

# John 12:42-50

by St. John Chrysostom

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in Christ and the Father, and the need to flee vainglory and seek true glory by living a simple life and caring for one's soul.*

**Scripture:** John 12:44

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Rejecting Jesus"

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## Description

John Chrysostom emphasizes the dangers of succumbing to the love of money and vainglory, which can lead to a lack of faith and disobedience to God. He highlights how some rulers believed in Jesus but did not confess Him due to fear of losing honor from men. Chrysostom delves into the importance of believing in Jesus and the Father, showcasing the inseparable connection between them. He also discusses the consequences of rejecting Jesus and emphasizes the need to prioritize faith over worldly desires.

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## Transcript

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

1. It is necessary for us to avoid alike all the passions which corrupt the soul, but most especially those, which from themselves generate numerous sins. I mean such as the love of money. It is in truth of itself a dreadful malady, but it becomes much more grievous, because it is the root and mother of all mischiefs. Such also is vainglory. See, for instance, how these men were broken off from the faith through their love of honor. Many, it says, of the chief rulers also believed on Him, but because of the Jews they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. As He said also to them before, How can you believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that comes from God only? John 5:44 So then they were not rulers, but slaves in the utmost slavery. However, this fear was afterwards done away, for nowhere during the time of the Apostles do we find them possessed by this feeling, since in their time both rulers and priests believed. The grace of the Spirit having come, made them all firmer than adamant. Since therefore this was what hindered them from believing at this time, hear what He says.

John 12:44

He that believes in Me, believes not on Me, but on Him that sent Me.

As though He had said, Why fear ye to believe in Me? Faith passes to the Father through Me, as does also unbelief. See how in every way He shows the unvaryingness of His Essence. He said not, He that believes Me, lest any should assert that He spoke concerning His words; this might have been said in the case of mere men, for he that believes the Apostles, believes not them, but God. But that you might learn that He speaks here of the belief on His Essence, He said not, He that believes My words, but, He that believes in Me. And wherefore, says some one, has He nowhere said conversely, He that believes in the Father, believes not on the Father but on Me? Because they would have replied, Lo, we believe in the Father, but we believe not on you. Their disposition was as yet too infirm. Anyhow, conversing with the disciples, He did speak thus: You believe in the Father, believe also on Me John 14:1; but seeing that these then were too weak to hear such words, He leads them in another way, showing that it is not possible to believe in the Father, without believing on Him. And that you may not deem that the words are spoken as of man, He adds,

John 12:45

He that sees Me, sees Him that sent Me.

What then! Is God a body? By no means. The seeing of which He here speaks is that of the mind, thence showing the Consubstantiality. And what is, He that believes in Me? It is as though one should say, He that takes water from the river, takes it not from the river but from the fountain; or rather this image is too weak, when compared with the matter before us.

John 12:46

I have come a light into the world.

For since the Father is called by this name everywhere both in the Old (Testament) and in the New, Christ uses the same name also; therefore Paul also calls Him, Brightness Hebrews 1:3, having learned to do so from this source. And He shows here His close relationship with the Father, and that there is no separation between them, if so be that He says that faith on Him is not on Him, but passes on to the Father. And He called Himself light, because He delivers from error, and dissolves mental darkness.

John 12:47

If any man hear not Me, and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

2. For lest they should think, that for want of power He passed by the despisers, therefore spoke He the, I came not to judge the world. Then, in order that they might not in this way be made more negligent, when they had learned that he that believes is saved, and he that disbelieves is punished, see how He has also set before them a fearful court of judgment, by going on to say,

John 12:48

He that rejects Me, and receives not My words, has One to judge him.

If the Father judges no man, and you are not come to judge the world, who judges him? The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him. For since they said, He is not from God, He says this, that, they shall not then be able to say these things, but the words which I have spoken now, shall be in place of an

accuser, convicting them, and cutting off all excuse. And the word which I have spoken. What manner of word?

John 12:49

For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak?

Surely these things were said for their sakes, that they might have no pretense of excuse. Since if this were not the case, what shall He have more than Isaiah? For he too says the very same thing, The Lord God gives me the tongue of the learned, that I should know when I ought to speak a word. Isaiah 50:4, Septuagint What more than Jeremiah? For he too when he was sent was inspired. Jeremiah 1:9 What then Ezekiel? For he too, after eating the roll, so spoke. Ezekiel 3:1 Otherwise also, they who were about to hear what He said shall be found to be causes of His knowledge. For if when He was sent, He then received commandment what He should say, you will then argue that before He was sent He knew not. And what more impious than these assertions? If (that is) one take the words of Christ in this sense, and understand not the cause of their lowliness? Yet Paul says, that both he and those who were made disciples knew what was that good and acceptable and perfect will of God Romans 12:2, and did the Son not know until He had received commandment? How can this be reasonable? Do you see not that He brings His expressions to an excess of humility, that He may both draw those men over, and silence those who should come after. This is why He utters words befitting a mere man, that even so He may force us to fly the meanness of the sayings, as being conscious that the words belong not to His Nature, but are suited to the infirmity of the hearers.

