a dark and slippery way how shall you go? Where set foot? These two ills are the great punishments of men: darkness, ignorance; a slippery way, luxury. And let the Angel of the Lord persecute them; that they be not able to stand. For any one in a dark and slippery way, when he sees

that if he move his foot he will fall, and there is no light before his feet, haply resolves to wait until light come; but here is the Angel of the Lord persecuting them. These things he predicted would come upon them, not as though he wished them to happen. Although the Prophet in the Spirit of God so speaks these things, even as God does the same, with sure judgment, with a judgment good, righteous, holy, tranquil; not moved with wrath, not with bitter jealousy, not with desire of wreaking enmities, but of punishing wickedness with righteousness; nevertheless, it is a prophecy.

7. But wherefore these so great evils? By what desert? Hear by what desert. For without cause have they hid for me the corruption of their trap Psalm 34:7. For Him that is our Head, observe, the Jews did this: they hid the corruption of their trap. For whom hid they their trap? For Him who saw the hearts of those that hid. But yet was He among them like one ignorant, as though He were deceived, whereas they were in that deceived, that they thought Him to be deceived. For therefore was He as though deceived, living among them, because we among such as they were so to live, as to be without doubt deceived. He saw His betrayer, and chose him the more to a necessary work. By his evil He wrought a great good: and yet among the twelve was he chosen, lest even the small number of twelve should be without one evil. This was an example of patience to us, because it was necessary that we should live among the evil: it was necessary that we should endure the evil, either knowing them or knowing them not: an example of patience He gave you lest you should fail, when you have begun to live among the evil. And because that School of Christ in the twelve failed not, how much more ought we to be firm, when in the great Church is fulfilled what was predicted of the mixture of the evil....

8. But yet what is to be done? Without a cause have they hid for me the corruption of their trap. What means, Without a cause? I have done them no evil, I have hurt them not at all. Vainly have they reviled my soul. What is, Vainly? Speaking falsely, proving nothing. Let a trap come upon them which they know not of Psalm 34:8. A magnificent retribution, nothing more just! They have hidden a trap that I might know not: let a trap come upon them which they know not of. For I know of their trap. But what trap is coming upon them? That which they know not of. Let us hear, lest haply he speak of that. Let a trap come upon them, which they know not of. Perhaps that is one which they hid for him, that another which shall come upon themselves. Not so: but what? The wicked shall be holden with the cords of his own sins. Proverbs 5:22 Thereby are they deceived, whereby they would deceive. Thence shall come mischief to them, whence they endeavoured mischief. For it follows, And let the net which they have hidden catch themselves, and let them fall into their own trap. As if any one should prepare a cup of poison for another, and forgetting should drink it up himself: or as if one should dig a pit, that his enemy might fall thereinto in the darkness and himself forgetting what he had dug, should first walk that way, and fall into it....

9. This then for the wicked that would hurt me: what for me? But my soul shall rejoice in the Lord Psalm 34:9; as in Him from whom it has heard, I am your salvation; as not seeking other riches from without; as not seeking to abound in pleasures and good things of earth; but loving freely the true Spouse, not from Him wishing to receive anything that may delight, but Him alone proposing to itself, by whom it may be delighted. For what better than God will be given unto me? God loves me: God loves you. See He has proposed to you, Ask what you will. Matthew 7:7 If the emperor should say to you, Ask what you will, what commands, what dignities, would you burst forth with! What great things would you propose to yourself, both to receive and to bestow! When God says unto you, Ask what you will, what will you ask? Empty your mind, exert your avarice, stretch forward as far as possible, and enlarge your desire: it is not any one, but Almighty God that said, Ask what you will. If of possessions you are a lover, you will desire the whole earth, that all who are born may be your husbandmen, or your slaves. And what when you have

possessed the whole earth? You will ask the sea, in which yet you can not live. In this greediness the fishes will have the better of you. But perhaps you will possess the islands. Pass over these also; ask the air although you can not fly; stretch your desire even unto the heavens, call your own the sun, the moon, and the stars, because He who made all said, Ask what you will: yet nothing will you find more precious, nothing will you find better, than Himself who made all things. Him seek, who made all things, and in Him and from Him shall you have all things which He made. All things are precious, because all are beautiful; but what more beautiful than He? Strong are they; but what stronger than He? And nothing would He give you rather than Himself. If anything better you have found, ask it. If you ask anything else, you will do wrong to Him, and harm to yourself, by preferring to Him that which He made, when He would give to you Himself who made....

