

Homily 32 on Matthew

by St. John Chrysostom

Jesus heals two blind men in private, teaching them to value their faith and their relationship with Him over the praise of others.

Scripture: Matthew 7:22, Matthew 9:27, Matthew 9:30, Matthew 10:1, Matthew 10:5, John 13:35, 1 Corinthians 12:31

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches on the importance of faith, humility, and love in the Christian life, emphasizing the need to focus on spiritual virtues rather than seeking after miracles. He highlights the significance of genuine love, peace, and unity within the church community, urging believers to imitate the apostles in their selfless service and devotion to God. Chrysostom encourages a life of virtue, charity, and moral transformation, stating that true miracles lie in the eradication of sin and the cultivation of a pure heart. He underscores the power of living a righteous life as a testimony to the world and a means to draw others to Christ.

Transcript

Matt. IX. 27-30.

And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus says unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.

Wherefore can it be that He puts them off, and they crying out? Here again teaching us utterly to repel the glory that comes from the multitude. For because the house was near, He leads them there to heal them in private. And this is evident from the fact, that He charged them moreover to tell no man.

But this is no light charge against the Jews; when these men, though their eyes were struck out, receive the faith by hearing alone, but they beholding the miracles, and having their sight to witness what was happening, do all just contrary. And see their earnestness also, both by their cry, and by their prayer itself. For they did not merely approach Him, but with loud cries, and alleging nought else but mercy.

And they called Him Son of David, because the name was thought to be honorable. In many passages, for instance, did the prophets likewise so call the kings, whom they wished to honor, and to declare great.

And having brought them into the house, He puts to them a further question. For in many cases He made a point of healing on entreaty, lest any should suppose Him to be rushing upon these miracles through vainglory: and not on this account alone, but to indicate also that they deserve healing, and that no one should say, If it was of mere mercy that He saved, all men ought to be saved. For even His love to man has a kind of proportion; depending on the faith of them that are healed. But not for these causes only does He require faith of them, but forasmuch as they called Him Son of David, He to lead them up to what is higher, and to teach them to entertain the imaginations they ought of Himself, says, Believe ye that I am able to do this? He did not say, Believe ye that I am able to entreat my Father, that I am able to pray but, that I am able to do this?

What then is their word? Yea, Lord. They call Him no more Son of David, but soar higher, and acknowledge His dominion.

And then at last He for His part lays His hand upon them, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And this He does to confirm their faith, and to show that they are participators in the good work, and to witness that their words were not words of flattery. For neither did He say, Let your eyes be opened, but, According to your faith be it unto you; which He says to many of them that came unto Him; before the healing of their bodies, hastening to proclaim the faith in their soul; so as both to make them more approved, and to render others more serious.

Thus with respect to the sick of the palsy also; for there too before giving nerve to the body, He raises up the fallen soul, saying, Son, be of good cheer, your sins be forgiven you. And the young damsel too, when He had raised her up, He detained, and by the food taught her her Benefactor; and in the case of the centurion also He did in like manner, leaving the whole to his faith; and as to His disciples again, when delivering them from the storm on the sea, He delivered them first from their want of faith. Just so likewise in this case: He knew indeed, even before their cry, the secrets of their mind; but that He might lead on others also to the same earnestness, He makes them known to the rest as well, by the result of their cure proclaiming their hidden faith.

Then after their cure He commands them to tell no man; neither does He merely command them, but with much strictness.

For Jesus, it is said, strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country. Matthew 9:30-31

They however did not endure this, but became preachers, and evangelists; and when bidden to hide what had been done, they endured it not.

And if in another place we find Him saying, Go your way, and declare the glory of God, that is not contrary to this, but even highly in agreement herewith. For He instructs us to say nothing ourselves, concerning ourselves, but even to forbid them that would eulogise us: but if the glory be referred to God, then not only not to forbid, but to command men to do this.

2. And as they went out, it is said, behold, they brought unto Him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

For the affliction was not natural, but the device of the evil spirit; wherefore also he needs others to bring him. For he could neither make entreaty himself, being speechless, nor supplicate others, when the evil spirit had bound his tongue, and together with his tongue had fettered his soul.

