

1 Corinthians 5:9-11

by St. John Chrysostom

Paul emphasizes the importance of separation from sinners, judgment, and repentance, and calls believers to holiness and accountability within the church.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 5:11-12, 1 Corinthians 6:1, 1 Corinthians 6:3-6, 1 Corinthians 6:8, 1 Corinthians 6:11

Topics: "Christian Community", "Personal Holiness"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the importance of not associating with those who engage in sinful behaviors, especially within the Christian community, emphasizing the need to maintain purity and righteousness. He explains that while it may seem impossible to completely avoid sinners in the world, it is crucial to distance oneself from fellow believers who persist in ungodly ways. Chrysostom highlights the need for self-examination and the avoidance of sins like fornication, covetousness, idolatry, drunkenness, reviling, and extortion. He encourages believers to seek justice within the Christian community and not to rely on worldly courts for dispute resolution, reminding them of the ultimate judgment by God. Chrysostom urges Christians to endure wrongs, forgive those who harm them, and trust in God's justice and rewards, emphasizing the eternal blessings that come from bearing injustices with grace and praying for those who wrong them.

Transcript

I wrote to you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world: but now I write unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a drunkard, or a reviler, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

For since he had said, You have not rather mourned, that such an one should be taken away; and, Purge out the old leaven; and it was likely that they would surmise it to be their duty to avoid all fornicators: for if he that has sinned imparts some of his own mischief to those who have not sinned, much more is it meet to keep one's self away from those without: (for if one ought not to spare a friend on account of such mischief arising from him, much less any others;) and under this impression, it was probable that they would separate themselves from the fornicators among the Greeks also, and the matter thus turning out impossible, they would have taken it more to heart: he used this mode of correction, saying, I wrote to you to have no company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world: using the word altogether, as if it were an acknowledged thing. For that they might not think that he charged not this upon

them as being rather imperfect, and should attempt to do it under the erroneous impression that they were perfect, he shows that this were even impossible to be done, though they wished it ever so much. For it would be necessary to seek another world. Wherefore he added, For you must needs then go out of the world. Do you see that he is no hard master, and that in his legislation he constantly regards not only what may be done, but also what may be easily done. For how is it possible, says he, for a man having care of a house and children, and engaged in the affairs of the city, or who is an artisan or a soldier, (the greater part of mankind being Greeks,) to avoid the unclean who are to be found every where? For by the fornicators of the world, he means those who are among the Greeks. But now I write unto you, If any brother be of this kind, with such an one no not to eat. Here also he glances at others who were living in wickedness.

But how can one that is a brother be an idolater? As was the case once in regard to the Samaritans who chose piety but by halves. And besides he is laying down his ground beforehand for the discourse concerning things offered in sacrifice to idols, which after this he intends to handle.

Or covetous. For with these also he enters into conflict. Wherefore he said also, Why not rather take wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? Nay, you yourselves do wrong and defraud.

Or a drunkard. For this also he lays to their charge further on; as when he says, One is hungry and another is drunken: and, meats for the belly and the belly for meats.

Or a reviler, or an extortioner: for these too he had rebuked before.

2. Next he adds also the reason why he forbids them not to mix with heathens of that character, implying that it is not only impossible, but also superfluous.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13

For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Calling the Christians and the Greeks, those within and those without, as also he says elsewhere, 1 Timothy 3:7 He must also have a good report of them that are without. And in the Epistle to the Thessalonians he speaks the same language, saying, 2 Thessalonians 3:14 Have no intercourse with him to the end that he may be put to shame. And, Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Here, however, he does not add the reason. Why? Because in the other case he wished to soothe them, but in this, not so. For the fault in this case and in that was not the same, but in the Thessalonians it was less. For there he is reproving indolence; but here fornication and other most grievous sins. And if any one wished to go over to the Greeks, he hinders not him from eating with such persons; this too for the same reason. So also do we act; for our children and our brethren we leave nothing undone, but of strangers we do not make much account. How then? Did not Paul care for them that were without as well? Yes, he cared for them; but it was not till after they received the Gospel and he had made them subject to the doctrine of Christ, that he laid down laws for them. But so long as they despised, it was superfluous to speak the precepts of Christ to those who knew not Christ Himself.

