

Homily 26 on Matthew

by St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom's homily highlights the centurion's extraordinary faith and humility, illustrating the power of belief in Christ's authority for healing and salvation.

Scripture: Numbers 12:13, Isaiah 37:35, Jeremiah 8:4, Matthew 3:9, Matthew 8:5, Matthew 8:10, Matthew 8:13, Luke 7:2, Luke 7:9, Acts 2:29, 1 Corinthians 10:12

Topics: "Faith And Humility", "Divine Authority"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches on the story of the centurion who displayed great faith in Jesus, believing in His authority to heal his servant with just a word. Chrysostom highlights the humility and faith of the centurion, contrasting it with the lack of faith shown by others. He emphasizes the importance of believing in Jesus' power and authority, even in the face of great challenges and doubts. Chrysostom uses the example of the centurion to encourage his listeners to have unwavering faith and humility in approaching Jesus for healing and salvation.

Transcript

Matt. VIII. 5.

And when He was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

The leper came unto Him when He had come down from the mountain, but this centurion, when He was entered into Capernaum. Wherefore then did neither the one nor the other go up into the mountain? Not out of remissness, for indeed the faith of them both was fervent, but in order not to interrupt His teaching.

But having come unto Him, he says, My servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. Now some say, that by way of excuse he mentioned also the cause, why he had not brought him. For neither was it possible, says he, paralyzed as he was, and tormented, and at his last gasp, to lift and convey him. For that he was at the point of expiring, Luke says; He was even ready to die. But I say, this is a sign of his having great faith, even much greater than theirs, who let one down through the roof. Luke 5:19 For because he knew for certain, that even a mere command was enough for the raising up of the patient, he thought it superfluous to bring him.

What then does Jesus? What He had in no case done before, here He does. For whereas on every occasion He was used to follow the wish of His supplicants, here He rather springs toward it, and offers not only to heal him, but also to come to the house. And this He does, that we might learn the virtue of the centurion. For if He had not made this offer, but had said, Go your way, let your servant be healed; we should have known none of these things.

This at least He did, in an opposite way, in the case also of the Phœnician woman. For here, when not summoned to the house, of His own accord He says, He will come, that you might learn the centurion's faith and great humility; but in the case of the Phœnician woman, He both refuses the grant, and drives her, persevering therein, to great perplexity.

For being a wise physician and full of resources, He knows how to bring about contraries the one by the other. And as here by His freely-offered coming, so there by His peremptory putting off and denial, He unfolds the woman's faith. So likewise He does in Abraham's case, saying, I will by no means hide from Abraham my servant; to make you know that man's kindly affection, and his care for Sodom. And in the instance of Lot, Genesis 19:2 they that were sent refuse to enter into his house, to make you know the greatness of that righteous man's hospitality.

What then says the centurion? I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. Matthew 8:8 Let us hearken, as many as are to receive Christ: for it is possible to receive Him even now. Let us hearken, and emulate, and receive Him with as great zeal; for indeed, when you receive a poor man who is hungry and naked, you have received and cherished Him.

2. But say in a word only, and my servant shall be healed.

See this man also, how, like the leper, he has the right opinion touching Him. For neither did this one say, entreat, nor did he say, pray, and beseech, but command only. And then from fear lest out of modesty He refuse, he says,

For I also am a man under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this man, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes; and to my servant, do this, and he does it. Matthew 8:4

And what of that, says one, if the centurion did suspect it to be so? For the question is, whether Christ affirmed and ratified as much. You speak well, and very sensibly. Let us then look to this very thing; and we shall find what happened in the case of the leper, the same happening here likewise. For even as the leper said, If you will (and not from the leper only are we positive about His authority, but also from the voice of Christ; in that, so far from putting an end to the suspicion, He did even confirm it more, by adding what were else superfluous to say, in the phrase, I will, be thou cleansed, in order to establish that man's doctrine): so here too, it is right to see whether any such thing occurred. In fact, we shall find this same thing again taking place. For when the centurion had spoken such words, and had testified His so great prerogative; so far from blaming, He did even approve it, and did somewhat more than approve it. For neither has the evangelist said, that He praised the saying only, but declaring a certain earnestness in His praise, that He even marvelled; and neither did He simply marvel, but in the presence also of the whole people, and set Him as an example to the rest, that they should emulate Him.

