

# Homily 32 on Romans

by St. John Chrysostom

---

*Paul exhorts the Romans to mark those who cause divisions and offenses, to praise their obedience, and to be wise and simple in their dealings with others.*

**Scripture:** 2 Thessalonians 3:6

**Topics:** "Church Unity", "Spiritual Warfare"

---

## Description

John Chrysostom emphasizes the importance of identifying and avoiding those who cause divisions and offenses by deviating from the true doctrine. He urges believers to be vigilant against deceitful individuals who serve their own interests rather than the Lord. Chrysostom highlights the destructive nature of division within the Church, stemming from opinions contrary to the teachings of the Apostles, often driven by selfish desires. He encourages believers to stay wise in goodness and innocent of evil, trusting in the God of peace to overcome Satan. The sermon concludes with a call to emulate Paul's dedication and love for Christ, striving to live a life that glorifies God.

---

## Transcript

Romans XVI. 17, 18

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Again an exhortation, and prayer after the exhortation. For after telling them to mark them which cause divisions, and not to listen to them, he proceeds, And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly: and, The grace of our Lord be with you. And notice how gently too he exhorts them: doing it not in the character of a counsellor, but that of a servant, and with much respect. For he calls them brethren, and supplicates them likewise. For, I beseech you, brethren, (he says).

Then he also puts them on the defensive by showing the deceitfulness of those who abused them. For as though they were not at once to be discerned, he says, I beseech you to mark, that is, to be exceedingly particular about, and to get acquainted with, and to search out thoroughly -- whom, pray? Why, those that cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned. For this is, if anything the subversion of the Church, the being in divisions. This is the devil's weapon, this turns all things upside-down.

For so long as the body is joined into one, he has no power to get an entrance, but it is from division that the offense comes. And whence is division? From opinions contrary to the teaching of the Apostles. And whence come opinions of this sort? From men's being slaves to the belly, and the other passions. For such, he says, serve not the Lord, but their own belly. And so there would be no offense, there would be no division, unless some opinion were thought of contrary to the doctrine of the Apostles.

And this he here points out by saying, contrary to the doctrine. And he does not say which we have taught, but which you have learned, so anticipating them, and showing that they were persuaded of and had heard them and received them. And what are we to do to those who make mischief in this way? He does not say have a meeting and come to blows, but avoid them. For if it was from ignorance or error that they did this, one ought to set them right. But if they sin willingly, spring away from them.

And in another place too he says this. For he says, Withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly 2 Thessalonians 3:6: and in speaking to Timothy about the coppersmith, he gives him the like advice, and says, Of whom also beware. 2 Timothy 4:15 Then also to lash (κομίδειν) those who dare to do such things, he mentions also the reason of their devising this division. For they that are such, he says, serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly. And this he said too when he wrote to the Philippians, Whose god is their belly.

Philippians 3:19 But here he appears to me to intimate those of the Jews, whom he ever uses particularly to find fault with as gluttonous. For in writing to Titus too, he said of them, Evil beasts, slow bellies. Titus 1:12, see 5:10 And Christ also blames them on this head: You devour widows' houses Matthew 23:14, He says. And the Prophets accuse them of things of the kind. For, My beloved, He says, has waxen fat and gross, and has kicked Deuteronomy 32:15. Wherefore also Moses exhorted them, and said, When you have eaten and drunken and are full, remember the Lord your God. (ib. 6:11, 12.)

And in the Gospels, they who say to Christ, What sign do you show unto us? John 6:30 pass over everything else, and remember the manna. So do they everywhere appear to be possessed with this affection. How then do you come not to be ashamed at having slaves of the belly for your teachers, when you are a brother of Christ? Now the ground of the error is this, but the mode of attack is again a different disorder, viz. flattery. For it is by fair speeches, he says, that they deceive the hearts of the simple.

For their attention reaches only to words; but their meaning is not such, for it is full of fraud. And he does not say that they deceive you, but the hearts of the simple. And even with this he was not satisfied, but with a view to making this statement less grating, he says,

Ver. 19. For your obedience has come abroad unto all men.

