

# Homily 11 on Romans

by St. John Chrysostom

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*Through baptism, we are united with Christ in His death and resurrection, and we must continue to mortify sin and live a life of obedience to God.*

**Scripture:** Luke 16:20, Romans 6:5-6, Romans 6:11, Romans 6:14, Romans 6:17-18, Romans 6:23, 1 Timothy 6:10

**Topics:** "Death To Sin", "New Life"

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## Description

John Chrysostom preaches on Romans 6:5, emphasizing the importance of being planted in the likeness of Christ's death to also partake in the likeness of His resurrection. He highlights the need for believers to actively mortify sin after baptism through their own earnestness, while acknowledging God's help. Chrysostom urges believers to show a change in their aims post-baptism to avoid defiling themselves again. He emphasizes the significance of being dead to sin and alive to God, encouraging believers to reckon themselves dead to sin and alive to righteousness. The sermon concludes with a call to prioritize adorning the soul over external possessions, urging believers to focus on inner virtues and charitable acts.

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## Transcript

Rom. VI. 5

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

What I had before occasion to remark, that I mention here too, that he continually digresses into exhortation, without making any twofold division as he does in the other Epistles, and setting apart the former portion for doctrines, and the latter for the care of moral instruction. Here then he does not do so, but blends the latter with the subject throughout, so as to gain it an easy admission. Here then he says there are two mortifyings, and two deaths, and that one is done by Christ in Baptism, and the other it is our duty to effect by earnestness afterwards.

For that our former sins were buried, came of His gift. But the remaining dead to sin after baptism must be the work of our own earnestness, however much we find God here also giving us large help. For this is not the only thing Baptism has the power to do, to obliterate our former transgressions; for it also secures against subsequent ones. As then in the case of the former, your contribution was faith that they might be obliterated, so also in those subsequent to this, show forth the change in your aims, that you may not defile yourself again.

For it is this and the like that he is counselling you when he says, for if we have been planted together in the likeness of His Death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection. Do you observe, how he rouses the hearer by leading him straightway up to his Master, and taking great pains to show the strong likeness? This is why he does not say in death, lest you should gainsay it, but, in the likeness of His Death. For our essence itself has not died, but the man of sins, that is, wickedness.

And he does not say, for if we have been partakers of the likeness of His Death; but what? If we have been planted together, so, by the mention of planting, giving a hint of the fruit resulting to us from it. For as His Body, by being buried in the earth, brought forth as the fruit of it the salvation of the world; thus ours also, being buried in baptism, bore as fruit righteousness, sanctification, adoption, countless blessings. And it will bear also hereafter the gift of the resurrection.

Since then we were buried in water, He in earth, and we in regard to sin, He in regard to His Body, this is why he did not say, we were planted together in His Death, but in the likeness of His Death. For both the one and the other is death, but not that of the same subject. If then he says, we have been planted together in His Death, we shall be in that of His Resurrection, speaking here of the Resurrection which (Gr. be of His Resurrection) is to come. For since when he was upon the subject of the Death before, and said, Do you not know, brethren, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His Death? he had not made any clear statement about the Resurrection, but only about the way of life after baptism, bidding men walk in newness of life; therefore he here resumes the same subject, and proceeds to foretell to us clearly that Resurrection.

And that you may know that he is not speaking of that resulting from baptism, but about the other, after saying, for if we were planted together in the likeness of His Death, he does not say that we shall be in the likeness of His Resurrection, but we shall belong to the Resurrection. For to prevent your saying, and how, if we did not die as He died, are we to rise as He rose? When he mentioned the Death, he did not say, planted together in the Death, but, in the likeness of His Death.

But when he mentioned the Resurrection, he did not say, in the likeness of the Resurrection, but we shall be of the Resurrection itself. And he does not say, We have been made, but we shall be, by this word again plainly meaning that Resurrection which has not yet taken place, but will hereafter. Then with a view to give credibility to what he says, he points out another Resurrection which is brought about here before that one, that from that which is present you may believe also that which is to come. For after saying, we shall be planted together in the Resurrection, he adds,

Ver. 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.