Do not ye judge them that are within, whereas them that are without, God judges? For since he had said, What have I to do with judging those without; lest any one should think that these were left unpunished, there is another tribunal which he sets over them, and that a fearful one. And this he said, both to terrify those, and to console these; intimating also that this punishment which is for a season snatches them away from that which is undying and perpetual: which also he has plainly declared elsewhere, saying, 1

Corinthians 11:32 But now being judged, we are chastened, that we should not be condemned with the world.

3. Put away from among yourselves the wicked person. He used an expression found in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 17:7 partly hinting that they too will be very great gainers, in being freed as it were from some grievous plague; and partly to show that this kind of thing is no innovation, but even from the beginning it seemed good to the legislator that such as these should be cut off. But in that instance it was done with more severity, in this with more gentleness. On which account one might reasonably question, why in that case he conceded that the sinner should be severely punished and stoned, but in the present instance not so; rather he leads him to repentance. Why then were the lines drawn in the former instance one way and in the latter another? For these two causes: one, because these were led into a greater trial and needed greater long-suffering; the other and truer one, because these by their impunity were more easily to be corrected, coming as they might to repentance; but the others were likely to go on to greater wickedness. For if when they saw the first undergoing punishment they persisted in the same things, had none at all been punished, much more would this have been their feeling. For which reason in that dispensation death is immediately inflicted upon the adulterer and the manslayer; but in this, if through repentance they are absolved, they have escaped the punishment. However, both here one may see some instances of heavier punishment, and in the Old Testament some less severe, in order that it may be signified in every way that the covenants are akin to each other, and of one and the same lawgiver: and you may see the punishment following immediately both in that covenant and in this, and in both often after a long interval. Nay, and oftentimes not even after a long interval, repentance alone being taken as satisfaction by the Almighty. Thus in the Old Testament, David, who had committed adultery and murder, was saved by means of repentance; and in the New, Ananias, who withdrew but a small portion of the price of the land, perished together with his wife. Now if these instances are more frequent in the Old Testament, and those of the contrary kind in the New, the difference of the persons produces the difference in the treatment adopted in such matters.

1 Corinthians 6:1-2

4. Dare any one of you, having a matter against his brother, (ἵνα, ἂν, ἵνα ἂν ἴμην ἵνα ἂν, rec. text ἵνα, ἂν ἵνα ἂν ἴμην ἵνα ἂν) go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?

Here also he again makes his complaint upon acknowledged grounds; for in that other place he says, It is actually reported that there is fornication among you. And in this place, Dare any one of you? From the very first outset giving signs of his anger, and implying that the thing spoken of comes of a daring and lawless spirit.

Now wherefore did he bring in by the way that discourse about covetousness and about the duty of not going to law without the Church? In fulfilment of his own rule. For it is a custom with him to set to right things as they fall in his way; just as when speaking about the tables which they used in common, he launched out into the discourse about the mysteries. So here, you see, since he had made mention of covetous brethren, burning with anxiety to correct those in sin, he brooks not exactly to observe order; but he again corrects the sin which had been introduced out of the regular course, and so returns to the former subject.

Let us hear then what he also says about this. Dare any of you, having a matter, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? For a while, he employs those personal terms to expose, discredit,

and blame their proceedings: nor does he quite from the beginning subvert the custom of seeking judgment before the believers: but when he had stricken them down by many words, then he even takes away entirely all going to law. For in the first place, says he, if one must go to law it were wrong to do so before the unrighteous. But you ought not to go to law at all. This however he adds afterwards. For the present he thoroughly sifts the former subject, namely, that they should not submit matters to external arbitration. For, says he, how can it be otherwise than absurd that one who is at variance (ἰσχυρισμῶν... ἰσχυρισμῶν) with his friend should take his enemy to be a reconciler between them? And how can you avoid feeling shame and blushing when a Greek sits to judge a Christian? And if about private matters it is not right to go to law before Greeks, how shall we submit to their decisions about other things of greater importance?

