

Exposition on Psalm 66

by St. Augustine

St. Augustine's exposition on Psalm 66 emphasizes the universal call to joy in God and the promise of resurrection for all believers, highlighting God's grace and power.

Scripture: Matthew 6:1, Matthew 12:39, Matthew 25:42, Luke 16:9, John 14:6, Romans 10:4, Romans 11:25, 1 Corinthians 1:26, 1 Corinthians 15:54, Philippians 2:12, Colossians 1:18

Topics: "Christian Hope", "Surrendered Faith"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the importance of recognizing Christ as the Resurrection and the hope of Christians, contrasting the Jewish hope of resurrection with the universal hope offered to Gentiles through Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the need for believers to surrender their pride and boast in God's grace, offering themselves as whole sacrifices to God. St. Augustine encourages believers to pass through trials of fire and water, symbolizing tribulations and prosperity, with faith and perseverance, offering prayers and sacrifices to God with sincerity and humility.

Transcript

1. This Psalm has on the title the inscription, For the end, a song of a Psalm of Resurrection. When ye hear for the end, whenever the Psalms are repeated, understand it for Christ: the Apostle saying, For the end of the law is Christ, for righteousness to every one believing. Romans 10:4 In what manner therefore here Resurrection is sung, you wilt hear, and whose Resurrection it is, as far as Himself deigns to give and disclose. For the Resurrection we Christians know already has come to pass in our Head, and in the members it is to be. The Head of the Church is Christ, Colossians 1:18 the members of Christ are the Church. That which has preceded in the Head, will follow in the Body. This is our hope; for this we believe, for this we endure and persevere amid so great perverseness of this world, hope comforting us, before that hope becomes reality....The Jews did hold the hope of the resurrection of the dead: and they hoped that themselves alone would rise again to a blessed life because of the work of the Law, and because of the justifications of the Scriptures, which the Jews alone had, and the Gentiles had not. Crucified was Christ, blindness in part happened unto Israel, in order that the fullness of the Gentiles might enter in: Romans 11:25 as the Apostle says. The resurrection of the dead begins to be promised to the Gentiles also that believe in Jesus Christ, that He has risen again. Thence this Psalm is against the presumption and pride of the Jews, for the comfort of the Gentiles that are to be called to the same hope of resurrection.

2. ...Thence he begins, Be joyful in God. Who? Every land Psalm 65:1. Not therefore Judaea alone. See, brethren, after what sort is set forth the universality of the Church in the whole world spread abroad: and mourn ye not only the Jews, who envied the Gentiles that grace, but still more for heretics wail ye. For if they are to be mourned, that have not been gathered together, how much more they that being gathered together have been divided? Jubilate in God every land. What is jubilate? Into the voice of rejoicings break forth if you cannot into that of words. For jubilation is not of words, but the sound alone of men rejoicing is uttered, as of a heart labouring and bringing forth into voice the pleasure of a thing imagined which cannot be expressed. Be joyful in God every land: let no one jubilate in a part: let every land be joyful, let the Catholic Church jubilate. The Catholic Church embraces the whole: whosoever holds a part and from the whole is cut off, should howl, not jubilate.

3. But play ye to His name Psalm 65:2. What has he said? By you playing let His name be blessed. But what it is to play? To play is also to take up an instrument which is called a psaltery, and by the striking and action of the hands to accompany voices. If therefore ye jubilate so that God may hear; play also something that men may both see and hear: but not to your own name....For if for the sake of yourselves being glorified ye do good works, we make the same reply as He made to certain of such men, Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward: Matthew 6:2 and again, Otherwise no reward ye will have with your Father that is in Heaven.

Matthew 6:1 You will say, ought I, then, to hide my works, that I do them not before men? No. But what says He? Let your works shine before men. In doubt then I shall remain. On one side You say to me, Take heed that you do not your righteousness before men: on the other side You say to me, Let your good works shine before men; what shall I keep? What do? What leave undone? A man can as well serve two masters commanding different things as one commanding different things. I command not, says the Lord, different things.

The end observe, for the end sing: with what end you do it, see thou. If for this reason you do it, that you may be glorified, I have forbidden it: but if for this reason, that God may be glorified, I have commanded it. Play therefore, not to your own name, but to the name of the Lord your God. Play ye, let Him be lauded: live ye well, let Him be glorified. For whence have ye that same living well? If for everlasting ye had had it, you would never have lived ill; if from yourselves ye had had it, you never would have done otherwise than have lived well.