So putting together both the cause and the demonstration of the Resurrection which is to come. And he does not say is crucified, but is crucified with Him, so bringing baptism near to the Cross. And on this score also it was that he said above, We have been planted together in the likeness of His Death that the body of sin might be destroyed, not giving that name to this body of ours, but to all iniquity. For as he calls the whole sum of wickedness the old man, thus again the wickedness which is made up of the different parts of iniquity he calls the body of that man. And that what I am saying is not mere guesswork, hearken to Paul's own interpretation of this very thing in what comes next. For after saying, that the body of sin might be destroyed, he adds, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For the way in which I would have it dead is not so that you should be destroyed and die, but so that you sin not. And as he goes on he makes this still clearer.

Ver. 7. For he that is dead, he says, is freed (Gr. justified) from sin.

This he says of every man, that as he that is dead is henceforth freed from sinning, lying as a dead body, so must he that has come up from baptism, since he has died there once for all, remain ever dead to sin. If then you have died in baptism, remain dead, for any one that dies can sin no more; but if you sin, you mar God's gift. After requiring of us then heroism (Gr. philosophy) of this degree, he presently brings in the crown also, in these words.

Ver. 8. Now if we be dead with Christ.

And indeed even before the crown, this is in itself the greater crown, the partaking with our Master. But he says, I give even another reward. Of what kind is it? It is life eternal. For we believe, he says, that we shall also live with Him. And whence is this clear?

Ver. 9. That Christ being raised from the dead, dies no more.

And notice again his undauntedness, and how he makes the thing good from opposite grounds. Since then it was likely that some would feel perplexed at the Cross and the Death, he shows that this very thing is a ground for feeling confident henceforward.

For suppose not, he says, because He once died, that He is mortal, for this is the very reason of His being immortal. For His death has been the death of death, and because He did die, He therefore does not die. For even that death

Ver. 10. He died unto sin.

What does unto sin mean? It means that He was not subject even to that one, but for our sin, that He might destroy it, and cut away its sinews and all its power, therefore He died. Do you see how he affrights them? For if He does not die again, then there is no second laver, then do thou keep from all inclinableness to sin. For all this he says to make a stand against the let us do evil that good may come. Let us remain in sin that grace may abound. To take away this conception then, root and branch, it is, that he sets down all this. But in that He lives, He lives unto God, he says -- that is, unchangeably, so that death has no more any dominion over Him. For if it was not through any liability to it that He died the former death, save only for the sin of others, much less will He die again now that He has done that sin away. And this he says in the Epistle to the Hebrews also, But now once, he says, in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Hebrews 9:26-28 And he both points out the power of the life that is according to God, and also the strength of sin. For with regard to the life according to God, he shows that Christ shall die no more. With regard to sin, that if it brought about the death even of the Sinless, how can it do otherwise than be the ruin of those that are subject to it? And then as he had discoursed about His life; that none might say, What has that which you have been saying to do with us? He adds,

Ver. 11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.

He well says, reckon, because there is no setting that, which he is speaking of, before the eyes as yet. And what are we to reckon? One may ask. That we are dead unto sin, but alive unto God. In Jesus Christ our Lord. For he that so lives will lay hold of every virtue, as having Jesus Himself for his ally. For that is

what, in Christ, means, for if He raised them when dead, much more when alive will He be able to keep them so.

Ver. 12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

He does not say, let not the flesh live or act, but, let not sin reign, for He came not to destroy our nature, but to set our free choice aright. Then to show that it is not through any force or necessity that we are held down by iniquity, but willingly, he does not say, let it not tyrannize, a word that would imply a necessity, but let it not reign. For it is absurd for those who are being conducted to the kingdom of heaven to have sin empress over them, and for those who are called to reign with Christ to choose to be the captives of sin, as though one should hurl the diadem from off his head, and choose to be the slave of a frantic woman, who came begging, and was clothed in rags. Next since it was a heavy task to get the upper hand of sin, see how he shows it to be even easy, and how he allays the labor by saying, in your mortal body. For this shows that the struggles were but for a time, and would soon bring themselves to a close. At the same time he reminds us of our former evil plight, and of the root of death, as it was from this that, contrary even to its beginning, it became mortal. Yet it is possible even for one with a mortal body not to sin. Do you see the abundancy of Christ's grace? For Adam, though as yet he had not a mortal body, fell. But you, who hast received one even subject to death, can be crowned. How then, is it that sin reigns? he says. It is not from any power of its own, but from your listlessness. Wherefore after saying, let it not reign, he also points out the mode of this reigning, by going on to say that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. For it is not honor to concede to it (i.e. to the body) all things at will, nay, it is slavery in the extreme, and the height of dishonor; for when it does what it lists, then is it bereft of all liberties; but when it is put under restraints, then it best keeps its own proper rank.