But my soul shall be joyful in the Lord; it shall rejoice in His salvation. The salvation of God is Christ: For my eyes have seen Your salvation. Luke 2:30

10. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like You Psalm 34:10. Who can speak anything worthily of these words? I think them only to be pronounced, not to be expounded. Why do you seek this or that? What is like your Lord? Him have you before you. The unrighteous have declared unto me delights, but not after Your law, O Lord! Persecutors have been who have said, Worship Saturn, worship Mercury. I worship not idols (says he): Lord, who is like You? They have eyes, and see not; ears have they, but they hear not. Lord, who is like You, who hast made the eye to see, the ear to hear? But I (says he) worship not idols, for them a workman made. Worship a tree or mountain; did a workman make them also? Here too, Lord, who is like You? Earthly things are shown unto me; You are Creator of the earth. And from these haply they turn to the higher creation, and say to me, Worship the Moon, worship this Sun, who with his light, as a great lamp in the Heavens, makes the day. Here also I plainly say, Lord, who is like You? The Moon and the Stars You have made, the Sun to rule the day have You kindled, the Heavens have You framed together. There are many invisible things better. But haply here also it is said to me, Worship Angels, adore Angels. And here also will I say, Lord, who is like You? Even the Angels You have created. The Angels are nothing, but by seeing You. It is better with them to possess You, than by worshipping them to fall from You.

11. O Body of Christ, Holy Church, let all your bones say, Lord, who is like you? And if the flesh under persecution has fallen away, let the bones say, Lord, who is like You? For of the righteous it is said, The Lord keeps all their bones; not one of them shall be broken. Of how many righteous have the bones under persecution been broken? Finally, The just shall live by faith, and Christ justifies the ungodly. Romans 4:5 But how justifies He any except believing and confessing? For with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:10 Therefore also that thief, although from His theft led to the judge, and from the judge to the cross, yet on the very cross was justified: with his heart he believed, with his mouth he confessed. For neither to a man unrighteous and not already justified, would the Lord have said, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise, Luke 23:43 and yet his bones were broken. For when they came to take down the bodies, by reason of the approaching Sabbath, the Lord was found already dead, and His Bones were not broken. John 19:33 But of those that yet lived, that they might be taken down, the legs were broken, that so from this pain having died, they might be buried. Were then of the one thief, who persisted in his ungodliness on the cross, the bones broken, and not also of the other who with his heart believed, and with his mouth made confession unto salvation? Where then is that which was said, The Lord keeps all his bones; not one of them shall be broken; except that in the Body of the Lord the name of bones is given to all the righteous, the firm in

heart, the strong, yielding to no persecutions, no temptations, so as to consent unto evil?...

12. Which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him; yea, the poor and needy from him that spoils him....Who that deliverest, but He who is Strong in hand? Even that David shall deliver the poor from him that is too strong for him. For the devil was too strong for you, and held you, because he conquered you, when you consented unto him. But what has the Strong in hand done? No man enters into a strong man's house, to spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man. Matthew 12:29 By His own Power, most Holy, most Magnificent, has He bound the devil by pouring forth the weapon to stop the way against him, that He may deliver the poor and needy, to whom there was no helper. For who is your helper but the Lord to whom you say, O Lord, My Strength, and My Redeemer. If you will presume of your own strength, thereby will you fall, whereof you have presumed: if of another's, he would lord it over you, not succour you. He then alone is to be sought Who has redeemed them, and made them free, and has given His Blood to purchase them, and of His servants has made them His Brethren....