For this cause neither does He require faith of him, but straightway heals the disease.

For when the devil was cast out, it says, the dumb spoke: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. Matthew 9:33

Now this especially vexed the Pharisees, that they preferred Him to all, not only that then were, but that had ever been. And they preferred Him, not for His healing, but for His doing it easily and quickly, and to diseases innumerable and incurable.

And thus the multitude; but the Pharisees quite contrariwise; not only disparaging the works, but saying things contradictory to themselves, and not ashamed. Such a thing is wickedness. For what say they?

He casts out devils through the prince of the devils.

What can be more foolish than this? For in the first place, as He also says further on, it is impossible that a devil should cast out a devil, for that being is wont to repair what belongs to himself, not to pull it down. But He did not cast out devils only, but also cleansed lepers, and raised the dead, and curbed the sea, and remitted sins, and preached the kingdom, and brought men unto the Father; things which a demon would never either choose, or at any time be able to effect. For the devils bring men to idols, and withdraw them from God, and persuade them to disbelieve the life to come. The devil does not bestow kindness when he is insulted; forasmuch as even when not insulted, he harms those that court and honor him.

But He does the contrary. For after these their insults and revilings,

3. He went about, it is said, all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease.

And so far from punishing them for their insensibility, He did not even simply rebuke them; at once both evincing His meekness, and so refuting the calumny; and at the same time minded also by the signs which followed to exhibit His proof more completely: and then to adduce also the refutation by words. He went about therefore both in cities, and in countries, and in their synagogues; instructing us to requite our calumniators, not with fresh calumnies, but with greater benefits. Since, if not for man's sake, but God's, you do good to your fellow-servants; whatsoever they may do, leave not thou off doing them good, that your reward may be greater; since he surely, who upon their calumny leaves off his doing good, signifies that for their praise' sake, not for God's sake, he applies himself to that kind of virtue.

For this cause Christ, to teach us that of mere goodness He had entered on this, so far from waiting for the sick to come to Him, of Himself hastened unto them, bearing them two of the greatest blessings; one, the gospel of the kingdom; another, the perfect cure of all their diseases. And not a city did He overlook, not a village did He hasten by, but visited every place.

4. And not even at this does He stop, but He exhibits also another instance of His forethought. That is,

When He saw, it is said, the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they were troubled, and scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then says He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few, pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.

See again His freedom from vainglory. That He may not draw all men unto Himself, He sends out His disciples.

And not with this view only, but that He might also teach them, after practising in Palestine, as in a sort of training-school, to strip themselves for their conflicts with the world. For this purpose then He makes the exercises even more serious than the actual conflicts, so far as pertained to their own virtue; that they might more easily engage in the struggles that were to ensue; as it were a sort of tender nestlings whom He was at length leading out to fly. And for the present He makes them physicians of bodies, dispensing to them afterwards the cure of the soul, which is the principal thing.

And mark how He points out the facility and necessity of the thing. For what says He? The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. That is, not to the sowing, says He, but to the reaping do I send you. Which in John He expressed by, Other men labored, and you are entered into their labors. John 4:38

And these things he said, at once repressing their pride, and preparing them to be of good courage, and signifying that the greater part of the labor came first.

And contemplate Him here too beginning from love to man, not with any requital. For He had compassion, because they were troubled and scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. This is His charge against the rulers of the Jews, that being shepherds they acted the part of wolves. For so far from amending the multitude, they even marred their progress. For instance, when they were marvelling and saying, It was never so seen in Israel: these were affirming the contrary, He casts out devils through the prince of the devils.

But of what laborers does He speak here? Of the twelve disciples. What then? Whereas He had said, But the laborers are few, did He add to their number? By no means, but He sent them out alone. Wherefore then did He say, Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest; and made no addition to their number? Because though they were but twelve, He made them many from that time forward, not by adding to their number, but by giving them power.