Give glory to His praise. Our whole attention upon the praise of God he directs, nothing for us he leaves whence we should be praised. Let us glory thence the more, and rejoice: to Him let us cleave, in Him let us be praised. You heard when the Apostle was being read, See ye your calling, brethren, how not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but the foolish things of the world God has chosen to confound the wise. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27 ...But the Lord chose afterwards orators also; but they would have been proud, if He had not first chosen fishermen; He chose rich men; but they would have said that on account of their riches they had been chosen, unless at first He had chosen poor men: He chose Emperors afterwards; but better is it, that when an Emperor has come to Rome, he should lay aside his crown, and weep at the monument of a fisherman, than that a fisherman should weep at the monument of an Emperor.

For the weak things of the world God has chosen to confound the strong, etc. 1 Corinthians 1:27 ...And what follows? The Apostle has concluded, That there might not glory before God any flesh. See ye how from us He has taken away, that He might give glory: has taken away ours, that He might give His own;

has taken away empty, that He might give full; has taken away insecure, that He might give solid....

4. Say ye to God, How to be feared are Your works! Psalm 65:3. Wherefore to be feared and not to be loved? Hear another voice of a Psalm: Serve the Lord in fear, and exult unto Him with trembling. What means this? Hear the voice of the Apostle: With fear, he says, and trembling, work out your own salvation. Philippians 2:12 Wherefore with fear and trembling? He has subjoined the reason: for God it is that works in you both to will and to work according to good will. Philippians 2:13 If therefore God works in you, by the Grace of God you work well, not by your strength. Therefore if you rejoice, fear also: lest perchance that which was given to a humble man be taken away from a proud one....Brethren, if against the Jews of old, cut off from the root of the Patriarchs, we ought not to exalt ourselves, but rather to fear and say to God, How to be feared are Your works: how much less ought we not to exalt ourselves against the fresh wounds of the cutting off! Before there had been cut off Jews, grafted in Gentiles; from the very graft there have been cut off heretics; but neither against them ought we to exalt ourselves; lest perchance he deserve to be cut off, that delights to revile them that are cut off. My brethren, a bishop's voice, however unworthy, has sounded to you: we pray you to beware, whosoever you are in the Church, do not revile them that are not within; but pray ye rather, that they too may be within. For God is able again to graft them in. Romans 11:23 Of the very Jews the Apostle said this, and it was done in their case. The Lord rose again, and many believed: they perceived not when they crucified, nevertheless afterwards they believed in Him, and there was forgiven them so great a transgression. The shedding of the Lord's blood was forgiven the manslayers, not to say, God-slayers: for if they had known, the Lord of glory they never would have crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:8 Now to the manslayers has been forgiven the shedding of the blood of Him innocent: and that same blood which through madness they shed, through grace they have drunk....O fullness of Gentiles, say thou to God, How to be feared are Your works! and so rejoice thou as that you may fear, be not exalted above the branches cut off.

5. In the multitude of your power Your enemies shall lie to You. For this purpose he says, to You your enemies shall lie, in order that great may be Your power. What is this? With more attention hearken. The power of our Lord Jesus Christ most chiefly appeared in the Resurrection, from whence this Psalm has received its title. And rising again, He appeared to His disciples. Acts 10:40 He appeared not to His enemies, but to His disciples. Crucified He appeared to all men, rising again to believers: so that afterwards also he that would might believe, and to him that should believe, resurrection might be promised. Many holy men wrought many miracles; no one of them when dead did rise again: because even they that by them were raised to life, were raised to life to die....Because therefore the Jews might say, when the Lord did miracles, Moses has done these things, Elias has done, Eliseus has done them: they might for themselves say these words, because those men also did raise to life dead men, and did many miracles: therefore when from Him a sign was demanded, of the peculiar sign making mention which in Himself alone was to be, He says, This generation crooked and provoking seeks a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it, except the sign of Jonas the Prophet: for as Jonas was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so shall be also the Son of Man in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. Matthew 12:39-40 In what way was Jonas in the belly of the whale? Was it not so that afterwards alive he was vomited out? Hell was to the Lord what the whale was to Jonas. This sign peculiar to Himself He mentioned, this is the most mighty sign. It is more mighty to live again after having been dead, than not to have been dead. The greatness of the power of the Lord as He was made Man, in the virtue of the Resurrection does appear....