Observe, moreover, how he speaks. He says not, Before the unbelievers, but, Before the unrighteous; using the expression of which he had most particular need for the matter before him, in order to deter and keep them away. For see that his discourse was about going to law, and those who are engaged in suits seek for nothing so much as that the judges should feel great interest about what is just; he takes this as a ground of dissuasion, all but saying, Where are you going? What are you doing, O man, bringing on yourself the contrary to what you wish, and in order to obtain justice committing yourself to unjust men? And because it would have been intolerable to be told at once not to go to law, he did not immediately add this, but only changed the judges, bringing the party engaged in the trial from without into the Church.

5. Then, since it seemed easily open to contempt, I mean our being judged by those who were within, and especially at that time, (for they were not perhaps competent to comprehend a point, nor were they such as the heathen judges, well skilled in laws and rhetoric, inasmuch as the greater part of them were uneducated men,) mark how he makes them worthy of credit, first calling them Saints.

But seeing that this bore witness to purity of life, and not to accuracy in hearing a case, observe how he orderly handles this part also, saying thus, Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? How then can you who art in your day to judge them, endure to be judged by them now? They will not indeed judge, taking their seat in person and demanding account, yet they shall condemn. This at least he plainly said; And if the world is judged in you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? He says not by you, but in you: just as when He said, Matthew 12:42 The queen of the south shall rise up and condemn this generation: and, The men of Nineveh shall arise and condemn this generation. For when beholding the same sun and sharing all the same things, we shall be found believers but they unbelievers, they will not be able to take refuge in ignorance. For we shall accuse them, simply by the things which we have done. And many such ways of judgment one will find there.

Then, that no one should think he speaks about other persons, mark how he generalizes his speech. And if the world is judged in you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

The thing is a disgrace to you, he says, and an unspeakable reproach. For since it was likely that they would be out of countenance at being judged by those that were within; nay, says he, on the contrary, the disgrace is when you are judged by those without: for those are the very small controversies, not these.

1 Corinthians 6:3

Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things which pertain to this life?

Some say that here the priests are hinted at, but away with this. His speech is about demons. For had he been speaking about corrupt priests, he would have meant them above when he said, the world is judged in you: (for the Scripture is wont to call evil men also The world:) and he would not have said the same thing twice, nor would he, as if he was saying something of greater consequence, have put it down afterwards. But he speaks concerning those angels about whom Christ says, Depart ye into the fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:41 And Paul, his angels fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness. 2 Corinthians 11:15 For when the very incorporeal powers shall be found inferior to us who are clothed with flesh, they shall suffer heavier punishment.

But if some should still contend that he speaks of priests, What sort of priests? let us ask. Those whose walk in life has been worldly, of course. In what sense then does he say, We shall judge angels, much more things that relate to this life? He mentions the angels, in contradistinction to things relating to this life: likely enough; for they are removed from the need of these things, because of the superior excellence of their nature.

1 Corinthians 6:4

6. If then you have to judge things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are of no account in the Church.

Wishing to instruct us as forcibly as possible that they ought not to commit themselves to those without, whatsoever the matter may be; having raised what seemed to be an objection, he answers it in the first instance. For what he says is something like this: Perhaps some one will say, No one among you is wise, nor competent to pass sentence; all are contemptible. Now what follows? Even though none be wise, says he, I bid you entrust things to those who are of least weight.