13. Let then our Head say, False witnesses did rise up, they laid to My charge things that I knew not Psalm 34:11. But let us say to our Head, Lord, what knew Thou not? Did Thou indeed know not anything? Did You not know the hearts of them that charged You? Did You not foresee their deceits? Did You not give Yourself into their hands knowingly? Had You not come that You might suffer by them? What then knew Thou not? He knew not sin, and thereby He knew not sin, not by not judging, but by not committing. There are phrases of this kind also in daily use, as when you say of any one, He knows not to stand, that is, he does not stand; and, He knows not to do good, because he does not good; and, He knows not to do ill, because he does not ill....What knew not Christ so much, as to blaspheme? Thereof was He called in question by His persecutors, and because He spoke truth, He was judged to have spoken blasphemy. Matthew 26:65 But by whom? By them of whom it follows, They rewarded Me evil for good, and barrenness to My Soul Psalm 34:12. I gave unto them fruitfulness, they rewarded Me barrenness; I gave life, they death; I honour, they dishonour; I medicine, they wounds; and in all these which they rewarded Me, was truly barrenness. This barrenness in the tree He cursed, when seeking fruit He found none. Matthew 21:19 Leaves there were, and fruit there was not: words there were, and deeds there were not. See of words abundance, and of deeds barrenness. Thou that preachest a man should not steal, stealest: thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, committest adultery. Romans 2:21-22 Such were they who charged Christ with things that He knew not.

14. But I, when they troubled me, clothed myself with sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer shall return into my own bosom Psalm 34:13...Brethren, if for some little space with pious curiosity we lift the veil, and search with the intent eye of the heart the inner part of this Scripture, we find that even this the Lord did. Sackcloth, haply He calls His mortal flesh. Wherefore Sackcloth? For the likeness of sinful flesh. For the Apostle says, God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that through sin He might condemn sin in the flesh: Romans 8:3 that is, He clothed His Own Son with sackcloth, that through sackcloth He might condemn the goats. Not that there was sin, I say not in the Word of God, but not even in that Holy Soul and Mind of a Man, which the Word and Wisdom of God had so joined to Himself as to be One Person. Nay, nor even in His very Body was any sin, but the likeness of sinful flesh there was in the Lord; because death is not but by sin, Romans 5:12 and surely that Body was mortal. For had It not been mortal, It had not died; had It not died, It had not risen again; had It not risen again, It had not showed us an example of eternal life. So then death, which is caused by sin, is called sin; as we say the Greek tongue, the Latin tongue, meaning not the very member of flesh, but that which is done by the member of flesh. For the tongue in our members is one among others, as the eyes, nose, ears, and the

rest: but the Greek tongue is Greek words, not that the tongue is words, but that words are by the tongue....So then the sin of the Lord is that which was caused by sin; because He assumed flesh, of the same lump which had deserved death by sin. For to speak more briefly, Mary who was of Adam died for sin, Adam died for sin, and the Flesh of the Lord which was of Mary died to put away sin. With this sackcloth the Lord clothed Himself, and therefore was He not known, because He lay hid under sackcloth. When they, says He, troubled Me, I clothed Myself with sackcloth: that is, they raged, I lay hid. For had He not willed to lie hidden neither could He have died, since in one moment of time one drop only of His Power, if indeed it is to be called a drop, He put forth, when they wished to seize Him, and at His one question, Whom do you seek? they all went back and fell to the ground. John 18:4, 6 Such power could He not have humbled in passion, if He had not lain hid under sackcloth.

15. Again, if we have understood the sackcloth, how understand we the fasting? Wished Christ to eat, when He sought fruit on the tree, Mark 11:13 and if He had found, would He have eaten? Wished Christ to drink, when He said to the woman of Samaria, Give Me to drink? John 4:7 when He said on the Cross, I thirst? For what hungered, for what thirsted Christ, but our good works? Because in them that crucified and persecuted Him He had found no good works, He fasted; for they rewarded barrenness to His soul. For what a fast was His, who found barely one thief, whom on the Cross He might taste! For the Apostles had fled, and had hidden themselves in the multitude. And even Peter, who even to the death of his Lord had promised to persevere, had now thrice denied Him, had now wept, and still lay hid in the multitude, still feared lest He should be known. Lastly, having seen Him dead, all of them despaired of their own safety and despairing He found them, after His resurrection, and when He spoke with them, found them grieving and mourning, no longer hoping anything....In great fasting had the Lord remained, had He not refreshed them that He might feed on them. For He refreshed them, He comforted them, He confirmed them, and into His Own Body converted them. In this manner then was our Lord also in fasting.

