

Hebrews 10:19-25

by St. John Chrysostom

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having boldness to enter the holiest through the blood of Jesus, drawing near with a true heart, and considering one another to provoke unto love and good works.

Scripture: Proverbs 17:17, Matthew 5:44, Matthew 18:20, Romans 13:11, 1 Corinthians 13:5, Philippians 4:5, Hebrews 5:6, Hebrews 7:16, Hebrews 7:19, Hebrews 8:13, Hebrews 9:11-12, Hebrews 10:5

Topics: "Faith Assurance", "Virtuous Living"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the significance of entering the holiest through the blood of Jesus, emphasizing the new and living way He has consecrated for believers. He encourages drawing near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, and holding fast to hope without wavering. Chrysostom highlights the importance of assembling together to provoke love and good works, urging believers to consider one another and strive for virtuous living. He stresses the power of love in fulfilling the law, urging believers to love even their enemies as a pathway to virtue and becoming more like God.

Transcript

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us, through the Veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering.

1. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us. Having shown the difference of the High Priest, and of the sacrifices, and of the tabernacle, and of the Covenant, and of the promise, and that the difference is great, since those are temporal, but these eternal, those near to vanishing away, these permanent, those powerless, these perfect, those figures, these reality, for (he says) not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. Hebrews 7:16 And You are a Priest forever. Hebrews 5:6 Behold the continuance of the Priest. And concerning the Covenant, That (he says) is old (for that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away Hebrews 8:13), but this is new; and has remission of sins, while that [has] nothing of the kind: for (he says) the Law made nothing perfect. Hebrews 7:19 And again, sacrifice and offering You would not. Hebrews 10:5 That is made with hands, while this is not made with hands Hebrews 9:11: that has the blood of goats Hebrews 9:12, this of the

Lord; that has the Priest standing, this sitting. Since therefore all those are inferior and these greater, therefore he says, Having therefore, brethren, boldness.

2. Boldness: from whence? As sins (he means) produce shame, so the having all things forgiven us, and being made fellow-heirs, and enjoying so great Love, [produces] boldness.

For the entrance into the holiest. What does he mean here by entrance? Heaven, and the access to spiritual things.

Which he has inaugurated, that is, which He prepared, and which He began; for the beginning of using is thenceforth called the inaugurating; which He prepared (he means) and by which He Himself passed.

A new and living way. Here He expresses the full assurance of hope. New, he says. He is anxious to show that we have all things greater; since now the gates of Heaven have been opened, which was not done even for Abraham. A new and living way, he says, for the first was a way of death, leading to Hades, but this of life. And yet he did not say, of life, but called it living, (the ordinances, that is,) that which abides.

Through the veil (he says) of His flesh. For this flesh first cut that way, by this He inaugurated it [the way] by which He walked. And with good reason did he call [the flesh] a veil. For when it was lifted up on high, then the things in heaven appeared.

Let us draw near (he says) with a true heart. To what should we draw near? To the holy things, the faith, the spiritual service. With a true heart, in full assurance of faith, since nothing is seen; neither the priest henceforward, nor the sacrifice, nor the altar. And yet neither was that priest visible, but stood within, and they all without, the whole people. But here not only has this taken place, that the priest has entered into the holy of holies, but that we also enter in. Therefore he says, in full assurance of faith. For it is possible for the doubter to believe in one way, as there are even now many who say, that of some there is a resurrection and of others not. But this is not faith. In full assurance of faith (he says); for we ought to believe as concerning things that we see, nay, even much more; for here it is possible to be deceived in the things that are seen, but there not: here we trust to the senses, but there to the Spirit.

Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. He shows that not faith only, but a virtuous life also is required, and the consciousness to ourselves of nothing evil. Since the holy of holies does not receive with full assurance those who are not thus disposed. For they are holy, and the holy of holies; but here no profane person enters. They were sprinkled as to the body, we as to the conscience, so that we may even now be sprinkled over with virtue itself. And having our body washed with pure water. Here he speaks of the Washing, which no longer cleanses the bodies, but the soul.

For He is faithful that promised. That promised what? That we are to depart there and enter into the kingdom. Be then in nothing over-curious, nor demand reasonings. Our [religion] needs faith.

Hebrews 10:24-25

3. And (he says) let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching. And again in other places, The Lord is at hand; be careful for nothing. Philippians 4:5-6 For now is our salvation nearer: Henceforth the time is short. Romans 13:11

What is, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together? 1 Corinthians 7:29 He knew that much strength arises from being together and assembling together. For where two or three (it is said) are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them Matthew 18:20; and again, That they may be One, as we also are John 17:11; and, They had all one heart and [one] soul. Acts 4:32 And not this only, but also because love is increased by the gathering [of ourselves] together; and love being increased, of necessity the things of God must follow also. And earnest prayer (it is said) was made by the people. Acts 12:5 As the manner of some is. Here he not only exhorted, but also blamed [them].

And let us consider one another, he says, to provoke unto love and to good works. He knew that this also arises from gathering together. For as iron sharpens iron Proverbs 17:17, so also association increases love. For if a stone rubbed against a stone sends forth fire, how much more soul mingled with soul! But not unto emulation (he says) but unto the sharpening of love. What is unto the sharpening of love? Unto the loving and being loved more. And of good works; that so they might acquire zeal. For if doing has greater force for instruction than speaking, you also have in your number many teachers, who effect this by their deeds.