1 Corinthians 6:5

But this I say to move you to shame. These are the words of one exposing their objection as being an idle pretext: and therefore he adds, Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, no not even one? Is the scarcity, says he, so great? So great the want of sensible persons among you? And what he subjoins strikes even still harder. For having said, Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one? he adds, who shall be able to judge in the case of his brother. For when brother goes to law with brother, there is never any need of understanding and talent in the person who is mediating in the cause, the feeling and relationship contributing greatly to the settlement of such a quarrel.

But brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers. Do you observe with what effect he disparaged the judges at first by calling them unrighteous; whereas here, to move shame, he calls them Unbelievers? For surely it is extremely disgraceful if the priest could not be the author of reconciliation even among brethren, but recourse must be had to those without. So that when he said, those who are of no account, his chief meaning was not (ὅτι ἡ ἐκκλησία ἡμετέρα οὐκ ἔστιν ἡγεμονία τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας οὐκ ἔστιν ἡγεμονία τοῦ κόσμου,) that the Church's outcasts should be appointed as judges, but to find fault with them. For that it was proper to make reference to those who were able to decide, he has shown by saying, Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one? And with great impressiveness he stops their mouths, and says, Even though there were not a single wise man, the hearing ought to have been left to you who are unwise rather than that those without should judge. For what else can it be than absurd, that whereas on a quarrel arising in a house we call in no one from without and feel ashamed if news get abroad among strangers of what is going on within doors; where the Church is, the treasure of the unutterable Mysteries, there all things

should be published without?

1 Corinthians 6:6

But brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers.

The charge is twofold; both that he goes to law, and before the unbelievers. For if even the thing by itself, To go to law with a brother, be a fault, to do it also before aliens, what pardon does it admit of?

1 Corinthians 6:7

7. Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that you have lawsuits one with another.

Do you see for what place he reserved this point? And how he has cleared the discussion of it in good time? For I talk not yet, says he, which injures, or which is injured. Thus far, the act itself of going to law brings each party under his censure, and in that respect one is not at all better than another. But whether one go to law justly or unjustly, that is quite another subject. Say not then, which did the wrong? For on this ground I at once condemn you, even for the act of going to law.

Now if being unable to bear a wrong-doer be a fault, what accusation can come up to the actual wrong? Why not rather take wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?

1 Corinthians 6:8-10

Nay, you yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

Again, it is a twofold crime, perhaps even threefold or fourfold. One, not to know how to bear being wronged. Another, actually to do wrong. A third, to commit the settlement of these matters even unto the unjust. And yet a fourth, that it should be so done to a brother. For men's offenses are not judged by the same rule, when they are committed against any chance person, and towards one's own member. For it must be a greater degree of recklessness to venture upon that. In the other case, the nature of the thing is alone trampled on; but in this, the quality of the person also.

8. Having thus, you see, abashed them from arguments on general principles, and before that, from the rewards proposed ; he shuts up the exhortation with a threat, making his speech more peremptory, and saying thus, 1 Corinthians 6:9 Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, 1 Corinthians 6:10 nor covetous, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. What do you say? When discoursing about covetous persons, have you brought in upon us so vast a crowd of lawless men? Yes, says he, but in doing this, I am not confusing my discourse, but going on in regular order. For as when discoursing about the unclean he made mention of all together; so again, on mentioning the covetous he brings forward all, thus making his rebukes familiar to those who have such things on their conscience. For the continual mention of the punishment laid up for others makes the reproof easy to be received, when it comes into conflict with our own sins. And so in the present instance he utters his threat, not at all as being conscious of their doing such things, nor as calling them to account, a thing which has special force to hold the hearer and keep him from starting off; namely, the discourse having no respect unto him, but being spoken indefinitely and so wounding his conscience secretly.