Do you see how each of them that bore witness of His authority is marvelled at? And the multitudes were astonished at His doctrine, because He taught as one having authority; Matthew 7:29 and so far from blaming them, He both took them with Him when He came down, and by His words of cleansing to the

leper, confirmed their judgment. Again, that leper said, If you will, you can make me clean; Matthew 8:2 and so far from rebuking, He on the contrary cleansed him by such treatment as He had said. Again, this centurion says, Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed: Matthew 8:8 and marvelling at him, He said, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Now, to convince you of this by the opposite also; Martha having said nothing of this sort, but on the contrary, Whatsoever you will ask of God, He will give You; John 11:22 so far from being praised, although an acquaintance, and dear to Him, and one of them that had shown great zeal toward Him, she was rather rebuked and corrected by Him, as not having spoken well; in that He said to her, Said I not unto you, that if you would believe, you should see the glory of God? John 11:40 blaming her, as though she did not even yet believe. And again, because she had said, Whatsoever You will ask of God, He will give You; to lead her away from such a surmise, and to teach her that He needs not to receive from another, but is Himself the fountain of all good things, He says, I am the resurrection and the life; John 11:25 that is to say, I wait not to receive active power, but work all of myself.

Wherefore at the centurion He both marvels, and prefers him to all the people, and honors him with the gift of the kingdom, and provokes the rest to the same zeal. And to show you that for this end He so spoke, viz. for the instructing of the rest to believe in like manner, listen to the exactness of the evangelist, how he has intimated it. For,

Jesus, says he, turned Him about, and said to them that followed Him, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

It follows, that to have high imaginations concerning Him, this especially is of faith, and tends to procure the kingdom and His other blessings. For neither did His praise reach to words only, but He both restored the sick man whole, in recompence of his faith, and weaves for him a glorious crown, and promises great gifts, saying on this wise,

Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down in the bosoms of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.

Thus, since He had shown many miracles, He proceeds to talk with them more unreservedly.

Then, that no one might suppose His words to come of flattery, but that all might be aware that such was the mind of the centurion, He says,

Go your way; as you have believed, so be it done unto you. Matthew 8:13

And straightway the work followed, bearing witness to his character. nothing; for the question is, whether each of them has set before us the zealousness of the man, and his having had the right opinion concerning Christ. But it is likely, that after sending his friends, he himself also came and said these things. And if Luke did not speak of the one, no more did Matthew of the other; and this is not the part of men disagreeing among themselves, but rather of those that are filling up the things omitted by one another. But see by another thing also how Luke has proclaimed his faith, saying that his servant was ready to die. Luke 7:2 Nevertheless, not even this cast him into despondency, neither did it cause him to give up: but even so he trusted that he should prevail. And if Matthew affirm Christ to have said, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel, and hereby to show clearly that he was not an Israelite; while Luke says, He built our synagogue; neither is this a contradiction. For it was possible for one, even though not a

Jew, both to build the synagogue, and to love the nation.

4. But do not thou, I pray you, merely inquire what was said by him, but add thereto his rank also, and then you will see the man's excellency. Because in truth great is the pride of them that are in places of command, and not even in afflictions do they take lower ground. He, for example, who is set down in John, is for dragging Him unto his house, and says, Come down, for my child is ready to die. John 4:49 But not so this man; rather he is far superior both to him, and to those who let down the bed through the roof. For he seeks not for His bodily presence, neither did He bring the sick man near the physician; a thing which implied no mean imaginations concerning Him, but rather a suspicion of His divine dignity. And he says, speak the word only. And at the beginning he says not even, speak the word, but only describe his affliction: for neither did he, of great humility, expect that Christ would straightway consent, and inquire for his house. Therefore, when he heard Him say, I will come and heal him, then, not before he says, speak the word. Nor yet did the suffering confound him, but still under calamity he reasons coolly, not looking so much to the health of the servant, as to the avoiding all appearance of doing anything irreverent.