6. Observe also the very lie of the false witnesses in the Gospel, and see how it is about Resurrection. For when to the Lord had been said, What sign will You, who does these things, show us? John 2:18 besides that which He had spoken about Jonah Matthew 12:39 through another similitude of this same thing also He spoke, that you might know this peculiar sign had been especially pointed out: Destroy this Temple, He says, and in three days I will raise it up. And they said, In forty and six years was built this temple, and will You in three days raise it up?

John 2:19-20 And the evangelist explaining what it was, But this, he says, spoke Jesus of the Temple of His Body. John 2:21 Behold this His power He said He would show to men in the same thing as that from whence He had given the similitude of a Temple, because of His flesh, which was the Temple of the Divinity hidden within. Whence the Jews outwardly saw the Temple, the Deity dwelling within they saw not. Out of those words of the Lord false witnesses made up a lie to say against Him, out of those very words wherein He mentioned His future Resurrection, in speaking of the Temple.

For false witnesses, when they were asked what they had heard Him say, alleged against Him: We heard Him saying, I will destroy this Temple, and after three days I will raise it up. After three days I will raise up, they had heard: I will destroy, they had not heard: but had heard destroy ye. One word they changed and a few letters, in order to support their false testimony. But for whom do you change a word, O human vanity, O human weakness? For the Word, the Unchangeable, do you change a word?

You change your word, do you change God's Word?...Wherefore said they that You had said, I will destroy; and said not that which You said, destroy ye? It was, as it were, in order that they might defend themselves from the charge of destroying the Temple without cause. For Christ, because He willed it, died: and nevertheless ye killed Him. Behold we grant you, O you liars, Himself destroyed the Temple. For it has been said by the Apostle, That loved me, and gave up Himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 It has been said of the Father, That His own Son spared not, but gave Him up for us all. Romans 8:32 ...By all means be it that Himself destroyed the Temple, Himself destroyed that said, Power I have to lay down My Soul, and power I have again to take it: no one takes it from Me, but I Myself lay it down from Me, and again I take it. John 10:18 Be it that Himself has destroyed the Temple in His Grace, in your malice. In the multitude of Your power your enemies shall lie to You.

Behold they lie, behold they are believed, behold You are oppressed, behold You are crucified, behold You are insulted, behold head is wagged at You, If Son of God He is, let Him come down from the Cross. Matthew 27:49 Behold when You will, life You lay down, and with lance in the side art pierced, and Sacraments from Your side flow forth; John 19:34 You are taken down from the Tree, wound in linens, laid in the sepulchre, there are set guards lest Your disciples take You away; there comes the hour of Your Resurrection, earth is shaken, tombs are cloven, Thou risest again in secret, appearest openly. Where then are those liars? Where is the false testimony of evil will? Have not Your enemies in the multitude of Your power lied to You?

7. Give them also those guards at the Tomb, let them recount what they have seen, let them take money and lie too. Matthew 28:12 ...They too were added to the lie of the enemies: increased was the number of liars, that increased might be the reward of believers. Therefore they lied, in the multitude of Your power they lied: to confound liars You have appeared to men of truth, and You have appeared to those men of truth whom You have made men of truth.

8. Let Jews remain in their lies: to You, because in the multitude of Your power they lied, let there be done that which follows, Let every land worship You, and play to You, play to Your name, O Most Highest Psalm 65:4. A little before, Most Lowly, now Most Highest: Most Lowly in the hands of lying enemies; Most Highest above the head of praising Angels. O you Gentiles, O most distant nations, leave lying Jews, come confessing. Come ye, and see the works of the Lord: terrible in counsels above the sons of men Psalm 65:5. Son of Man indeed He too has been called, and verily Son of Man He became: very Son of God in the form of God; Philipians 2:6 very Son of Man in form of a servant: but do not judge of that form by the condition of others alike: terrible He is in counsels above the sons of men. Sons of men took counsel to crucify Christ, being crucified He blinded the crucifiers. What then have ye done, sons of men, by taking keen counsels against your Lord, in whom was hidden Majesty, and to sight shown weakness? You were taking counsels to destroy, He to blind and save; to blind proud men, to save humble men: but to blind those same proud men, to the end that, being blinded they might be humbled, being humbled might confess, having confessed might be enlightened. Terrible in counsels above the sons of men. Terrible indeed. Behold blindness in part to Israel has happened: Romans 11:25 behold the Jews, out of whom was born Christ, are without: behold the Gentiles, that were against Judæa, in Christ are within. Terrible in counsels above the sons of men.