What is let us draw near with a true heart? That is, without hypocrisy; for woe be to a fearful heart, and faint hands Sirach 2:12: let there be (he means) no falsehood among us; let us not say one thing and think another; for this is falsehood; neither let us be fainthearted, for this is not [a mark] of a true heart. Faintheartedness comes from not believing. But how shall this be? If we fully assure ourselves through faith.

Having our hearts sprinkled: why did he not say having been purified? [Because] he wished to point out the difference of the sprinklings: the one he says is of God, the other our own. For the washing and sprinkling the conscience is of God; but the drawing near with truth and in full assurance of faith is our own. Then he also gives strength to their faith from the truth of Him that promised.

What is and having our bodies washed with pure water? With water which makes pure; or which has no blood.

Then he adds the perfect thing, love. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, which some (he says) do, and divide the assemblies. For a brother helped by a brother is as a strong city. Proverbs 18:19, Septuagint

But let us consider one another to provoke unto love. What is, let us consider one another? For instance if any be virtuous, let us imitate him, let us look on him so as to love and to be loved. For from Love good works proceed. For the assembling is a great good: since it makes love more warm; and out of love all good things arise. For nothing is good which is not done through love.

4. This then let us confirm towards each other. For love is the fulfilling of the law. Romans 13:10 We have no need of labors or of sweatings if we love one another. It is a pathway leading of itself towards virtue. For as on the highway, if any man find the beginning, he is guided by it, and has no need of one to take him by the hand; so is it also in regard to Love: only lay hold on the beginning, and at once you are guided and directed by it. Love works no ill to his neighbor Romans 13:10; thinks no evil. 1 Corinthians 13:5 Let each man consider with himself, how he is disposed toward himself. He does not envy himself; he wishes all good things for himself; he prefers himself before all; he is willing to do all things for himself. If then we were so disposed towards others also, all grievous things are brought to an end; there is no enmity; there is no covetousness: for who would choose to overreach himself? No man; but on the contrary we shall

possess all things in common, and shall not cease assembling ourselves together. And if we do this, the remembrance of injuries would have no place: for who would choose to remember injuries against himself? Who would choose to be angry with himself? Do we not make allowances for ourselves most of all? If we were thus disposed towards our neighbors also, there will never be any remembrance of injuries.

And how is it possible (you say) that one should so love his neighbor as himself? If others had not done this, you might well think it impossible: but if they have done it, it is plain that from indolence it is not done by ourselves.

And besides, Christ enjoins nothing impossible, seeing that many have even gone beyond His commands. Who has done this? Paul, Peter, all the company of the Saints. Nay, indeed if I say that they loved their neighbors, I say no great matter: they so loved their enemies as no man would love those who were likeminded with himself. For who would choose for the sake of those likeminded, to go away into Hell. when he was about to depart unto a kingdom? No man. But Paul chose this for the sake of his enemies, for those who stoned him, those who scourged him. What pardon then will there be for us, what excuse, if we shall not show towards our friends even the very smallest portion of that love which Paul showed towards his enemies?

And before him too, the blessed Moses was willing to be blotted out of God's book for the sake of his enemies who had stoned him. David also when he saw those who had stood up against him slain, says, I, the shepherd, have sinned, but these, what have they done? See 2 Samuel 24:17 And when he had Saul in his hands, he would not slay him, but saved him; and this when he himself would be in danger. But if these things were done under the Old [Covenant] what excuse shall we have who live under the New, and do not attain even to the same measure with them? For if, unless our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven Matthew 5:20, how shall we enter in when we have even less than they?

5. Love your enemies, He says. Matthew 5:44 Love thou therefore your enemy: for you are doing good not to him, but to yourself. How? You are becoming like God. He, if he be beloved of you, has no great gain, for he is beloved by a fellow-slave; but thou, if you love your fellow-slave, hast gained much, for you are becoming like God. Do you see that you are doing a kindness not to him but to yourself? For He appoints the prize not for him, but for you.

What then if he be evil (you say)? So much the greater is the reward. Even for his wickedness you ought to feel grateful to him: even should he be evil after receiving ten thousand kindnesses. For if he were not exceedingly evil, your reward would not have been exceedingly increased; so that the reason you assign, for not loving him, the saying that he is evil, is the very reason for loving him. Take away the contestant and you take away the opportunity for the crowns. Do you see not the athletes, how they exercise when they have filled the bags with sand? But there is no need for you to practice this. Life is full of things that exercise you, and make you strong. Do you see not the trees too, the more they are shaken by the winds, so much the more do they become stronger and firmer? We then. if we be long-suffering, shall also become strong. For it is said, a man who is long-suffering abounds in wisdom, but he that is of a little soul is strongly foolish. Proverbs 14:29 Do you see how great is his commendation of the one, do you see how great his censure of the other? Strongly foolish, i.e. very [foolish]. Let us not then be faint-hearted one towards another: for this does not rise from enmity, but from having a small soul. As if the soul be strong, it will endure all things easily, and nothing will be able to sink it, but will lead it into tranquil havens. To which may we all attain, by the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father

together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

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