And yet it was not he that pressed it, but Christ that offered it: nevertheless even so he feared, lest perchance he should be thought to be going beyond his own deservings, and to be drawing upon himself a thing above his strength. Do you see his wisdom? Mark the folly of the Jews, in saying, He was worthy for whom He should do the favor. Luke 7:4 For when they should have taken refuge in the love of Jesus towards man, they rather allege this man's worthiness; and know not so much as on what ground to allege it. But not so he, but he affirmed himself even in the utmost degree unworthy, not only of the benefit, but even of receiving the Lord in his house. Wherefore even when he said, My servant lies sick, he did not add, speak, for fear lest he should be unworthy to obtain the gift; but he merely made known his affliction. And when he saw Christ zealous in His turn, not even so did he spring forward, but still continues to keep to the end his own proper measure.

And if any one should say, wherefore did not Christ honor him in return? we would say this, that He did make return to him in honor, and that exceedingly: first by bringing out his mind, which thing chiefly appeared by His not coming to his house; and in the second place, by introducing him into His kingdom, and preferring him to the whole Jewish nation. For because he made himself out unworthy even to receive Christ into his house, he became worthy both of a kingdom, and of attaining unto those good things which Abraham enjoyed.

But wherefore, one may say, was not the leper commended, who showed forth things greater than these? For he did not so much as say, speak the word, but what was far more, be willing only, which is what the prophet says concerning the Father, He has done whatsoever He pleased. But he also was commended. For when He said, Offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them, Matthew 8:4 He means nothing else but, you shall be an accuser of them, in that you believed. And besides, it was not the same for one that was a Jew to believe, and for one from without that nation. For that the centurion was not a Jew is evident, both from his being a centurion and from its being said, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And it was a very great thing for a man who was out of the list of the Jewish people to admit so great a thought. For he did no less than imagine to himself, as it seems to me, the armies in Heaven; or that the diseases and death, and everything else, were so subject to Him, as his soldiers to himself.

Wherefore he said likewise, For I also am a man set under authority; that is, You are God, and I man; I under authority, but Thou not under authority. If I therefore, being a man, and under authority, can do so

much; far more He, both as God, and as not under authority. Thus with the strongest expression he desires to convince Him, that he says this, as one giving not a similar example, but one far exceeding. For if I (said he), being equal in honor to them whom I command, and under authority, yet by reason of the trifling superiority of my rank am able to do such great things; and no man contradicts me, but what I command, that is done, though the injunctions be various (for I say to this man, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes: Matthew 8:9) much more will You Yourself be able.

And some actually read the place in this way, For if I, being a man, and having inserted a stop, they add, having soldiers under authority under me.

But mark thou, I pray you, how he signified that Christ is able both to overcome even death as a slave, and to command it as its master. For in saying, come, and he comes, and go, and he goes; he expresses this: If You should command his end not to come upon him, it will not come.

Do you see how believing he was? For that which was afterwards to be manifest to all, here is one who already has made it evident; that He has power both of death and of life, and leads down to the gates of hell, and brings up again. 1 Samuel xxvi Nor was he speaking of soldiers only, but also of slaves; which related to a more entire obedience.

5. But nevertheless, though having such great faith, he still accounted himself to be unworthy. Christ however, signifying that he was worthy to have Him enter into his house, did much greater things, marvelling at him, and proclaiming him, and giving more than he had asked. For he came indeed seeking for his servant health of body, but went away, having received a kingdom. Do you see how the saying had been already fulfilled, Seek the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you. For, because he evinced great faith, and lowliness of mind, He both gave him heaven, and added unto him health.