9. Wherefore what has He done by the terror of His counsel? He has turned the sea into dry land. For this follows, That has turned the sea into dry land Psalm 65:6. A sea was the world, bitter with saltness, troubled with tempest, raging with waves of persecutions, sea it was: truly into dry land the sea has been turned, now there thirsts for sweet water the world that with salt water was filled. Who has done this? He that has turned the sea into dry land. Now the soul of all the Gentiles says what? My soul is as it were land without water to You. That has turned the sea into dry land. In the river they shall pass over on foot. Those same persons that have been turned into dry land, though they were before sea, in the river on foot shall pass over. What is the river? The river is all the mortality of the world. Observe a river: some things come and pass by, other things that are to pass by do succeed. Is it not thus with the water of a river, that from earth springs and flows? Every one that is born must needs give place to one going to be born: and all this order of things rolling along is a kind of river. Into this river let not the soul greedily throw herself, let her not throw herself, but let her stand still. And how shall she pass over the pleasures of things doomed to perish? Let her believe in Christ, and she will pass over on foot: she passes over with Him for Leader, on foot she passes over.

10. There we will be joyous in Him. O you Jews, of your own works boast ye: lay aside the pride of boasting of yourselves, take up the Grace of being joyous in Christ. For therein we will be joyous, but not in ourselves: there we will be joyous in Him. When shall we joy? When we shall have passed over the river on foot. Life everlasting is promised, resurrection is promised, there our flesh no longer shall be a river: for a river it is now, while it is mortality. Observe whether there stands still any age. Boys desire to grow up; and they know not how by succeeding years the span of their life is lessened. For years are not added to but taken from them as they grow: just as the water of a river always draws near, but from the source it withdraws. And boys desire to grow up that they may escape the thralldom of elders; behold they grow up, it comes to pass quickly, they arrive at youth: let them that have emerged from boyhood retain, if they are able, their youth: that too passes away. Old age succeeds: let even old age be everlasting; with death it is removed. Therefore a river there is of flesh that is born. This river of mortality, so that it does not by reason of concupiscence of things mortal undermine and carry him away, he easily passes over, that humbly, that is on foot, passes over, He being leader that first has passed over, that of the flood in the way even unto death has drunk, and therefore has lifted up the head. Passing over therefore on foot that river, that is,

easily passing over that mortality that glides along, there we will be joyous in Him. But now in what save in Him, or in the hope of Him? For even if we are joyous now, in hope we are joyous; but then in Him we shall be joyous. And now in Him, but through hope: but then face to face. 1 Corinthians 13:12 There we will be joyous in Him.

11. In whom? In Him that reigns in His virtue for everlasting Psalm 65:7. For what virtue have we and is it everlasting? If everlasting were our virtue, we should not have slipped, should not have fallen into sin, we should not have deserved penal mortality. He, of His good pleasure, took up that whereunto our desert threw us down. That reigns in His virtue for everlasting. Of Him partakers let us be made, in whose virtue we shall be strong, but He in His own. We enlightened, He a light enlightening: we, being turned away from Him, are in darkness; turned away from Himself He cannot be. With the heat of Him we are warmed; from whence withdrawing we had grown cold, to the Same drawing near again we are warmed. Therefore let us speak to Him that He may keep us in His virtue, because in Him we will be joyous that reigns in His virtue for everlasting.

12. But this thing is not granted to believing Jews alone....The eyes of Him do look upon the Gentiles. And what do we? The Jews will murmur; the Jews will say, what He has given to us, the same to them also; to us Gospel, to them Gospel; to us the Grace of Resurrection, and to them the Grace of Resurrection; does it profit us nothing that we have received the Law, and that in the justifications of the Law we have lived, and have kept the commandments of the fathers? Nothing will it avail? The same to them as to us. Let them not strive, let them not dispute. Let not them that are bitter be exalted in their own selves. O flesh miserable and wasting, are you not sinful? Why cries out your tongue? Let the conscience be listened to. For all men have sinned, and need the glory of God. Romans 3:23 Know yourself, human weakness. You received the Law, in order that a transgressor also of the Law you might be: Romans 5:20 for you have not kept and fulfilled that which you received. There has come to you because of the Law, not the justification which the Law enjoins, but the transgression which you have done. If therefore there has abounded sin, why do you envy Grace more abounding. Be not bitter, for let not them that are bitter be exalted in their own selves. He seems in a manner to have uttered a curse in Let not them that are bitter be exalted; yea, be they exalted, but not in themselves. Let them be humbled in themselves, exalted in Christ. For, he that humbles himself shall be exalted; and he that exalts himself shall be humbled. Matthew 23:12 Let not them that are bitter be exalted in their own selves.