Be not deceived. Here he glances at certain who maintain (what indeed most men assert now) that God being good and kind to man, takes not vengeance upon our misdeeds: Let us not then be afraid. For never will he exact justice of any one for any thing. And it is on account of these that he says, Be not deceived. For it belongs to the extreme of error and delusion, after depending on good to meet with the contrary; and to surmise such things about God as even in man no one would think of. Wherefore says the Prophet in His person, Psalm 49:21 You have conceived iniquity, that I shall be like you: I will reprove you and set before your face your iniquities. And Paul here, Be not deceived; neither fornicators, (he puts first the one that was already condemned,) nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor drunkards, nor revilers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Many have attacked this place as extremely severe, since he places the drunkard and the reviler with the adulterer and the abominable and the abuser of himself with mankind. And yet the offenses are not equal: how then is the award of punishment the same? What shall we say then? First, that drunkenness is no small thing nor reviling, seeing that Christ Himself delivered over to hell him that called his brother Fool. And often that sin has brought forth death. Again, the Jewish people too committed the greatest of their sins through drunkenness. In the next place, it is not of punishment that he is so far discoursing, but of exclusion from the kingdom. Now from the kingdom both one and the other are equally thrust out; but whether in hell they will find any difference, it belongs not to this present occasion to enquire. For that subject is not before us just now.

1 Corinthians 6:11

9. And such were some of you: but you were washed, but you were sanctified.

In a way to abash them exceedingly, he adds this: as if he said, Consider from what evils God delivered us; how great an experiment and demonstration of loving-kindness He afforded us! He did not limit His redemption to mere deliverance, but greatly extended the benefit: for He also made you clean. Was this then all? Nay: but He also sanctified. Nor even is this all: He also justified. Yet even bare deliverance from our sins were a great gift: but now He also filled you with countless blessing. And this He has done, In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; not in this name or in that: yea also, In the Spirit of our God.

Knowing therefore these things, beloved, and bearing in mind the greatness of the blessing which has been wrought, let us both continue to live soberly, being pure from all things that have been enumerated; and let us avoid the tribunals which are in the forums of the Gentiles; and the noble birth which God has freely given us, the same let us preserve to the end. For think how full of shame it is that a Greek should take his seat and deal out justice to you.

But you will say, what if he that is within judge contrary to the law? Why should he? Tell me. For I would know by what kind of laws the Greek administers justice, and by what the Christian? Is it not quite plain that the laws of men are the rule of the Greek, but those of God, of the Christian? Surely then with the latter there is greater chance of justice, seeing that these laws are even sent from heaven. For in regard to those without, besides what has been said, there are many other things also to suspect; talent in speakers and corruption in magistrates and many other things which are the ruin of justice. But with us, nothing of this sort.

What then, you will say, if the adversary be one in high place? Well, for this reason more than all one ought to go to law in Christian courts: for in the courts without he will get the better of you at all events. But what if he acquiesce not, but both despise those within and forcibly drag the course without? Better were it

to submit willingly to what you are likely to endure by compulsion, and not go to law, that you may have also a reward. For, Matthew 5:40 If any one will go to law with you, and take away your coat, you shall let him have your cloak also: and, Matthew 5:25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are with him in the way. And why need I speak of our rules? For even the pleaders in the heathen courts very often tell us this, saying, it were better to make up matters out of court. But, O wealth, or rather, O the absurd love of wealth! It subverts all things and casts them down; and all things are to the many an idle tale and fables because of money! Now that those who give trouble to courts of laws should be worldly men is no marvel: but that many of those who have bid farewell to the world should do the very same, this is a thing from which all pardon is cut off. For if you choose to see how far you should keep from this sort of need, I mean that of the tribunals, by rule of the Scripture, and to learn for whom the laws are appointed, hear what Paul says; 1 Timothy 1:9 For a righteous man law is not made, but for the lawless, and unruly. And if he says these things about the Mosaic Law, much more about the laws of the heathen.