And not by this alone did He honor him, but also by signifying upon whose casting out he is brought in. For now from this time forth He proceeds to make known to all, that salvation is by faith, not by works of the law. And this is why not to Jews only, but to Gentiles also the gift so given shall be proffered, and to the latter rather than to the former. For think not, says He, by any means, that so it has come to pass in regard of this man alone; nay, so it shall be in regard of the whole world. And this He said, prophesying of the Gentiles, and suggesting to them good hopes. For in fact there were some following Him from Galilee of the Gentiles. And this He said, on the one hand, not letting the Gentiles despair, on the other, putting down the proud spirits of the Jews.

But that His saying might not affront the hearers, nor afford them any handle; He neither brings forward prominently what He has to say of the Gentiles, but upon occasion taken from the centurion; nor does He use nakedly the term, Gentiles: not saying, many of the Gentiles, but, many from east and west: Matthew 8:11 which was the language of one pointing out the Gentiles, but did not so much affront the hearers, because His meaning was under a shadow.

Neither in this way only does He soften the apparent novelty of His doctrine, but also by speaking of Abraham's bosom instead of the kingdom. For neither was that term familiar to them: moreover, the introduction of Abraham would be a sharper sting to them. Wherefore John also spoke nothing at first concerning hell, but, what was most apt to grieve them, He says, Think not to say, we are children of Abraham. Matthew 3:9

He is providing for another point also; not to seem in any sense opposed to the ancient polity. For he that admires the patriarchs, and speaks of their bosom as an inheritance of blessings, does much more than sufficiently remove also this suspicion.

Let no man therefore suppose that the threat is one only, for both the punishment of the one and the joy of the other is double: of the one, not only that they fell away, but that they fell away from their own; of the other, not only that they attained, but that they attained what they had no expectation of: and there is a third together with these, that the one received what pertained to the other. And he calls them children of the kingdom, for whom the kingdom had been prepared: which also more than all was apt to gall them; in that having pointed to them as being in their bosom by His offer and promise, after all He puts them out.

6. Then, because what He had said was mere affirmation, He confirms it by the miracle; as indeed He shows the miracles in their turn, by the subsequent accomplishment of the prediction. He accordingly, who disbelieves the health which the servant then received, let him from the prophecy, which has this day come to pass, believe that other also. For so that prophecy again, even before the event, was made manifest to all by the sign which then took place. To this end, you see, having first uttered that prediction, then and not before He raised up the sick of the palsy; that He might make the future credible by the present, and the less by the greater. Since for virtuous men to enjoy His good things, and for the contrary sort to undergo His penalties, were nothing improbable, but a reasonable event, and according to the tenor of laws: but to brace up the feeble, and to raise the dead, was something beyond nature.

But nevertheless, unto this great and marvellous work the centurion too contributed no little; which thing, we see, Christ also declared, saying, Go your way, and as you have believed, so be it done unto you. Do you see how the health of the servant proclaimed aloud both Christ's power, and the faith of the centurion, and also became a pledge of the future? Or rather it was all a proclamation of Christ's power. For not only did He quite heal the servant's body, but the soul also of the centurion He did Himself bring over unto the faith by His miracles.

And do thou look not to this only, that the one believed, and the other was healed, but marvel how quickly also. For this too the evangelist declared, saying, And his servant was healed in the self-same hour: even as of the leper also he said, he was straightway cleansed. For not by healing, but by doing so both in a wonderful manner and in a moment of time, did He display His power. Neither in this way only does He profit us, but also by his constant practice, in the manifestation of His miracles, of opening incidentally His discourses about His kingdom, and of drawing all men towards it. For, those even whom He was threatening to cast out, He threatened not in order to cast them out, but in order that through such fear, He might draw them into it by His words. And if not even hereby were they profited, theirs is the whole blame, as also of all who are in the like distemper.