13. Bless our God, you nations Psalm 65:8. Behold, there have been driven back they that are bitter, reckoning has been made with them: some have been converted, some have continued proud. Let not them terrify you that grudge the Gentiles Gospel Grace: now has come the Seed of Abraham, in whom are blessed all nations. Genesis 12:3 Bless ye Him in whom you are blessed, Bless our God, you nations: and hear ye the voice of His praise. Praise not yourselves, but praise Him. What is the voice of His praise? That by His Grace we are whatever of good we are. Who has set my Soul unto life Psalm 65:9 Behold the voice of his praise: Who has set my Soul unto life. Therefore in death she was: in death she was, in yourself. Thence it is that you ought not to have been exalted in yourselves. Therefore in death she was, in yourself: where will it be in life, save in Him that said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life? John 14:6 Just as to certain believers the Apostle says, You were sometime darkness, but now light in the Lord. Ephesians 5:8 ...And has not given unto motion my feet. He has set my Soul unto life, He guides the feet that they stumble not, be not moved and given unto motion; He makes us to live, He makes us to persevere even unto the end, in order that for everlasting we may live....

14. For you have proved us, O God; You have fired us as silver is fired Psalm 65:10. Have not fired us like hay, but like silver: by applying to us fire, You have not turned us into ashes, but You have washed off uncleanness, You have fired us, as silver is fired. And see in what manner God is angry against them, whose Soul He has set unto life. You have led us into a trap: not that we might be caught and die, but that we might be tried and delivered from it. You have laid tribulations upon our back. For having been to ill purpose lifted up, proud we were: having been to ill purpose lifted up, we were bowed down, in order that being bowed down, we should be lifted up for good. You have laid tribulations on our back: You have set men over our heads Psalm 65:11. All these things the Church has suffered in sundry and various persecutions: She has suffered this in Her individual members, even now does suffer it. For there is not one, that in this life could say that he was exempt from these trials. Therefore there are set even men over our heads: we endure those whom we would not, we suffer for our betters those whom we know to be worse. But if sins be wanting, a man is justly superior: but by how much there are more sins, by so much he is inferior. And it is a good thing to consider ourselves to be sinners, and thus endure men set over our heads: in order that we also to God may confess that deservedly we suffer. For why do you suffer with indignation that which He does who is just? You have laid tribulations upon our back: You have set men over our heads. God seems to be angry, when He does these things: fear not, for a Father He is, He is never so angry as to destroy. When ill you live, if He spares, He is more angry. In a word, these tribulations are the rods of Him correcting, lest there be a sentence from Him punishing....

15. We have passed through fire and water. Fire and water are both dangerous in this life. Certainly water seems to extinguish fire, and fire seems to dry up water. Thus also these are the trials, wherein abounds this life. Fire burns, water corrupts: both must be feared, both the burning of tribulation and the water of corruption. Whenever there is adversity, and anything which is called unhappiness in this world, there is as it were fire: whenever there is prosperity, and the world's plenty flows about one, there is as it were water. See that fire burn you not, nor water corrupt....Hasten not to the water: through fire pass over to the water, that you may pass over the water also. Therefore also in the mystic rites and in catechising and in exorcising, there is first used fire. For whence oftentimes do the unclean spirits cry out, I burn, if that is not fire? But after the fire of Exorcism we come to Baptism: so that from fire to water, from water unto refreshment. But as in the Sacraments, so it is in the temptations of this world: the straitness of fear draws near first, in place of fire; afterwards fear being removed, we ought to be afraid lest worldly happiness corrupt. But when the fire has not made you burst, and when you have not sunk in the water, but hast swum out; through discipline you pass over to rest, and passing over through fire and water, you are led forth into a place of refreshment. For of those things whereof the signs are in the Sacraments, there are the very realities in that perfection of life everlasting....But we are not torpid there, but we rest: nor though it be called heat, shall we be hot there, but we shall be fervent in spirit. Observe that same heat in another Psalm: nor is there any one that hides himself from the heat thereof. What says also the Apostle? In spirit fervent. Romans 12:11 Therefore, we have gone over through fire and water: and You have led us forth into a cool place.