10. Now then, if you commit injustice, it is plain that you cannot be righteous: but if you are injured and bear it, (for this is a special mark of a righteous man,) you have no need of the laws which are without. How then, say you, shall I be able to bear it when injured? And yet Christ has commanded something even more than this. For not only has he commanded you when injured to bear it, but even to give abundantly more to the wrong-doer; and in your zeal for suffering ill to surpass his eagerness for doing it. For he said not, to him that will sue you at law, and take away your coat, give your coat, but, together with that give also your cloak. But I bid you overcome him, says He, by suffering, not by doing, evil: for this is the certain and splendid victory. Wherefore also Paul goes on to say, Now then it is altogether a defect in (ἀνὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἰσχυρίαν rec. vers. a fault.) you that you have lawsuits one with another. And, Wherefore do ye not rather take wrong? For that the injured person overcomes, rather than he who cannot endure being injured, this I will make evident to you. He that cannot endure injury, though he force the other into court and gain the verdict, yet is he then most of all defeated. For that which he would not, he has suffered; in that the adversary has compelled him both to feel pain and to go to law. For what is it to the point that you have prevailed? And what, that you have recovered all the money? You have in the meanwhile borne what you did not desire, having been compelled to decide the matter by law. But if you endure the injustice, you overcome; deprived indeed of the money, but not at all of the victory which is annexed to such self-command. For the other had no power to oblige you to do what you did not like.

And to show that this is true; tell me, which conquered at the dunghill? Which was defeated? Job who was stripped of all, or the devil who stripped him of all? Evidently the devil who stripped him of all. Whom do we admire for the victory, the devil that smote, or Job that was smitten? Clearly, Job. And yet he could not retain his perishing wealth nor save his children. Why speak I of riches and children? He could not insure to himself bodily health. Yet nevertheless this is the conqueror, he that lost all that he had. His riches indeed he could not keep; but his piety he kept with all strictness. But his children when perishing he could not help. And what then? Since what happened both made them more glorious, and besides in this way he protected himself against the spiteful usage. Now had he not have suffered ill and been wronged of the devil, he would not have gained that signal victory. Had it been an evil thing to suffer wrong, God would not have enjoined it upon us: for God enjoins not evil things. What, know ye not that He is the God of Glory? That it could not be His will to encompass us with shame and ridicule and loss, but to introduce (ἐν ἡμετέροις ἀσχημίας καὶ ἂν ἡμεῖς ἴδωμεν) us to the contrary of these? Therefore He commands us to suffer wrong, and does all to withdraw us from worldly things, and to convince us what is glory, and what shame; what loss, and what gain.

But it is hard to suffer wrong and be spitefully entreated. Nay, O man, it is not, it is not hard. How long will your heart be fluttering about things present? For God, you may be sure, would not have commanded this, had it been hard. Just consider. The wrong-doer goes his way with the money, but with an evil conscience besides: the receiver of the wrong, defrauded indeed of some money, but enriched with confidence towards God; an acquisition more valuable than countless treasures.

11. Knowing these things, therefore, let us of our free choice go on strict principles, and not be like the unwise, who think that they are then not wronged, when their suffering wrong is the result of a trial. But, quite on the contrary, that is the greatest harm; and so in every case when we exercise self-restraint in these matters, not willingly, but after being worsted in that other quarter. For it is no advantage that a man defeated in a trial endures it; for it becomes thenceforth a matter of necessity. What then is the splendid victory? When you look down on it: when you refuse to go to law.

How say you? Have I been stripped of every thing, says one, and do you bid me keep silent? Have I been shamefully used, and do you exhort me to bear it meekly? And how shall I be able? Nay, but it is most easy if you will look up unto heaven; if you will behold the beauty that is in sight; and whither God has promised to receive you, if you bear wrong nobly. Do this then; and looking up unto the heaven, think that you are made like Him that sits there upon the Cherubim. For He also was injured and He bore it; He was reproached and avenged not Himself; and was beaten, yet He asserted not His cause. Nay, He made return, in the contrary kind, to those who did such things, even in benefits without number; and He commanded us to be imitators of Him. Consider that you came naked out of your mother's womb, and that naked both you and he that has done you wrong shall depart; rather, he for his part, with innumerable wounds, breeding worms. Consider that things present are but for a season; count over the tombs of your ancestors; acquaint yourself accurately with past events; and you shall see that the wrong-doer has made you stronger. For his own passion he has aggravated, his covetousness I mean; but yours, he has alleviated, taking away the food of the wild beast. And besides all this, he has set you free from cares, agony, envy, informers, trouble, worry, perpetual fear; and the foul mass of evils he has heaped upon his own head.