Ver. 13. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin...but as instruments of righteousness.

The body then is indifferent between vice and virtue, as also instruments (or arms) are. But either effect is wrought by him that uses it. As if a soldier fighting in his country's behalf, and a robber who was arming against the inhabitants, had the same weapons for defense. For the fault is not laid to the suit of armor, but to those that use it to an ill end. And this one may say of the flesh too which becomes this or that owing to the mind's decision, not owing to its own nature. For if it be curious after the beauty of another, the eye becomes an instrument of iniquity, not through any agency of its own (for what is of the eye, is but seeing, not seeing amiss), but through the fault of the thought which commands it. But if you bridle it, it becomes an instrument of righteousness. Thus with the tongue, thus with the hands, thus with all the other members. And he well calls sin unrighteousness. For by sinning a man deals unrighteously either by himself or by his neighbor, or rather by himself more than by his neighbor. Having then led us away from wickedness, he leads us to virtue, in these words:

But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.

See how by his bare words he exhorts them, on that side naming sin and on this God. For by showing what a difference there is between the rulers, he casts out of all excuse the soldier that leaves God, and desires to serve under the dominion of sin. But it is not only in this way, but also by the sequel, that he establishes this; by saying, as alive from the dead. For by these he shows the wretchedness of the other, and the greatness of God's gift. For consider, he says, what you were, and what you have been made. What then were ye? Dead, and ruined by a destruction which could not from any quarter be repaired. For

neither was there any one who had the power to assist you. And what have you been made out of those dead ones? Alive with immortal life. And by whom? By the all-powerful God. You ought therefore to marshal yourselves under Him with as much cheerful readiness, as men would who had been made alive from being dead.

And your members as instruments of righteousness.

Hence, the body is not evil, since it may be made an arm of righteousness. But by calling it an arm, he makes it clear that there is a hard warfare at hand for us. And for this reason we need strong armor, and also a noble spirit, and one acquainted too with the ways of this warfare; and above all we need a commander. The Commander however is standing by, ever ready to help us, and abiding unconquerable, and has furnished us with strong arms likewise. Farther, we have need of a purpose of mind to handle them as should be, so that we may both obey our Commander, and take the field for our country. Having then given us this vigorous exhortation, and reminded us of arms, and battle, and wars, see how he encourages the soldier again and cherishes his ready spirit.

Ver. 14. For sin shall no more have dominion over you; for you are not under the Law, but under grace.

If then sin has no more dominion over us, why does he lay so great a charge upon them as he does in the words, Let not sin reign in your mortal body, and, yield not ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin? What does that here said mean then? He is sowing a kind of seed in this statement, which he means to develop afterwards, and to cultivate in a powerful argument. What then is this statement? It is this; that our body, before Christ's coming, was an easy prey to the assaults of sin. For after death a great swarm of passions entered also. And for this cause it was not lightsome for running the race of virtue. For there was no Spirit present to assist, nor any baptism of power to mortify. John 7:39 But as some horse (Plato Phædr. §74) that answers not the rein, it ran indeed, but made frequent slips, the Law meanwhile announcing what was to be done and what not, yet not conveying into those in the race anything over and above exhortation by means of words. But when Christ had come, the effort became afterwards more easy, and therefore we had a more distant goal (μεζονα τ σκμματα) set us, in that the assistance we had given us was greater. Wherefore also Christ says, Unless your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 5:20 But this he says more clearly in the sequel. But at present he alludes here briefly to it, to show that unless we stoop down very low to it, sin will not get the better of us. For it is not the Law only that exhorts us, but grace too which also remitted our former sins, and secures us against future ones. For it promised them crowns after toils, but this (i.e. grace) crowned them first, and then led them to the contest. Now it seems to me that he is not signifying here the whole life of a believer, but instituting a comparison between the Baptism and the Law. And this he says in another passage also; The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Corinthians 3:6 For the Law convinces of transgression, but grace undoes transgression. As then the former by convincing establishes sin so the latter by forgiving suffers us not to be under sin. And so you are in two ways set free from this thralldom; both in your not being under the Law, and in your enjoying grace. After then he had by these words given the hearer a breathing time, he again furnishes him a safeguard, by introducing an exhortation in reply to an objection, and by saying as follows.