16. Observe how not only concerning a cool place, but neither of that very fire to be desired he has been silent: I will enter into Your House in holocausts Psalm 65:13. What is a holocaust? A whole sacrifice burned up, but with fire divine. For a sacrifice is called a holocaust, when the whole is burned. One thing are the parts of sacrifices, another thing a holocaust: when the whole is burned and the whole consumed by fire divine, it is called a holocaust: when a part, a sacrifice. Every holocaust indeed is a sacrifice: but not every sacrifice a holocaust. Holocausts therefore he is promising, the Body of Christ is speaking, the Unity of Christ is speaking, I will enter into Your House in holocausts. All that is mine let Your fire consume, let

nothing of mine remain to me, let all be Yours. But this shall be in the Resurrection of just men, when both this corruptible shall be clad in incorruption, and this mortal shall be clad in immortality: then shall come to pass that which has been written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 1 Corinthians 15:54 Victory is, as it were, fire divine: when it swallows up our death also, it is a holocaust. There remains not anything mortal in the flesh, there remains not anything culpable in the spirit: the whole of mortal life shall be consumed, in order that in life everlasting it may be consummated, that from death we may be preserved in life. These therefore will be the holocausts. And what shall there be in the holocausts?

17. I will render to You my vows, which my lips have distinguished Psalm 65:14. What is the distinction in vows? This is the distinction, that yourself thou censure, Him thou praise: perceive yourself to be a creature, Him the Creator: yourself darkness, Him the Enlightener, to whom you should say, You shall light my lamp, O Lord my God, You shall enlighten my darkness. For whenever you shall have said, O soul, that from yourself you have light, you will not distinguish. If you will not distinguish, you will not render distinct vows. Render distinct vows, confess yourself changeable, Him unchangeable: confess yourself without Him to be nothing, but Himself without you to be perfect; yourself to need Him, but Him not to need you. Cry to Him, I have said to the Lord, My God are You, for my good things You need not. Now though God takes you to Him for a holocaust, He grows not, He is not increased, He is not richer, He becomes not better furnished: whatsoever He makes of you for your sake, is the better for you, not for Him that makes. If you distinguish these things, you render the vows to your God which your lips have distinguished.

18. And my mouth has spoken in my tribulation. How sweet oftentimes is tribulation, how necessary! In that case what has the mouth of the same spoken in his tribulation? Holocausts marrowed I will offer to You Psalm 65:15. What is marrowed? Within may I keep Your love, it shall not be on the surface, in my marrow it shall be that I love You. For there is nothing more inward than our marrow: the bones are more inward than the flesh, the marrow is more inward than those same bones. Whosoever therefore on the surface loves God, desires rather to please men, but having some other affection within, he offers not holocausts of marrow: but into whosoever marrow He looks, him He receives whole. With incense and rams. The rams are the rulers of the Church: the whole Body of Christ is speaking: this is the thing which he offers to God. Incense is what? Prayer. With incense and rams. For especially the rams do pray for the flocks. I will offer to You oxen with he-goats. Oxen we find treading out grain, and the same are offered to God. The Apostle has said, that of the preachers of the Gospel must be understood that which has been written, Of the ox treading out grain the mouth you shall not muzzle. Does God care for oxen? Therefore great are those rams, great the oxen. What of the rest, that perchance are conscious of certain sins, that perchance in the very road have slipped, and, having been wounded, by penitence are being healed? Shall they too continue, and to the holocausts shall they not belong? Let them not fear, he has added he-goats also. I will offer to You oxen with he-goats. By the very yoking are saved the he-goats; of themselves they have no strength, being yoked to bulls they are accepted. For they have made friends of the mammon of iniquity, that the same may receive them into everlasting tabernacles. Luke 16:9 Therefore those he-goats shall not be on the left, because they have made to themselves friends of the mammon of iniquity. But what he-goats shall be on the left? They to whom shall be said, I hungered, and you gave me not to eat: Matthew 25:42 not they that have redeemed their sins by almsdeeds.