Then to signify how great the gift is, He says, Pray ye the Lord of the harvest; and indirectly declares it to be His own prerogative. For after having said, Pray ye the Lord of the harvest; when they had not made any entreaty nor prayer, He Himself at once ordains them, reminding them also of the sayings of John, Matthew 3:12 of the threshing floor, and of the Person winnowing, and of the chaff, and of the wheat. Whence it is evident that Himself is the husbandman, Himself the Lord of the harvest, Himself the master and owner of the prophets. For if He sent them to reap, clearly it was not to reap what belongs to another, but what Himself had sown by the prophets.

But not in this way only was He indirectly encouraging them, in calling their ministry a harvest; but also by making them able for the ministry.

And when He had called unto Him, it says, His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.

Still the Spirit was not yet given. For there was not yet, it says, a Spirit, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. How then did they cast out the spirits? By His command, by His authority.

And mark, I pray you, also, how well timed was the mission. For not at the beginning did He send them; but when they had enjoyed sufficiently the advantage of following Him, and had seen a dead person

raised, and the sea rebuked, and devils expelled, and a paralytic new-strung, and sins remitted, and a leper cleansed, and had received a sufficient proof of His power, both by deeds and words, then He sends them forth: and not to dangerous acts, for as yet there was no danger in Palestine, but they had only to stand against evil speakings. However, even of this He forewarns them, I mean of their perils; preparing them even before the time, and making them feel as in conflict by His continual predictions of that sort.

5. Then, since He had mentioned to us two pairs of apostles, that of Peter, and that of John, and after those had pointed out the calling of Matthew, but had said nothing to us either of the calling or of the name of the other apostles; here of necessity He sets down the list of them, and their number, and makes known their names, saying thus:

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; first, Simon, who is called Peter. Matthew 10:2

Because there was also another Simon, the Canaanite; and there was Judas Iscariot, and Judas the brother of James; and James the son of Alphæus, and James the son of Zebedee.

Now Mark does also put them according to their dignity; for after the two leaders, He then numbers Andrew; but our evangelist not so, but without distinction; or rather He sets before himself even Thomas who came far short of him.

But let us look at the list of them from the beginning.

First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother.

Even this is no small praise. For the one he named from his virtue, the other from his high kindred, which was in conformity to his disposition.

Then, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.

Do you see how He arranges them not according to their dignity. For to me John seems to be greater, not only than the others, but even than his brother.

After this, when he had said, Philip, and Bartholomew, he added, Thomas, and Matthew the Publican. Matthew 10:3

But Luke not so, but in the opposite order, and he puts him before Thomas.

Next, James the son of Alphæus. For there was, as I have already said, the son of Zebedee also. Then after having mentioned Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus, and Simon Zelotes, whom he calls also the Canaanite, he comes to the traitor. And not as a sort of enemy or foe, but as one writing a history, so has he described him. He says not, the unholy, the all unholy one, but has named him from his city, Judas Iscariot. Because there was also another Judas, Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus, who, Luke says, was the brother of James, saying, Judas the brother of James. Luke 6:16 Therefore to distinguish him from this man, it says, Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. Matthew 10:4 And he is not ashamed to say, who also betrayed Him. So far were they from ever disguising anything even of those things that seem to be matters of reproach.

And first of all, and leader of the choir, is the unlearned, the ignorant man. Acts 4:13

But let us see whither, and to whom, He sends them.

These twelve, it is said, Jesus sent forth. Matthew 10:5

What manner of men were these? The fishermen, the publicans: for indeed four were fishermen and two publicans, Matthew and James, and one was even a traitor. And what says He to them? He presently charges them, saying,

Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 10:5-6

For think not at all, says He, because they insult me, and call me demoniac, that I hate them and turn away from them. Nay, as I sought earnestly to amend them in the first place, so keeping you away from all the rest, to them do I send you as teachers and physicians. And I not only forbid you to preach to others before these, but I do not suffer you so much as to touch upon the road that leads there, nor to enter into such a city. Because the Samaritans too are in a state of enmity with the Jews. And yet it was an easier thing to deal with them, for they were much more favorably disposed to the faith; but the case of these was more difficult. But for all this, He sends them on the harder task, indicating his guardian care of them, and stopping the mouths of the Jews, and preparing the way for the teaching of the apostles, that people might not hereafter blame them for entering in to men uncircumcised, Acts 11:3 and think they had a just cause for shunning and abhorring them. And he calls them lost, not stray, sheep, in every way contriving how to excuse them, and winning their mind to himself.