This he does, not to leave them free to be shameless, but to win them beforehand with encomiums, and the number of his witnesses, to arrest their attention. For neither is it I alone that am the witness, but the whole world. And he does not say for your understanding, but, your obedience: that is, their compliance, which was evidence of much meekness in them. I am glad therefore on your behalf. And this is no small encomium too. Then, after the praise, admonition. For lest, after liberating them from any charges against them, he should make them the more listless, as not being observed; he gives them another hint in the words,

I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

You see then how he attacks them again, and that without their suspecting it. For this looks like intimating that some of them were apt to be led astray.

Ver. 20. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

For since he had spoken of those who caused divisions and offenses among them, he has mentioned the God of peace also, that they might feel hopeful about the riddance of these evils. For he that rejoices in this (i.e., peace) will put an end to that which makes havoc of it. And he does not say, will subject, but will bruise Genesis 3:19, which is a stronger expression. And not those people only, but also him who was the general over them herein, Satan. And not will bruise merely, but under your feet, so that they may obtain the victory themselves, and become noble by the trophy. And the time again is made a ground of comfort. For he adds, shortly. And this was prayer and prophecy as well at once. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

That greatest weapon; that impregnable wall; that tower unshaken! For he reminds them of the grace, that he may give them the more alacrity. Because if you have been freed from the ills more grievous by far, and freed by grace only, much more will you be freed from the lesser, now you have become friends too, and contribute your own share likewise. You see how he neither puts prayer without works, nor works without prayer. For after giving them credit for their obedience, than he prays; to show that we need both, our own part as well as God's part, if we are to be duly saved. For it was not before only, but now too, even though we be great and in high esteem, we need grace from Him.

Ver. 21. Timotheus my work-fellow salutes you.

Observe the customary encomiums again. And Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater my kinsmen.

This Jason Luke also mentions, and sets before us his manliness also, when he says, that they drew him to the rulers of the city, crying, etc. Acts 17:5 And it is likely that the others too were men of note. For he does not mention relations barely, unless they were also like him in religiousness.

Ver. 22. I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle, salute you.

This too is no small encomium, to be Paul's amanuensis. Still it is not to pass encomiums on himself that he says this, but that he might attach a warm love to him on their part, for this ministration.

Ver. 23. Gaius mine host (ξἴστος), and of the whole Church, salutes you.

See what a crown he has framed for him by bearing witness to such great hospitality in him, and brought in the entire Church into this man's house! For by the word ξἴστος, used here, he means a host, not a . But when you hear that he was Paul's host, do not admire him for his munificence only, but also for his strictness of life. For except he were worthy of Paul's excellency, he would never have lodged there, since he, who took pains to go beyond many of Christ's commands, would never have trespassed against that law, which bids us be very particular about who receive us, and about lodging with worthy persons. Matthew 10:11 Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, salutes you, and Quartus a brother. There is a purpose in his adding the chamberlain of the city, for as he wrote to the Philippians, They of Cæsar's household salute you Philippians 4:22, that he might show that the Gospel had taken a hold upon great folk, so here too he mentions the title with a view to the same object, and to show that, to the man who gives heed, neither riches are a hindrance, nor the cares of government, nor anything else of the kind.

Ver. 24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

See what we ought to begin and to end with everywhere! For in this he laid the foundation of the Epistle, and in this he puts on the roof, at once praying for the mother of all good things for them, and calling the whole of his loving-kindness to their mind. For this is the best proof of a generous teacher, to benefit his learners not by word only, but likewise by prayer, for which cause also one said, But let us give ourselves continually to prayers, and to the ministry of the word. Acts 6:4

Who is there then to pray over us, since Paul has departed? These who are the imitators of Paul. Only let us yield ourselves worthy of such intercession (συνηγορᾶς), that it may not be that we hear Paul's voice here only, but that hereafter, when we are departed, we may be counted worthy to see the wrestler of Christ. Or rather, if we hear him here, we shall certainly see him hereafter, if not as standing near him, yet see him we certainly shall, glistening near the Throne of the king.

Where the Cherubim sing the glory, where the Seraphim are flying, there shall we see Paul, with Peter, and as a chief and leader of the choir of the Saints, and shall enjoy his generous love. For if when here he loved men so, that when he had the choice of departing and being with Christ, he chose to be here, much more will he there display a warmer affection. I love Rome even for this, although indeed one has other grounds for praising it, both for its greatness, and its antiquity, and its beauty, and its populousness, and for its power, and its wealth, and for its successes in war.