19. Come ye, hear, and I will tell, all you that fear God Psalm 65:16. Let us come, let us hear, what he is going to tell, Come ye, hear, and I will tell. But to whom, Come ye, and hear? All you that fear God. If God ye fear not, I will not tell. It is not possible that it be told to any where the fear of God is not. Let the fear of God open the ears, that there may be something to enter in, and a way whereby may enter in that which I

am going to tell. But what is he going to tell? How great things He has done to my soul. Behold, he would tell: but what is he going to tell? Is it perchance how widely the earth is spread, how much the sky is extended, and how many are the stars, and what are the changes of sun and of moon? This creation fulfills its course: but they have very curiously sought it out, the Creator thereof have not known. Wisdom 13:1 This thing hear, this thing receive, O you that fear God, how great things He has done to my soul: if you will, to yours also. How great things He has done to my soul. To Him with my mouth I have cried Psalm 65:17. And this very thing, he says, has been done to his soul; that to Him with his mouth he should cry, has been done, he says, to his soul. Behold, brethren, Gentiles we were, even if not in ourselves, in our parents. And what says the Apostle? You know, when Gentiles you were, to idols without speech how ye went up, being led. 1 Corinthians 12:2 Let the Church now say, how great things He has done to my soul. To Him with my mouth I have cried. I a man to a stone was crying, to a deaf stock I was crying, to idols deaf and dumb I was speaking: now the image of God has been turned to the Creator thereof. I that was saying to a stock, My father you are; and to a stone, You have begotten me: Jeremiah 2:27 now say, Our Father, which art in Heaven. Matthew 6:9 ...To Him with my mouth I have cried, and I have exalted Him under my tongue. See how in secret He would be uncorrupt that offers marrowed holocausts. This do ye, brethren, this imitate, so that you may say, Come ye, see how great things He has done to my soul. For all those things of which he tells, by His Grace are done in our soul. See the other things of which he speaks.

20. If I have beheld iniquity in my heart, may not the Lord hearken Psalm 65:18. Consider now, brethren, how easily, how daily men blushing for fear of men do censure iniquities; He has done ill, He has done basely, a villain the fellow is: this perchance for man's sake he says. See whether you behold no iniquity in your heart, whether perchance that which you censure in another, you are meditating to do, and therefore against him dost exclaim, not because he has done it, but because he has been found out. Return to yourself, within be to yourself a judge. Behold in your hid chamber, in the very inmost recess of the heart, where thou and He that sees are alone, there let iniquity be displeasing to you, in order that you may be pleasing to God. Do not regard it, that is, do not love it, but rather despise it, that is, condemn it, and turn away from it. Whatever pleasing thing it has promised to allure you to sin; whatever grievous thing it has threatened, to drive you on to evil doing; all is nought, all passes away: it is worthy to be despised, in order that it may be trampled upon; not to be eyed lest it be accepted.. ..

21. Therefore God has hearkened to me Psalm 65:19. Because I have not beheld iniquity in my heart. And He has listened to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be my God, that has not thrust away my supplication and His mercy from me Psalm 65:20. Gather the sense from that place, where he says, Come ye, hear, and I will tell you, all you that fear God, how great things He has done to my soul: he has both said the words which you have heard, and at the end thus he has concluded: Blessed be my God, that has not thrust away my supplication and His mercy from me. For thus there arrives at the Resurrection he that speaks, where already we also are by hope: yea both it is we ourselves, and this voice is ours. So long therefore as here we are, this let us ask of God, that He thrust not from us our supplication, and His mercy, that is, that we pray continually, and He continually pity. For many become feeble in praying, and in the newness of their own conversion pray fervently, afterwards feebly, afterwards coldly, afterwards negligently: as if they have become secure. The foe watches: you sleep. The Lord Himself has given commandment in the Gospel, how it behooves men always to pray and not to faint. And he gives a comparison from that unjust judge, who neither feared God, nor regarded man, whom that widow daily importuned to hear her; and he yielded for weariness, that was not influenced by pity: and the naughty judge says to himself, Though neither God I fear, nor men I regard, even because of the weariness which

this widow daily puts upon me, I will hear her cause, and will avenge her. And the Lord says, If a naughty judge has done this, shall not your Father avenge His chosen, that to Him do cry day and night? Yea, I say unto you, He shall make judgment of them speedily. Therefore let us not faint in prayer. Though He puts off what He is going to grant, He puts it not away: being secure of His promise, let us not faint in praying, and this is by His goodness. Therefore he has said, Blessed is my God, that has not thrust away my supplication and His mercy from me. When you have seen your supplication not thrust away from you, be secure, that His mercy has not been thrust away from you.

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