6. And as you go, says He, preach, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Matthew 10:7

Do you see the greatness of their ministry? Do you see the dignity of apostles? Of nothing that is the object of sense are they commanded to speak, nor such as Moses spoke of, and the prophets before them, but of some new and strange things. For while the former preached no such things, but earth, and the good things in the earth, these preached the kingdom of Heaven, and whatever is there.

And not from this circumstance only were these the greater, but also from their obedience: in that they shrink not, nor are they backward, like those of old; but, warned as they are of perils, and wars, and of those insupportable evils, they receive with great obedience His injunctions, as being heralds of a kingdom.

And what marvel, says one, if having nothing to preach that is dismal or grievous, they readily obeyed? What do you say? Nothing grievous enjoined them? Do you not hear of the prisons, the executions, the civil wars, the hatred of all men? All which, He said a little while after, they must undergo. True, as to other men, He sent them to be procurers and heralds of innumerable blessings: but for themselves, He said and proclaimed beforehand, that they were to suffer terrible and incurable ills.

After this, to make them trustworthy, He says,

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: freely you have received, freely give.

See how He provides for their conduct, and that no less than for their miracles, implying that the miracles without this are nothing. Thus He both quells their pride by saying, Freely you have received, freely give; and takes order for their being clear of covetousness. Moreover, lest it should be thought their own work, and they be lifted up by the signs that were wrought, He says, freely you have received. You bestow no favor on them that receive you, for not for a price did ye receive these things, nor after toil: for the grace is mine. In like manner therefore give ye to them also, for there is no finding a price worthy of them.

7. After this plucking up immediately the root of the evils, 1 Timothy 6:10 He says,

Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet a staff.

He said not, take them not with you, but, even if you can obtain them from another, flee the evil disease. And you see that hereby He was answering many good purposes; first setting His disciples above suspicion; secondly, freeing them from all care, so that they might give all their leisure to the word; thirdly, teaching them His own power. Of this accordingly He quite speaks out to them afterwards, Lacked ye anything, when I sent you naked and unshod?

He did not at once say, Provide not, but when He had said, Cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, then He said, Provide nothing; freely you have received, freely give; by His way of ordering things consulting at once for their interest, their credit, and their ability.

But perhaps some one may say, that the rest may not be unaccountable, but not to have a scrip for the journey, neither two coats, nor a staff, nor shoes, why did He enjoin this? Being minded to train them up unto all perfection; since even further back, He had suffered them not to take thought so much as for the next day. For even to the whole world He was to send them out as teachers. Therefore of men He makes them even angels (so to speak); releasing them from all worldly care, so that they should be possessed with one care alone, that of their teaching; or rather even from that He releases them, saying, Take no thought how or what you shall speak.

And thus, what seems to be very grievous and galling, this He shows to be especially light and easy for them. For nothing makes men so cheerful as being freed from anxiety and care; and especially when it is granted them, being so freed, to lack nothing, God being present, and becoming to them instead of all things.

Next, lest they should say, whence then are we to obtain our necessary food? He says not unto them, You have heard that I have told you before, 'Behold the fowls of the air;' Matthew 6:26 (for they were not yet able to realise this commandment in their actions); but He added what came far short of this, saying, For the workman is worthy of his meat; declaring that they must be nourished by their disciples, that neither they might be high minded towards those whom they were teaching, as though giving all and receiving nothing at their hands; nor these again break away, as being despised by their teachers.

After this, that they may not say, Do you then command us to live by begging? and be ashamed of this, He signifies the thing to be a debt, both by calling them workmen, and by terming what was given, hire. For think not, says He, because the labor is in words, that the benefit conferred by you is small; nay, for the thing has much toil; and whatsoever they that are taught may give, it is not a free gift which they bestow, but a recompence which they render: for the workman is worthy of his meat. But this He said, not as declaring so much to be the worth of the apostles' labors, far from it; God forbid: but as both making it a law for them to seek nothing more, and as convincing the givers, that what they do is not an act of liberality, but a debt.