Ver. 15. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? God forbid.

So he first adopted a form of adjuration, because it was an absurd thing he had named. And then he makes his discourse pass on to exhortation, and shows the great facility of the struggle, in the following words.

Ver. 16. Do you not know, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

I do not, he would say, mention hell as yet, nor that great (manuscript Bodl. long) punishment, but the shame it is in this world, when you become slaves, and slaves of your own accord too, and sin's slaves, and when the wages are such as a second death. For if before baptism, it wrought death of the body, and the wound required so great attendance, that the Lord of all came down to die, and so put a stop to the evil; if after so great a gift, and so great liberty, it seize you again, while you bend down under it willingly, what is there that it may not do? Do not then run into such a pit, or willingly give yourself up. For in the case of wars, soldiers are often given up even against their will. But in this case, unless you desert of yourself, there is no one who will get the better of you. Having then tried to shame them by a sense of duty, he alarms them also by the rewards, and lays before them the wages of both; righteousness, and death, and that a death not like the former, but far worse. For if Christ is to die no more, who is to do away with death? No one! We must then be punished, and have vengeance taken upon us forever. For a death preceptible to the senses is not still to come in this case, as in the former, which gives the body rest, and separates it from the soul. For the last enemy, death, is destroyed 1 Corinthians 15:26, whence the punishment will be deathless. But not to them that obey, for righteousness, and the blessings springing from it, will be their rewards.

Ver. 17. But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. (Lit. into which you were delivered.)

After shaming them by the slavery, after alarming them by the rewards, and so exhorting them, he again rights them by calling the benefits to mind. For by these he shows that they were great evils from which they were freed, and that not by any labors of their own, and that things henceforth would be more manageable. Just as any one who has rescued a captive from a cruel tyrant, and advises him not to run away back to him, reminds him of his grievous thralldom; so does Paul set the evils passed away most emphatically before us, by giving thanks to God. For it was no human power that could set us free from all those evils, but, thanks be to God, who was willing and able to do such great things. And he well says, You have obeyed from the heart. You were neither forced nor pressed, but you came over of your own accord, with willing mind. Now this is like one that praises and rebukes at once. For after having willingly come, and not having had any necessity to undergo, what allowance can you claim, or what excuse can you make, if you run away back to your former estate? Next that you may learn that it came not of your own willing temper only, but the whole of it of God's grace also, after saying, You have obeyed from the heart, he adds, that form of doctrine which was delivered you. For the obedience from the heart shows the free will. But the being delivered, hints the assistance from God. But what is the form of doctrine? It is living aright, and in conformity with the best conversation.

Ver. 18. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.

There are two gifts of God which he here points out. The freeing from sin, and also the making them servants to righteousness, which is better than any freedom. For God has done the same as if a person were to take an orphan, who had been carried away by savages into their own country, and were not only

to free him from captivity, but were to set a kind father over him, and bring him to very great dignity. And this has been done in our case. For it was not our old evils alone that He freed us from, since He even led us to the life of angels, and paved the way for us to the best conversation, handing us over to the safe keeping of righteousness, and killing our former evils, and deadening the old man, and leading us to an immortal life.

Let us then continue living this life; for many of those who seem to breathe and to walk about are in a more wretched plight than the dead. For there are different kinds of deadness; and one there is of the body, according to which Abraham was dead, and still was not dead. For God, He says, is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Matthew 22:32 Another is of the soul which Christ alludes to when He says, Let the dead bury their dead. Matthew 8:22 Another, which is even the subject of praise, which is brought about by religion (φιλοσοφίας), of which Paul says, Mortify your members which are upon the earth.