But I let all this pass, and esteem it blessed on this account, that both in his lifetime he wrote to them, and loved them so, and talked with them while he was with us, and brought his life to a close there. Wherefore the city is more notable upon this ground, than upon all others together. And as a body great and strong, it has as two glistening eyes the bodies of these Saints. Not so bright is the heaven, when the sun sends forth his rays, as is the city of Rome, sending out these two lights into all parts of the world.

From thence will Paul be caught up, from thence Peter. Just bethink you, and shudder (φροξάτε) at the thought of what a sight Rome will see, when Paul arises suddenly from that deposit, together with Peter, and is lifted up to meet the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 What a rose will Rome send up to Christ! Isaiah 35:1 what two crowns will the city have about it! What golden chains will she be girded with! What fountains possess! Therefore I admire the city, not for the much gold, not for the columns, not for the other display there, but for these pillars of the Church. 1 Corinthians 15:38 Would that it were now given me to throw myself round (περιχύθῃ) the body of Paul, and be riveted to the tomb, and to see the dust of that body that filled up that which was lacking after Christ Colossians 1:24, that bore the marks (στίγματα,) Galatians 6:17 that sowed the Gospel everywhere yea, the dust of that body through which he ran to and fro everywhere!

The dust of that body through which Christ spoke, and the Light shone forth more brilliant than any lightning, and the voice started out, more awful than any thunder to the devils! Through which he uttered that blessed voice, saying, I could wish that myself were accursed, for my brethren Romans 9:3, through which he spoke before kings, and was not ashamed! Psalm 119:46 through which we come to know Paul through which also Paul's Master! Not so awful to us is the thunder, as was that voice to the demons!

For if they shuddered at his clothes Acts 19:12, much more did they at his voice. This led them away captive, this cleansed out the world, this put a stop to diseases, cast out vice, lifted the truth on high, had Christ riding upon it, and everywhere went about with Him; and what the Cherubim were, this was Paul's voice, for as He was seated upon those Powers, so was He upon Paul's tongue. For it had become worthy

of receiving Christ, by speaking those things only which were acceptable to Christ, and flying as the Seraphim to height unspeakable!

For what more lofty than that voice which says, For I am persuaded that neither Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus? Romans 8:38-39 What pinions does not this discourse seem to you to have? What eyes? Ezekiel 10:12 It was owing to this that he said, for we are not ignorant of his devices. 2 Corinthians 2:11 Owing to this did the devils flee not only at hearing him speak, but even at seeing his garments.

This is the mouth, the dust whereof I would fain see, through which Christ spoke the great and secret things, and greater than in His own person, (for as He wrought, so He also spoke greater things by the disciples, ) through which the Spirit gave those wondrous oracles to the world! For what good thing did not that mouth effect? Devils it drove out, sins it loosed, tyrants it muzzled, philosophers' mouths it stopped, the world it brought over to God, savages it persuaded to learn wisdom, all the whole order of the earth it altered.

Things in Heaven too it disposed what way it listed 1 Corinthians 5:3-4, binding whom it would, and loosing in the other world, according unto the power given unto it. 2 Corinthians 13:10 Nor is it that mouth only, but the heart too would fain see the dust of, which a man would not do wrong to call the heart of the world, and a fountain of countless blessings, and a beginning, and element of our life. For the spirit of life was furnished out of it all, and was distributed through the members of Christ, not as being sent forth by arteries, but by a free choice of good deeds.