8. And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy: and there abide till ye go thence.

That is, it follows not, says He, from my saying, 'The workman is worthy of his meat,' that I have opened to you all men's doors: but herein also do I require you to use much circumspection. For this will profit you both in respect of your credit, and for your very maintenance. For if he is worthy, he will surely give you food; more especially when you ask nothing beyond mere necessities.

And He not only requires them to seek out worthy persons, but also not to change house for house, whereby they would neither vex him that is receiving them, nor themselves get the character of gluttony and self-indulgence. For this He declared by saying, There abide till ye go thence. And this one may perceive from the other evangelists also. Luke 10:7

Do you see how He made them honorable by this also, and those that received them careful; by signifying that they rather are the gainers, both in honor, and in respect of advantage?

Then pursuing again the same subject, He says,

And when you come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. Matthew 10:12-13

Do you see how far He declines not to carry His injunctions? And very fitly. For as champions of godliness, and preachers to the whole world, was He training them. And in that regard disposing them to practise moderation, and making them objects of love, He says,

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. Matthew 10:14-15

That is, do not, says He, because you are teachers, therefore wait to be saluted by others, but be first in showing that respect. Then, implying that this is not a mere salutation, but a blessing, He says, If the house be worthy, it shall come upon it, but if it deal insolently, its first punishment will be, not to have the benefit of your peace; and the second, that it shall suffer the doom of Sodom. And what, it will be said, is their punishment to us? You will have the houses of such as are worthy.

But what means, Shake off the dust of your feet? It is either to signify their having received nothing of them, or to be a witness to them of the long journey, which they had travelled for their sake.

But mark, I pray you, how He does not even yet give the whole to them. For neither does He as yet bestow upon them foreknowledge, so as to learn who is worthy, and who is not so; but He bids them inquire, and await the trial. How then did He Himself abide with a publican? Because he was become worthy by his conversion.

And mark, I pray you, how when He had stripped them of all, He gave them all, by suffering them to abide in the houses of those who became disciples, and to enter therein, having nothing. For thus both themselves were freed from anxiety, and they would convince the others, that for their salvation only are they come; first by bringing in nothing with them, then by requiring no more of them than necessities, lastly, by not entering all their houses without distinction.

Since not by the signs only did He desire them to appear illustrious, but even before the signs, by their own virtue. For nothing so much characterizes strictness of life, as to be free from superfluities, and so far as may be, from wants. This even the false apostles knew. Wherefore Paul also said, That wherein they

glory, they may be found even as we. 2 Corinthians 11:12

But if when we are in a strange country, and are going unto persons unknown to us, we must seek nothing more than our food for the day, much more when abiding at home.

9. These things let us not hear only, but also imitate. For not of the apostles alone are they said, but also of the saints afterwards. Let us therefore become worthy to entertain them. For according to the disposition of the entertainers this peace both comes and flies away again. For not only on the courageous speaking of them that teach, but also on the worthiness of them that receive, does this effect follow.

Neither let us account it a small loss, not to enjoy such peace. For this peace the prophet also from of old proclaims, saying, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring good tidings of peace. Then to explain the value thereof he added, That bring good tidings of good things.

This peace Christ also declared to be great, when He said, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. John 14:27 And we should do all things, so as to enjoy it, both at home and in church. For in the very church too the presiding minister gives peace. And this which we speak of is a type of that. And you should receive it with all alacrity, in heart before the actual communion. For if not to impart it after the communion be disgusting, how much more disgusting to repel from you him that pronounces it!

For you the presbyter sits, for you the teacher stands, laboring and toiling. What plea then will you have, for not affording him so much welcome as to listen to Him? For indeed the church is the common home of all, and when you have first occupied it, we enter in, strictly observing the type which they exhibited. For this cause we also pronounce peace in common to all, directly as we enter, according to that law.