Colossians 3:5 Another, which is the cause even of this, the one which takes place in baptism. For our old man, he says, has been crucified Romans 6:6, that is, has been deadened. Since then we know this, let us flee from the deadness by which, even though alive, we die. And let us not be afraid of that with which common death comes on. But the other two, whereof one is blissful, having been given by God, the other praiseworthy (cf. Ar. Eth. i. 12), which is accomplished by ourselves together with God, let us both choose and be emulous of.

And of those two, one does David pronounce blessed, when he says, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven Psalm 32:1; and the other, Paul holds in admiration, saying, and writing to the Galatians, They that be Christ's have crucified the flesh. Galatians 5:24 But of the other couple, one Christ declares to be easy to hold in contempt, when He says, Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: and the other fearful, for, Fear (He says) Him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.

Matthew 10:28 And therefore let us flee from this, and choose that deadness which is held blessed and admirable; that of the other two, we may escape the one and not fear the other: for it is not the least good to us to see the sun, and to eat and drink, unless the life of good words be with us. For what would be the advantage, pray, of a king dressed in a purple robe and possessed of arms, but without a single subject, and exposed to all that had a mind to attack and insult him?

In like manner it will be no advantage to a Christian to have faith, and the gift of baptism, and yet be open to all the passions. In that way the disgrace will be greater, and the shame more. For as such an one having the diadem and purple is so far from gaining by this dress any honor to himself, that he even does disgrace to that by his own shame: so the believer also, who leads a corrupt life, is so far from becoming, as such, an object of respect, that he is only the more one of scorn.

For as many, it says, as sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. Romans 2:12. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he says, He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who had trodden under foot the Son of God? Hebrews 10:28-29 And with reason. For I placed (He might say) all the passions in subjection to you by baptism.

How then comes it that you have disgraced so great a gift, and hast become one thing instead of another? I have killed and buried your former transgressions, like worms -- how is it that you have bred others?-- for sins are worse than worms, since these do harm to the body, those to the soul; and those make the more offensive stench. Yet we perceive it not, and so we are at no pains to purge them out. Thus the drunkard

knows not how disgusting the stale wine is, but he that is not drunken has a distinct perception of it.

So with sins also, he that lives soberly knows thoroughly that other mire, and the stain. But he that gives himself up to wickedness, like a man made drowsy with drunkenness, does not even know the very fact that he is ill. And this is the most grievous part of vice, that it does not allow those who fall into it even to see the greatness of their own bane, but as they lie in the mire, they think they are enjoying perfumes. And so they have not even the power of getting free, but when full of worms, like men that pride themselves in precious stones, so do they exult in these.

And for this reason they have not so much as the will to kill them, but they even nourish these up, and multiply them in themselves, until they send them on to the worms of the world to come. For these are providers for those, and are not only providers, but even the fathers of those that never die; as it says, their worm shall not die. Mark 9:44 These kindle the hell which never extinguishes. To prevent this from happening then, let us do away with this fountain of evil, and extinguish the furnace, and let us draw up the root of wickedness from beneath, since you will do no good by cutting the tree off from above, if the root remains below, and sends up fresh shoots of the same kind again.

What then is the root of the evils? Learn from the good husbandman i.e. St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 3:6-9, who has an accurate knowledge of such things, and tends the spiritual vine and cultivates the whole world. Now what does he say is the cause of all the evils? The love of money. For the love of money is the root of all evils. 1 Timothy 6:10. Hence come fightings, and enmities and wars; hence emulations, and railings, and suspicions, and insults; hence murders, and thefts, and violations of sepulchres.

Through this, not cities and countries only, but roads and habitable and inhabitable parts, and mountains, and groves, and hills, and, in a word, all places are filled with blood and murder. And not even from the sea has this evil withdrawn, but even there also with great fury has it revelled, since pirates beset it on all sides, thus devising a new mode of robbery. Through this have the laws of nature been subverted, and the claims of relationship set aside, and the laws of piety itself broken through.