This heart was so large, as to take in entire cities, and peoples, and nations. For my heart he says, is enlarged. 2 Corinthians 6:11 Yet even a heart thus large, did this very charity that enlarged it many a time straiten and oppress. For he says, Out of much affliction (θλ■ψεως) and anguish (συνοχ■ς) of heart I wrote to you. 2 Corinthians 2:4 I were desirous to see that heart even after its dissolution, which burned at each one that was lost, which travailed a second time with the children that had proved abortions Galatians 4:19, which saw God, (for the pure in heart, He says, shall see God,) Matthew 5:8 which became a Sacrifice, (for a sacrifice to God is a contrite heart,) Psalm 51:17 which was loftier than the heavens, which was wider than the world, which was brighter than the sun's beam, which was warmer than fire, which was stronger than adamant, which sent forth rivers, (for rivers, it says, of living water shall flow out of his belly,) John 7:38 wherein was a fountain springing up, and watering, not the face of the earth, but the souls of men, whence not rivers only, but even fountains of tears, issued day and night, which lived the new life, not this of ours, (for I live, he says, yet not I, but Christ lives in me, Galatians 2:20 so Paul's heart was His heart, and a tablet of the Holy Spirit, and a book of grace); which trembled for the sins of others, (for I fear, he says, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain; Galatians 4:11 lest as the serpent beguiled Eve; 2 Corinthians 11:3 lest when I come I should find you not such as I would;) 2 Corinthians 12:20 which both feared for itself, and was confiding too, (for I fear, he says, lest by any means after having preached to others I myself should be a castaway, 1 Corinthians 9:27 And, I am persuaded that neither angels nor powers shall be able to separate us;) alluding to Romans 9:3 which was counted worthy to love Christ as no other man loved Him: which despised death and hell, yet was broken down by brothers' tears, (for he says, what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?)

Acts 21:13 which was most enduring, and yet could not bear to be absent from the Thessalonians by the space of an hour! 1 Thessalonians 2:17; 3:10 Fain would I see the dust of hands that were in a chain,

through the imposition of which the Spirit was furnished, through which the divine writings were written, (for behold how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand: and again, The salutation of me Paul with my own hand,) 1 Corinthians 16:21 of those hands at the sight of which the serpent fell off into the fire.

Acts 28:5 Fain would I see the dust of those eyes which were blinded gloriously, which recovered their sight again for the salvation of the world; which even in the body were counted worthy to see Christ, which saw earthly things, yet saw them not, which saw the things which are not seen, which saw not sleep, which were watchful at midnight, which were not effected as eyes are. I would also see the dust of those feet, which ran through the world and were not weary; which were bound in the stocks when the prison shook, which went through parts habitable or uninhabited, which walked on so many journeys.

And why need I speak of single parts? Fain would I see the tomb, where the armor of righteousness is laid up, the armor of light, the limbs which now live, but which in life were made dead; and in all whereof Christ lived, which were crucified to the world, which were Christ's members, which were clad in Christ, were a temple of the Spirit, an holy building, bound in the Spirit, Acts 20:22 riveted to the fear of God, which had the marks of Christ. This body is a wall to that City, which is safer than all towers, and than thousands of battlements.

And with it is that of Peter. For he honored him while alive. For he went up to see Peter, Galatians 1:18 and therefore even when departed grace deigned to give him the same abode with him. Fain would I see the spiritual Lion. For as a lion breathing (Gr. sending,) Canticles 2:15 forth fire (π■ρ ■φτε■ς) upon the herds of foxes, so rushed he upon the clan of demons and philosophers, and as the burst of some thunderbolt, was borne down into the host of the devil. Luke 13:32 For he did not even come to set the battle in array against him, since he feared so and trembled at him, as that if he saw his shadow, and heard his voice, he fled even at a distance.

And so did he deliver over to him the fornicator, though at a distance, and again snatched him out of his hands 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-11; and so others also, that they might be taught not to blaspheme. 1 Timothy 1:20 And consider how he sent forth his own liegemen against him, rousing them, suppling them. And at one time he says to the Ephesians, We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. Ephesians 6:12 Then too he puts our prize in heavenly places.

For we struggle not for things of the earth, he says, but for Heaven, and the things in the Heavens. And to others, he says, Do you not know that we shall judge Angels? How much more the things of this life? 1 Corinthians 6:3 Let us then, laying all this to heart, stand nobly; for Paul was a man, partaking of the same nature with us, and having everything else in common with us. But because he showed such great love toward Christ, he went up above the Heavens, and stood with the Angels.

And so if we too would rouse ourselves up some little, and kindle in ourselves that fire, we shall be able to emulate that holy man. For were this impossible, he would never have cried aloud, and said, Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1 Let us not then admire him only, or be struck with him only, but imitate him, that we too may, when we depart hence, be counted worthy to see him, and to share the glory unutterable, which God grant that we may all attain to by the grace and love toward man of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom, and with Whom, be glory to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, now and evermore. Amen.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-chrysostom/homily-32-on-romans/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**