Let no one therefore be careless, no one inattentive, when the priests have entered in and are teaching; for there is really no small punishment appointed for this. Yea, and I for one would rather enter into any of your houses ten thousand times, and find myself baffled, than not be heard when I speak here. This latter is to me harder to bear than the other, by how much this house is of greater dignity; our great possessions being verily laid up here, here all the hopes we have. For what is here, that is not great and awful? Thus both this table is far more precious and delightful than the other, and this candlestick than the candlestick there. And this they know, as many as have put away diseases by anointing themselves with oil in faith and in due season. And this coffer too is far better and more indispensable than that other chest; for it has not clothes but alms shut up in it; even though they be few that own them. Here too is a couch better than that other; for the repose of the divine Scriptures is more delightful than any couch.

And had we attained to excellence in respect of concord, then had we no other home beside this. And that there is nothing over-burdensome in this saying, the three thousand, Acts 2:41 bear witness, and the five thousand, Acts 4:4 who had but one home, one table, one soul; for the multitude of them that believed, we read, were of one heart and of one soul. Acts 4:32 But since we fall far short of their virtue, and dwell scattered in our several homes, let us at least, when we meet here, be earnest in so doing. Because though in all other things we be destitute and poor, yet in these we are rich. Wherefore here at least receive us with love when we come in unto you. And when I say, Peace be unto you, and you say, And with your spirit, say it not with the voice only, but also with the mind; not in mouth, but in understanding also. But if, while here you say, Peace also to your spirit, out of doors you are mine enemy, spitting at and calumniating me, and secretly aspersing me with innumerable reproaches; what manner of peace is this?

For I indeed, though thou speak evil of me ten thousand times, give you that peace with a pure heart, with sincerity of purpose, and I can say nothing evil at any time of you; for I have a father's bowels. And if I rebuke you at any time, I do it out of concern for you. But as for you, by your secret carping at me, and not receiving me in the Lord's house, I fear lest you should in return add to my despondency; not for your insulting me, not for your casting me out, but for your rejecting our peace, and drawing down upon yourself that grievous punishment.

For though I shake not off the dust, though I turn not away, what is threatened remains unchanged. For I indeed oftentimes pronounce peace to you, and will not cease from continually speaking it; and if, besides your insults, you receive me not, even then I shake not off the dust; not that I am disobedient to our Lord, but that I vehemently burn for you. And besides, I have suffered nothing at all for you; I have neither come a long journey, nor with that garb and that voluntary poverty am I come (therefore we first blame ourselves), nor without shoes and a second coat; and perhaps this is why ye also fail of your part. However, this is not a sufficient plea for you; but while our condemnation is greater, to you it imparts no excuse.

10. Then the houses were churches, but now the church has become a house. Then one might say nothing worldly in a house, now one may say nothing spiritual in a church, but even here ye bring in the business from the market place, and while God is discoursing, you leave off listening in silence to His sayings, and bring in the contrary things, and make discord. And I would it were your own affairs, but now the things which are nothing to you, those ye both speak and hear.

For this I lament, and will not cease lamenting. For I have no power to quit this house, but here we must needs remain until we depart from this present life. Receive us 2 Corinthians 7:2 therefore, as Paul commanded. For his language in that place related not to a meal, but to the temper and mind. This we also seek of you, even love, that fervent and genuine affection. But if you endure not even this, at least love yourselves, and lay aside your present remissness. This is sufficient for our consolation, if we see you approving yourselves, and becoming better men. So will I also myself show forth increased love, even though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

For indeed there are many things to bind us together. One table is set before all, one Father begot us, we are all the issue of the same throes, the same drink has been given to all; or rather not only the same drink, but also to drink out of one cup. For our Father desiring to lead us to a kindly affection, has devised this also, that we should drink out of one cup; a thing which belongs to intense love.

But there is no comparison between the apostles and us. I confess it too, and would never deny it. For I say not, to themselves, but not even to their shadows are we comparable.

But nevertheless, let your part be done. This will have no tendency to disgrace you but rather to profit you the more. For when even to unworthy persons ye show so much love and obedience, then shall you receive the greater reward.