For the thralldom of money has armed, not against the living only, but even against the departed too, the right hands of such men. And at death even, they make no truce with them, but bursting open the sepulchres, they put forth their impious hands even against dead bodies, and not even him that has let go of life will they suffer to be let go from their plotting. And all the evils that you may find, whether in the house or in the market-place, or in the courts of law, or in the senate, or in the king's palace, or in any other place whatsoever, it is from this that you will find they all spring.

For this evil it is, this assuredly, which fills all places with blood and murder, this lights up the flame of hell, this makes cities as wretchedly off as a wilderness, yea, even much worse. For those that beset the high roads, one can easily be on one's guard against, as not being always upon attack. But they who in the midst of cities imitate them are so much the worse than them, in that these are harder to guard against, and dare to do openly what the others do with secrecy.

For those laws, which have been made with a view to stopping their iniquity, they draw even into alliance and fill the cities with this kind of murders and pollutions. Is it not murder, pray, and worse than murder, to hand the poor man over to famine, and to cast him into prison, and to expose him not to famine only, but to tortures too, and to countless acts of insolence? For even if you do not do these things yourself to him, yet you are the occasion of their being done, you do them more than the ministers who execute them.

The murderer plunges his sword into a man at once, and after giving him pain for a short time, he does not carry the torture any farther. But do you who by your calumnies, by your harassings, by your plottings, make light darkness to him, and set him upon desiring death ten thousand times over, consider how many deaths you perpetrate instead of one only? And what is worse than all, you plunder and are grasping, not impelled to it by poverty, without any hunger to necessitate you, but that your horse's bridle may be spattered over with gold enough, or the ceiling of your house, or the capitals of your pillars.

And what hell is there that this conduct would not deserve, when it is a brother, and one that has shared with yourself in blessings unutterable, and has been so highly honored by the Lord, whom you, in order that you may deck out stones, and floors, and the bodies of animals with neither reason, nor perception of these ornaments, are casting into countless calamities? And your dog is well attended too, while man, or rather Christ, for the sake of the hound, and all these things I have named, is straitened with extreme hunger.

What can be worse than such confusion? What more grievous than such lawlessness as this? What streams of fire will be enough for such a soul? He that was made in the Image of God stands in unseemly plight, through your inhumanity; but the faces of the mules that draw your wife glisten with gold in abundance, as do the skins and woods which compose that canopy. And if it is a seat that is to be made, or a footstool, they are all made of gold and silver. But the member of Christ, for whom also He came hither from Heaven, and shed His precious Blood, does not even enjoy the food that is necessary for him, owing to your rapaciousness.

But the couches are mantled with silver on every side, while the bodies of the saints are deprived even of necessary clothing. And to you Christ is less precious than anything else, servants, or mules, or couch, or chair, or footstool; for I pass over furniture of still meaner use than these, leaving it to you to know of it. But if you are shocked at hearing this, stand aloof from doing it, and then the words spoken will not harm you. Stand aloof, and cease from this madness.

For plain madness it is, such eagerness about these things. Wherefore letting go of these things, let us look up, late as it is, towards Heaven, and let us call to mind the Day which is coming, let us bethink ourselves of that awful tribunal, and the exact accounts, and the sentence incorruptible. Let us consider that God, who sees all these things, sends no lightnings from Heaven; and yet what is done deserves not thunderbolts merely. Yet He neither does this, nor does He let the sea loose upon us, nor does He burst the earth in two, He quenches not the sun, nor does He hurl the heaven with its stars upon us.

He does not move anything from its place, but suffers them to hold their course, and the whole creation to minister to us. Pondering all this then, let us be awestruck with the greatness of His love toward man, and let us return to that noble origin which belongs to us, since at present certainly we are in no better plight than the creatures without reason, but even in a much worse one. For they do love their kin, and need but the community of nature to cause affection towards each other.

But thou who besides nature hast countless causes to draw you together and attach you to the member of yourself; the being honored with the Word, the partaking in one religion, the sharing in countless blessings; art become of wilder nature than they, by displaying so much carefulness about profitless things, and leaving the Temples of God to perish in hunger and nakedness, and often surrounding them also with a thousand evils. For if it is from love of glory that you do these things, it is much more binding on you to show your brother attention, than your horse.