For not at all among Jews only may one see this taking place, but also among them that have believed. For Judas too was a child of the kingdom, and it was said to him with the disciples, You shall sit on twelve thrones; Matthew 19:28 yet he became a child of hell; whereas the Ethiopian, barbarian as he was, and of them from the east and west, shall enjoy the crowns with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. This takes place among us also now. For many, says He, that are first shall be last, and the last first. Matthew 19:30 And this He says, that neither the one may grow languid, as unable to return; nor the others be confident, as standing fast. This John also declared before from the beginning, when he said, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. Matthew 3:9 Thus, since it was so to come to pass, it is proclaimed long before; that no one may be confounded at the strangeness of the event. But he indeed

speaks of it as a possible thing (for he was first); Christ on the other hand as what will surely be, affording the proof of it from His works.

7. Let us not then be confident, who stand, but let us say to ourselves, Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall; 1 Corinthians 10:12 neither let us who are fallen despair, but let us say to ourselves, He that falls, does he not arise? Jeremiah 8:4 For many even who have mounted to the very summit of Heaven, and have shown forth all austerity, and had made their abode in the deserts, nor saw any woman so much as in a dream; having become a little remiss, have been tripped up, and have come unto the very gulf of wickedness. While others again from thence have gone up to Heaven, and from the stage and orchestra have passed over unto the discipline of angels, and have displayed so great virtue, as to drive away devils, and to work many other such miracles. And of these examples both the Scriptures are full, and our life is also full. Even whoremongers and effeminate persons stop the mouths of the Manichæans, who say that wickedness is immovable, enrolling themselves on the devil's side, and weakening the hands of them that would wish to be in earnest, and overturning all our life.

For they who inculcate these things, not only injure men as to the future, but here also turn all things upside down, for their own part at least. Because when will any regard virtue, from among those that are living in wickedness, so long as he accounts his return that way, and his change for the better, a thing impossible? For if now, when both laws exist, and penalties are threatened, and there is common opinion to recall the ordinary sort, and hell is looked for, and a kingdom promised, and wrong things reproached, and the good praised; hardly do any choose the labors that are to be undergone for virtue's sake: should you take away all these things, what is there to hinder ruin and corruption universal?

Knowing therefore the devil's craft, and that as well the lawgivers of the Gentiles as the oracles of God, and the reasonings of nature, and the common opinion of all men, yea barbarians, and Scythians, and Thracians, and generally all, are directly opposed both to these, and to such as strive to enact the doctrines of fate: let us be sober, beloved, and bidding farewell to all those, let us travel along the narrow way, being both confident and in fear: in fear because of the precipices on either side, confident because of Jesus our guide. Let us travel on, sober and wakeful. For though but for a little while one slumber, he is swept away quickly.

8. For we are not more perfect than David, who by a little carelessness was hurled into the very gulf of sin. Yet he arose again quickly. Look not then to his having sinned only, but also to his having washed away his sin. For to this end He wrote that history, not that you should behold him fallen, but admire him risen; to teach you, when you are fallen, how you should arise. Thus, as physicians choose out the most grievous diseases, and write them in their books, and teach their method of cure in similar cases; if so be men having practised on the greater, may easily master the less; even so God likewise has brought forward the greatest of sins, that they also who offend in small things may find the cure of these easy, by means of the other: since if those admitted of healing, much more the less.

Let us look then to the manner both of the sickness, and of the speedy recovery of that blessed man. What then was the manner of his sickness? He committed adultery and murder. For I shrink not from proclaiming these things with a loud voice. Since if the Holy Ghost thought it no shame to record all this history, much less ought we to draw any shade over it. Wherefore I not only proclaim it, but I add another circumstance also. For in fact, whosoever hide these things, they most of all men throw his virtue into the shade. And as they that say nothing of the battle with Goliath deprive him of no small crowns, so also they that hurry by this history. Does not my saying seem a paradox? Nay, wait a little, and then you shall know

that with reason have we said this. For to this end do I magnify the sin, and make my statement stranger, that I may the more abundantly provide the medicines.