16. And My prayer shall return into Mine Own Bosom. In the bosom of this verse is plainly a great depth, and may the Lord grant that it be fathomable by us. For in the bosom a secret is understood. And we ourselves, Brethren, are here well admonished to pray within our own bosom, where God sees, where God hears, where no human eye penetrates, where none sees but He who succours; where Susanna prayed, and her voice, though it was not heard by men, yet by God was heard.. ..We read also that in the mount Jesus prayed alone, Matthew 14:23 we read that He passed the night in prayer, Luke 6:12 even at the time of His Passion. What then? And My prayer shall return into Mine Own Bosom. I know not what better to understand concerning the Lord: take meanwhile what now occurs; perhaps something better will occur hereafter, either to me or to some better: My prayer shall return into Mine Own Bosom: this I understand to be said, because in His Own Bosom He had the Father. For God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. 2 Corinthians 5:19 In Himself He had Him to whom He prayed. He was not far from Him, for Himself had said, I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. John 14:10 But because prayer rather belongs to very Man (for according as Christ is the Word, He prays not, but hears prayer; and seeks not to be succoured for Himself, but with the Father succours all): what is, My prayer shall return into Mine Own Bosom, but in Me My Manhood invokes in Me My Godhead.

17. As a Neighbour, as our Brother, so I pleased Him: as one mourning and sorrowful, so I humbled myself Psalm 34:14. Now looks He back to His Own Body: let us now look to this. When we rejoice in prayer, when our mind is calmed, not by the world's prosperity, but by the light of Truth: (who perceives this light, knows what I say, and he sees and acknowledges what is said, As a Neighbour, as our Brother, so I pleased Him): even then our soul pleases God, not placed afar off, for, In Him, says one, we live and

move and have our being, Acts 17:28 but as a Brother, as a Neighbour, as a Friend. But if it be not such that it can so rejoice, so shine, so approach, so cleave unto Him, and sees itself far off thence, then let it do what follows, As one mourning and sorrowful, so I humbled Myself. As our Brother, so I pleased Him, said He, drawing near; As one mourning and sorrowful, so I humbled Myself, said He, removed and set afar off....Did not Peter draw near, when he said, You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God? And yet the same man became afar off by saying, Be it far from You, Lord; this shall not be unto You. Lastly, what said He, his Neighbour, as it were, to him drawing near? Blessed are you, Simon, Barjona. To him afar off, as it were, and unlike, what said He? Get behind Me, Satan. Matthew 16:16-23 To him drawing near, Flesh and blood, says He, has not revealed it unto you, but My Father, which is in Heaven. His Light is shed over you, in His Light you shine. But when having become afar off, he spoke against the Lord's Passion, which should be for our Salvation, Thou savourest not, said He, the things that be of God, but those that be of men. One rightly placing together both of these says in a certain Psalm, I said in my ecstasy, I am cast off from before Your Eyes. In my ecstasy, would he not have said, had he not drawn near; for ecstasy is the transporting of the mind. He poured over himself his own soul, and drew near unto God; and through some cloud and weight of the flesh being again cast down to earth, and recollecting where he had been, and seeing where he was, he said, I am cast off from before Your Eyes. This then, As a Neighbour, as our Brother, so I pleased Him, may He grant to be done in us; but when that is not, let even this be done, As one mourning and sorrowful, so I humbled myself.

18. And against Me they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together Psalm 34:15, against Me only: they rejoicing, I sorrowful. But we heard just now in the Gospel, Blessed are they that mourn. Matthew 5:5 If they are blessed that mourn, miserable are they that laugh. Against Me they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: scourges were gathered together against Me, and they knew not. Because they laid to My charge things that I knew not, they also knew not Whom they charged.