For the better the creature that enjoys the act of kindness, the brighter the crown that is woven for such carefulness. Since now while you fall into the contrary of all this, you pull upon yourself accusers without number, yet perceivest it not. For who is there that will not speak ill of you? Who that will not indite you as guilty of the greatest atrocity and misanthropy, when he sees that you disregard the human race, and settest that of senseless creatures above men, and besides senseless creatures, even the furniture of your house?

Have you not heard the Apostles say, that they who first received the word sold both houses and lands Acts 4:34, that they might support the brethren? But you plunder both houses and lands, that you may adorn a horse or wood-work, or skins, or walls, or a pavement. And what is worse is, that it is not men only, but women too are afflicted with this madness, and urge their husbands to this empty sort of pains, by forcing them to lay out their money upon anything rather than the necessary things. And if any one accuse them for this, they are practised with a defense, itself loaded with much to be accused. For both the one and the other are done at once, says one.

What say you? Are you not afraid to utter such a thing, and to set the same store by horses and mules and couches and footstools, as by Christ an hungered? Or rather not even comparing them at all, but giving the larger share to these, and to Him meting out with difficulty a scant share? Do you not know that all belongs to Him, both you and yours? Do you not know that He fashioned your body, as well as gave you a soul, and apportioned you the whole world? But you are not for giving a little recompense to Him.

But if you let a little hut, you require the rent with the utmost rigor, and though reaping the whole of His creation, and dwelling in so wide a world, you have not courage to lay down even a little rent, but has given up to vainglory yourself and all you have. For this is that whereof all these things come. The horse is none the better above his natural excellence for having this ornament, neither yet is the person mounted upon him, for sometimes he is only in the less esteem for it; since many neglect the rider and turn their eyes to the horse's ornaments, and to the attendants behind and before, and to the fan-bearers.

But the man, who is lackeyed by these, they hate and turn their heads from, as a common enemy. But this does not happen when you adorn your soul, for then men, and angels, and the Lord of angels, all weave you a crown. And so, if you are in love with glory, stand aloof from the things which you are now doing, and show your taste not in your house, but in your soul, that you may become brilliant and conspicuous. For now nothing can be more cheap than you are, with your soul unfurnished, and but the handsomeness of your house for a screen.

But if you are impatient of hearing me speak in this way, listen to what one of those that are without did, and at all events be shamed by their philosophy. For it is said that a certain one of them, who went into a palace that shone with gold in abundance, and glistened with the great beauty of the marbles and the columns, when he saw the floor strewed with carpets in all directions, spat in the face of the master of the house, and when found fault with for it said, that since there was no other part of the house where he could do this, he was obliged to do this affront to his face.

See how ridiculous a man is, who displays his taste in exteriors, and how little he is in the eyes of all reasonable men. And with good reason. For if a person were to leave your wife to be clad in rags, and to be neglected, and clothed your maid-servants with brilliant dresses, you would not bear it meekly, but would be exasperated, and say that it was insulting in the extreme. Reason then in this way about your soul. When you display your taste in walls then, and pavement, and furniture, and other things of the kind,

and do not give liberally in alms, or practise the other parts of a religious life (φιλοσοφία); you do nothing less than this, or rather what is worse than this by far.

For the difference between servant and mistress is nothing, but between soul and flesh, there is a great disparity. But if it be so with the flesh, much more is it with a house or a couch or a footstool. What kind of excuse then do you deserve, who puttest silver on all these, but for it hast no regard, though it be covered with filthy rags, squalid, hungry, and full of wounds, torn by hounds unnumbered Luke 16:20-21; and after all this fanciest that you shall get you glory by displaying your taste in externals wound about you?

And this is the very height of phrenzy, while ridiculed, reproached, disgraced, dishonored, and falling into the severest punishment, still to be vain of these things! Wherefore, I beseech you, laying all this to heart, let us become sober-minded, late as it is, and become our own masters, and transfer this adorning from outward things to our souls. For so it will abide safe from spoiling, and will make us equal to the angels, and will entertain us with unaltering good, which may we all attain by the grace and love toward man, etc.

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