What is it then which I add? The man's virtue; which makes the fault also greater. For all things are not judged alike in all men. For mighty men (it is said) shall be mightily tormented: and He that knew his Lord's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. Luke 12:47 So that more knowledge is a ground of more punishment. For this same reason the priest, if he commit the same sin as those under government, shall not have the same to endure, but things far more grievous.

Perhaps, seeing the charge against him amplified, you tremble and fear, and marvel at me, as though I were going down a precipice. But I am so confident on that righteous man's behalf, that I will proceed even farther; for the more I aggravate the charge, so much the more shall I be able to show forth the praise of David.

And what more than this, you will say, can be uttered? Abundantly more. For as in the case of Cain, what was done was not a murder only, but worse than even many murders; for it was not a stranger, but a brother, whom he slew; and a brother who had not done but suffered wrong; not after many murderers, but having first originated the horrid crime: so here too that which was perpetrated was not murder only. For it was no ordinary man that did it, but a prophet: and he slays not him that had done wrong, but him that had suffered wrong; for indeed he had been mortally wronged, by the forcing away his wife: nevertheless after that he added this also.

9. Perceive ye, how I have not spared that righteous one? How without any the least reserve I have mentioned his offenses? But yet, so confident am I concerning his defense, that after so great load as this of his sin, I would there were present both the Manichæans who most deride all this, and they that are diseased in Marcion's way, that I might fully stop their mouths. For they indeed say he committed murder and adultery; but I say not this only, but have also proved the murder to be twofold, first from him who suffered the wrong, then from the quality of the person who offended. For it is not the same thing, for one to whom the Spirit was vouchsafed, and on whom so great benefits had been conferred, and who had been admitted to such freedom of speech, and at such a time of life, to venture on crimes of that sort; as without all these, to commit this self-same thing. Nevertheless even in this respect is that illustrious man most of all worthy of admiration, that when he had fallen into the very pit of wickedness, he did not sink nor despair, nor cast himself down in supineness, on receiving of the devil so fatal a wound; but quickly, or rather straightway, and with great force, he gave a more fatal blow than he had received.

And the same thing occurred, as if in war and in battle some barbarian had struck his spear into the heart of a chieftain, or shot an arrow into his liver, and had added to the former wound a second more fatal than it, and he that had received these grievous blows, when fallen, and wallowing in much blood all about him, were first to rise up quickly, then to hurl a spear at him that wounded him, and exhibit him dead on the ground in a moment. Even so in this case also, the greater you declare the wound, so much the more admirable do you imply the soul of him that was wounded to be, that he had power after this grievous wound both to rise up again, and to stand in the very forefront of the battle array, and bear down him that had wounded him.

And how great a thing this is, they best know, whosoever are fallen into grievous sins. For it is not so much a proof of a generous and vigorous soul to walk upright, and to run all the way (for such a soul has the good hope going along with it, to cheer and to rouse it, to nerve and render it more zealous); as after those

innumerable crowns, and so many trophies, and victories, having undergone the utmost loss, to be able to resume the same course. And that what I say may be made plain, I will endeavor to bring before you another example, not at all inferior to the former.

For imagine, I pray you, some pilot, when he had compassed seas without number, and sailed over the whole ocean; after those many storms, and rocks and waves, to sink, having with him a great freight, in the very mouth of the harbor, and hardly with his naked body to escape this grievous shipwreck; how would he naturally feel towards the sea, and navigation, and such labors? Will such a one then ever choose, unless he be of a very noble soul, to see a beach, or a vessel, or a harbor? I think not; but he will lie hiding his face, seeing night all through the day, and shrinking from all things; and he will choose rather to live by begging, than to put his hand to the same labors.