For neither are they our own words which we speak, since you have no teacher at all on earth; but what we have received, that we also give, and in giving we seek for nothing else from you, but to be loved only. And if we be unworthy even of this, yet by our loving you we shall quickly be worthy. Although we are commanded to love not them only that love us, but even our enemies. Who then is so hardhearted, who so savage, that after having received such a law, he should abhor and hate even them that love him, full as he may be of innumerable evils?

We have partaken of a spiritual table, let us be partakers also of spiritual love. For if robbers, on partaking of salt, forget their character; what excuse shall we have, who are continually partaking of the Lord's body, and do not imitate even their gentleness? And yet to many, not one table only, but even to be of one city, has sufficed for friendship; but we, when we have the same city, and the same house, and table, and way, and door, and root, and life, and head, and the same shepherd, and king, and teacher, and judge, and maker, and father, and to whom all things are common; what indulgence can we deserve, if we be divided one from another?

11. But the miracles, perhaps, are what ye seek after, such as they wrought when they entered in; the lepers cleansed, the devils driven out, and the dead raised? Nay, but this is the great indication of your high birth, and of your love, that you should believe God without pledges. And in fact this, and one other thing, were the reasons why God made miracles to cease. I mean, that if when miracles are not performed, they that plume themselves on other advantages -- for instance, either on the word of wisdom, or on show of piety -- grow vainglorious, are puffed up, are separated one from another; did miracles also take place, how could there but be violent rendings? And that what I say is not mere conjecture, the Corinthians bear witness, who from this cause were divided into many parties.

Do not thou therefore seek signs, but the soul's health. Seek not to see one dead man raised; nay, for you have learned that the whole world is arising. Seek not to see a blind man healed, but behold all now restored unto that better and more profitable sight; and do thou too learn to look chastely, and amend your eye.

For in truth, if we all lived as we ought, workers of miracles would not be admired so much as we by the children of the heathen. For as to the signs, they often carry with them either a notion of mere fancy, or another evil suspicion, although ours be not such. But a pure life cannot admit of any such reproach; yea, all men's mouths are stopped by the acquisition of virtue.

Let virtue then be our study: for abundant are her riches, and great the wonder wrought in her. She bestows the true freedom, and causes the same to be discerned even in slavery, not releasing from slavery, but while men continue slaves, exhibiting them more honorable than freemen; which is much more than giving them freedom: not making the poor man rich, but while he continues poor, exhibiting him wealthier than the rich.

But if you would work miracles also, be rid of transgressions, and you have quite accomplished it. Yea, for sin is a great demon, beloved; and if you exterminate this, you have wrought a greater thing than they who drive out ten thousand demons. Do thou listen to Paul, how he speaks, and prefers virtue to miracles. But covet earnestly, says he, the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. 1 Corinthians 12:31 And when he was to declare this way, he spoke not of raising the dead, not of cleansing of lepers, not of any other such thing; but in place of all these he set charity. Harken also unto Christ, saying, Rejoice not that the demons obey you, but that your names are written in Heaven. Luke 10:20 And again before this, Many will say to me in that day, Have we not prophesied in Your name, and cast out devils, and done many mighty works, and then I will profess unto them, I know you not. Matthew 7:22-23 And when He was about to be crucified, He called His disciples, and said to them, By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, not if you cast out devils, but if you have love one to another. John 13:35 And again, Hereby shall all men know that You have sent me; not if these men raise the dead, but, if they be one.

For, as to miracles, they oftentimes, while they profited another, have injured him who had the power, by lifting him up to pride and vainglory, or haply in some other way: but in our works there is no place for any such suspicion, but they profit both such as follow them, and many others.

These then let us perform with much diligence. For if you change from inhumanity to almsgiving, you have stretched forth the hand that was withered. If you withdraw from theatres and go to the church, you have cured the lame foot. If you draw back your eyes from an harlot, and from beauty not your own, you have opened them when they were blind. If instead of satanical songs, you have learned spiritual psalms, being dumb, you have spoken.

These are the greatest miracles, these the wonderful signs. If we go on working these signs, we shall both ourselves be a great and admirable sort of persons through these, and shall win over all the wicked unto virtue, and shall 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.

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