What then, says one, if I have to struggle with hunger? You endure this with Paul, who says, 1 Corinthians 4:10 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked. But he did it, you will say, for God's sake: do it also for God's sake. For when you abstain from avenging, you do so for God's sake.

But he that wronged me, takes his pleasure with the wealthy. Nay, rather with the devil. But be you crowned with Paul.

Therefore fear not hunger, for Proverbs 10:3 the Lord will not kill with hunger the souls of the righteous. And again, another says, Psalm 55:23 Cast upon the Lord your care, and He will nourish you. For if the sparrows of the field are nourished by Him, how shall He not nourish you? Now let us not be of little faith nor of little soul, O my beloved! For He who has promised the kingdom of heaven and such great blessings, how shall He not give things present? Let us not covet superfluous things, but let us keep to a sufficiency, and we shall always be rich. Let shelter be what we seek and food, and we shall obtain all things; both these, and such as are far greater.

But if you are still grieving and bowing down, I should like to show you the soul of the wrongdoer after his victory, how it has become ashes. For truly sin is that kind of thing: while one commits it, it affords a certain pleasure; but when it is finished, then the trifling pleasure is gone, one knows not how, and in its

place comes dejection. And this is our feeling when we do hurt to any: afterwards, at any rate, we condemn ourselves. So also when we over-reach we have pleasure; but afterwards we are stung by conscience. Do you see in any one's possession some poor man's home? Weep not for him that is spoiled, but for the spoiler: for he has not inflicted, but sustained an evil. For he robbed the other of things present; but himself he cast out of the blessings which cannot be uttered. For if he who gives not to the poor shall go away into hell; what shall he suffer who takes the goods of the poor?

Yet, says one, where is the gain, if I suffer ill? Indeed, the gain is great. For not of the punishment of him that has done you harm does God frame a compensation for you: since that would be no great thing. For what great good is it, if I suffer ill and he suffer ill? And yet I know of many, who consider this the greatest comfort, and who think they have got all back again, when they see those who had insulted them undergoing punishment. But God does not limit His recompense to this.

Would you then desire to know in earnest how great are the blessings which await you? He opens for you the whole heaven; He makes you a fellow-citizen with the Saints; He fits you to bear a part in their choir: from sins He absolves; with righteousness He crowns. For if such as forgive offenders shall obtain forgiveness, those who not only forgive but who also give largely to boot, what blessing shall they not inherit?

Therefore, bear it not with a poor spirit, but even pray for him that injured you. It is for yourself that you do this. Has he taken your money? Well: he took your sins too: which was the case with Naaman and Gehazi. How much wealth would you not give to have your iniquities forgiven you? This, believe me, is the case now. For if you endure nobly and curse not, you have bound on you a glorious crown. It is not my word, but you have heard Christ speaking, Pray for those that despitefully use you. And consider the reward how great! That ye may be like your Father which is in the heavens. So then you have been deprived of nothing, yea, you have been a gainer: you have received no wrongs, rather you have been crowned; in that you have become better disciplined in soul; are made like to God; are set free from the care of money; are made possessor of the kingdom of heaven.

All these things therefore taking into account, let us restrain ourselves in injuries, beloved, in order that we may both be freed from the tumult of this present life, and cast out all unprofitable sadness of spirit, and may obtain the joy to come; through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power, honor, now, henceforth, and for ever and ever. Amen.

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