19. They tempted Me, and mocked Me with mocking Psalm 34:16. That is, they derided Me, they insulted Me; this of the Head, this of the Body. Consider, Brethren, the glory of the Church which now is; remember its past dishonours, remember how once were Christians everywhere put to flight, and wherever found, mocked, beaten, slain, exposed to beasts, burned, men rejoicing against them. As it was to the Head, so it is also to the Body. For as it was to the Lord on the Cross, so has it been to His Body in all that persecution which was made but now: nor even now cease the persecutions of the same. Wherever men find a Christian, they are wont to insult, to persecute, to deride him, to call him dull, senseless, of no spirit, of no knowledge. Do they what they will, Christ is in Heaven: do they what they will, He has honoured His punishment, already has He fixed His Cross in the foreheads of all; the ungodly is permitted to insult, to rage he is not permitted; but yet from that which the tongue utters, is understood what he bears in his heart: They gnashed upon Me with their teeth.

20. Lord, when will You look on? Rescue My Soul from their deceits, My Darling from the lions Psalm 34:17. For to us the time is slow; and in our person is this said, When will You look on? that is, when shall we see vengeance upon those who insult us? When shall the Judge, overcome by weariness, hear the widow? Luke 18:3 But our Judge, not from weariness, but from love, delays our salvation; from reason, not from need; not that He could not even now succour us, but that the number of us all may be filled up even to the end. And yet out of our desire, what do we say? Lord, when will You look on? Rescue My Soul from their deceits, My Darling from the lions: that is, My Church from raging powers.

21. Lastly, would you know what is that Darling? Read the words following: I will confess unto You, O Lord, in the great Congregation; in a weighty people will I praise You Psalm 34:18. Truly says He, I will

confess unto You: for confession is made in all the multitude, but not in all is God praised: the whole multitude hears our confession, but not in all the multitude is the praise of God. For in all the whole multitude, that is, in the Church which is spread abroad in the whole world, is chaff, and wheat: the chaff flies, the wheat remains; therefore, in a weighty people will I praise You. In a weighty people, which the wind of temptation carries not away, in such is God praised. For in the chaff He is ever blasphemed....

22. Let not them that are Mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over Me: for they rejoice over Me because of My chaff. Who hate Me without a cause; that is, whom I never hurt; winking with their eyes Psalm 34:19: that is, pretending hypocrites, For they spoke indeed peace to Me Psalm 34:20. What is, winking with their eyes? Declaring by their looks, what they carry not in their heart. And who are these winking with their eyes? For they spoke indeed peace to Me; and with wrath devised craftily. Yea they opened their mouth wide against Me Psalm 34:21. First winking with their eyes, those lions sought to ravish and devour; first fawning they spoke peace, and then with wrath devised craftily. What peace spoke they? Master, we know that Thou acceptest not man's person, and teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute unto C^æsar, or not? They spoke indeed peace unto Me. What then? Did You not know them, and they deceived You, winking with their eyes? Truly He knew them; therefore said He, Why do you tempt Me, you hypocrites? Matthew 22:16-18 Afterward, they opened their mouth wide against Me, crying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him! Luke 23:21 and said, Aha, Aha, our eyes have seen it. This, when they insulted Him, Aha, Aha, Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ. Matthew 26:68 As their peace was pretended when they tempted Him concerning the money, so now insulting was their praise. They said, Aha, Aha, our eyes have seen it Psalm 34:21: that is, Your deeds, Your miracles. This Man is the Christ. If He be the Christ, let Him come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him. He saved others, Himself He cannot save. Our eyes have seen it. This is all whereof He boasted Himself, when He called Himself the Son of God. John 19:7 But the Lord was hanging patient upon the Cross: His power had He not lost, but He showed His patience. For what great thing was it for Him to come down from the Cross, who could afterward rise again from the sepulchre? But He seems to have yielded to His insulters; and this, beloved, that having risen again He should show Himself to His own, and not to them, and this is a great mystery; for His resurrection signified the New Life, but the New Life is known to His friends, not to His enemies.