But not such was this blessed man; but though he had undergone such a shipwreck, after those innumerable troubles and toils, he stayed not with his face covered, but launched his vessel, and having spread his sails, and taken the rudder in hand, he applies himself to the same labors, and has made his wealth more abundant again. Now if to stand be so admirable, and not to lie down for ever after one has fallen; to rise up again, and to do such deeds, what crowns would not this deserve?

And yet surely there were many things to drive him to despair; as first, the greatness of his sins; secondly, that not at the beginning of life, when our hopes also are more abundant, but near the end, these things befell him. For neither does the merchant, who has just gone out of the harbor and been wrecked, grieve equally with him, who after very many traffickings strikes on a rock. Thirdly, that when he had already obtained great wealth, he incurred this. Yea, for by that time he had stored up no small merchandise: for instance, the deeds of his early youth, when he was a shepherd; those about Goliath, when he set up the glorious trophy; those pertaining to his self-command respecting Saul. Since he showed forth even the evangelical long-suffering, in that he got his enemy ten thousand times into his hands, and continually spared him; and chose rather to be an outcast from his country and from liberty, and from life itself, than to slay him that was unjustly plotting against him. Likewise after his coming to the kingdom, there were noble deeds of his to no small amount.

And besides what I have said, his credit also among the many, and his fall from glory so bright, would cause no ordinary perplexity. For the purple did by no means so much adorn him, as the stain of his sin disgraced him. And ye know of course what a great thing it is for evil deeds to be exposed, and how great a soul is required in such an one, not to despond after the censure of the multitude, and when he has so many witnesses of his own offenses.

Nevertheless all these darts that noble person drew out of his soul, and so shone forth after this, so wiped out the stain, became so pure, that his offspring even after his death had their sins mitigated by him: and that which was said of Abraham, we find God saying the same of this man also; or rather, much more of the latter. For with respect to the patriarch it is said, I remembered my covenant with Abraham; Exodus 2:24 but here He says not the covenant, but how? I will defend this city for my servant David's sake. Isaiah 37:35 And besides, on account of His favor towards him, He suffered not Solomon to fall from the kingdom, great as the sin was which he had committed. And so great was the glory of the man, that Peter, so many years after, in exhorting the Jews, spoke on this wise: Let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried. Acts 2:29 And Christ too, discoursing with the Jews, signifies him after his sin to have had the Spirit vouchsafed to such a degree, that he was counted worthy to prophesy again even concerning His Godhead; and thereby stopping their mouths, He said, How then

does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand? And much as with Moses, so it fell out also with David. For as Miriam, even against Moses' will, was punished by God for insolence to her brother, Numbers 12:13-14 because He greatly loved the holy man; even so this man, injuriously treated by his son, God did swiftly avenge, and that against his will.

These things then are sufficient, yea rather before all others these are sufficient to indicate the man's excellency. For when God pronounces His judgment, we ought to inquire no further. But if you would become particularly acquainted with His self command, you may by perusing his history after his sin, perceive his confidence towards God, his benevolence, his growth in virtue, his strictness unto his last breath.

10. Having then these examples, let us be sober, and let us strive not to despond, and if at any time we fall, not to lie prostrate. For not to cast you into slothfulness, did I speak of the sins of David, but to work in you more fear. For if that righteous man through a little remissness received such wounds, what shall we have to suffer, who are every day negligent? Do not therefore look at his fall, and be remiss, but consider what great things he did even after this, what great mournings, how much repentance he showed forth, adding his nights to his days, pouring forth fountains of tears, washing his couch with his tears, withal clothing himself in sackcloth.

Now if he needed so great a conversion, when will it be possible for us to be saved, feeling insensible after so many sins? For he that has many good deeds, would easily even by this throw a shade over his sins; but he that is unarmed, wherever he may receive a dart, receives a mortal wound.

In order therefore that this may not be so, let us arm ourselves with good works; and if any offense have befallen us, let us wash it away: that we may be counted worthy, after having lived the present life to the glory of God, to enjoy the life to come; unto which may we all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might forever and ever. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-chrysostom/homily-26-on-matthew/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net