23. This You have seen, O Lord; keep not silence Psalm 34:22. What is, keep not silence? Judge Thou. For of judgment is it said in a certain place, I have kept silence; shall I keep silence for ever? And of the delaying of judgment it is said to the sinner, These things have you done, and I kept silence; You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself. How keeps He silence, who speaks by the Prophets, who speaks with His own mouth in the Gospel, who speaks by the Evangelists, who speaks by us, when we speak the truth? What then? He keeps silence from judgment, not from precept, not from doctrine. But this His judgment the Prophet in a manner invokes, and predicts: You have seen, O Lord: keep not silence; that is, You will not keep silence, needs must that You will judge. O Lord, be not far from Me. Until Your judgment come, be not far from Me, as You have promised, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

24. Arise, Lord, and attend to My judgment Psalm 34:23. To what judgment? That You are in tribulation; that You are tormented with labours and pains? Do not even many wicked men suffer the same? To what judgment? Therefore are You righteous, because Thou sufferest these things? No: but what? To My judgment. What follows? Attend to My judgment; even to My cause, My God, and My Lord. Not to My punishment, but to My cause: not to that which the robber has in common with Me, but to that whereof is said, Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Matthew 5:10 For this cause is

distinguished. For punishment is equal to good and bad. Therefore Martyrs, not the punishment, but the cause makes, for if punishment made Martyrs, all the mines would be full of Martyrs, every chain would drag Martyrs, all that are executed with the sword would be crowned. Therefore let the cause be distinguished; let none say, because I suffer, I am righteous. Because He who first suffered, suffered for righteousness' sake, therefore He added a great exception, Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake. For many having a good cause do persecution, and many having a bad cause suffer persecution. For if persecution could not be done rightly, it had not been said in a certain Psalm, Whoso privily slanders his neighbour, him did I persecute.. .Let none then say, I suffer persecution: let him not sift the punishment, but prove the cause: lest if he prove not the cause, he be numbered with the ungodly. Therefore how watchfully, how excellently has This Man recommended Himself, O Lord, attend to My judgment, not to My punishments; even to My cause, My God, and My Lord.

25. Judge me, O Lord, according to My righteousness Psalm 34:24; that is, attend to My cause. Not according to My punishment, but according to My righteousness, O Lord, My God, that is, according to this judge Thou Me. And let them not rejoice over Me; that is, Mine enemies.

26. Let them not say in their heart, Aha, aha, so would we have it Psalm 34:25; that is, We have done what we could, we have slain him, we have taken him away. Let them not say: show them that they have done nothing. Let them not say, We have swallowed him up. Whence say those Martyrs, If the Lord had not been on our side, then they had swallowed us up quick. What is, had swallowed us up? Had passed into their own body. For that you swallow up, which you pass into your own body. The world would swallow you up; swallow thou the world, pass it into your own body: kill and eat. As it was said to Peter, Kill and eat; Acts 10:13 do thou kill in them what they are, make them what you are. But if they on the other hand persuade you to ungodliness, you are swallowed up by them. Not when they persecute you are you swallowed up by them, but when they persuade you to be what they are. Let them not say, We have swallowed him up. Do thou swallow up the body of Pagans. Why the body of Pagans? It would swallow you up. Do thou to it, what it would to you. Therefore perhaps that calf, being ground to powder, was cast into the water and given to the children of Israel to drink, Exodus 32:20 that so the body of ungodliness might be swallowed up by Israel. Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour Psalm 34:26; so that we may swallow up them ashamed and brought to confusion. Who speak evil against me: let them be ashamed, let them be brought to confusion.

27. What do you say now, the Head with the Members? Let them shout for joy and be glad that favour My righteous cause: who cleave to My Body. Yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant Psalm 34:27. And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness, and of Your praise all the day long Psalm 34:28. And whose tongue endures to speak the praise of God all the day long? See now I have made a discourse something longer; you are wearied. Who endures to praise God all the day long? I will suggest a remedy, whereby you may praise God all the day long if you will. Whatever you do, do well, and you have praised God. When you sing an hymn, you praise God, but what does your tongue, unless your heart also praise Him? Have you ceased from singing hymns, and departed, that you may refresh yourself? Be not drunken, and you have praised God. Do you go away to sleep? Rise not to do evil, and you have praised God. Do you transact business? Do no wrong, and you have praised God. Do you till your field? Raise not strife, and you have praised God. In the innocency of your works prepare yourself to praise God all the day long.

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