John 12:50

And I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said to Me, so I speak.

Do you see the humility of the words? For he that has received a commandment is not his own master. Yet He says, As the Father raises up the dead and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom He will. John 5:21 Hath He then power to quicken whom He will, and to say what He will has He not power? What He intends then by the words is this; The action has not natural possibility, that He should speak one set of words, and I should utter another. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. He said this to those that called Him a deceiver, and asserted that He had come to do hurt. But when He says, I judge not, He shows that He is not the cause of the perdition of these men. By this He all but plainly testifies, when about to remove from, and to be no more with, them, that I converse with you, speaking nothing as of Myself, but all as from the Father. And for this cause He confined His discourse to them to humble expressions, that He might say, Even until the end did I utter this, My last word, to them. What word was that? As the Father said to Me, so I speak. Had I been opposed to God I should have said the contrary, that I speak nothing of what is pleasing to God, so as to attract the honor to Myself, but now I have so referred all things to Him, as to call nothing My own. Why then do ye not believe Me when I say that 'I have received a commandment,' and when I so vehemently remove your evil suspicion respecting rivalry? For as it is impossible for those who have received a commandment to do or say anything but what their senders wish, as long as they fulfill the commandment, and do not forge anything; so neither is it possible for Me to say or do anything except as My Father wills. For what I do He does, because He is with Me, and 'the Father has not left Me alone.' John 8:29 Do you see how everywhere He shows Himself connected

with Him who begot Him, and that there is no separation? For when He says, I am not come of Myself, He says it not, as depriving Himself of power, but as taking away all alienation or opposition. For if men are masters of themselves, much more the Only-begotten Son. And to show that this is true, hear what Paul says, He emptied Himself, and gave Himself for us. Philippians 2:7 But, as I said, a terrible thing is vainglory, very terrible Ephesians 5:2; for this made these men not to believe, and others to believe ill, so that the things which were said for the sake of those men, through lovingkindness, they turned to impiety.

3. Let us then ever flee this monster: various and manifold it is, and everywhere sheds its peculiar venom, in wealth, in luxury, in beauty of person. Through this we everywhere go beyond needful use; through this arises extravagance in garments, and a great swarm of domestics; through this the needful use is every where despised, in our houses, our garments, our table; and extravagance prevails. Will you enjoy glory? Do almsdeeds, then shall Angels praise you, then shall God receive you.

Now the admiration goes no farther than the goldsmiths and weavers, and thou departest without a crown, often seeing that you receive curses. But if you put not these things about your body, but expend them in feeding the poor, great will be the applause from all sides, great the praise. Then shall you have them, when you give them to others; when you keep them to yourself, then you have them not. For a house is a faithless treasury, but a sure treasury are the hands of the poor.

Why do you adorn your body, while your soul is neglected, possessed by uncleanness? Why do you not bestow so much thought on your soul, as your body? You ought to bestow greater; but anyhow, beloved, we ought to bestow equal care upon it. For tell me, if any one asked you which you would choose, that your body should be fresh and of good habit and surpassing in beauty, and wear mean raiment, or having the body deformed and full of diseases, to wear gold and finery; would you not much prefer to have beauty depending on the nature of your person, than on the raiment with which you are clothed?

And will you choose this in the case of your body, but the contrary in the case of your soul; and, when you have that ugly and unsightly and black, do you think to gain anything from golden ornaments? What madness is this! Shift this adorning within, put these necklaces about your soul. The things that are put about your body help neither to its health nor to its beauty, for it will not make black white, nor what is ugly either beautiful or good looking. But if you put them about your soul, you shall soon make it white instead of black, instead of ugly and unsightly, you shall make it beautiful and well-favored.

The words are not mine, but those of the Lord Himself, who says, Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow Isaiah 1:18, Septuagint; and, Give alms-- and all things shall be clean unto you Luke 11:41; and by such a disposition you shall beautify not yourself only, but your husband. For they if they see you putting off these outward ornaments, will have no great need of expense, and not having it, they will abstain from all covetousness, and will be more inclined to give alms, and you too will be able boldly to give them fitting counsel.

At present you are deprived of all such authority. For with what mouth will you speak of these things? With what eyes will you look your husbands in the face, asking money for alms, when you spend most upon the covering of your bodies? Then will you be able boldly to speak with your husband concerning almsgiving, when you lay aside your ornaments of gold. Even if you accomplish nothing, you have fulfilled all your part; but I should rather say, that it is impossible that the wife should not gain the husband, when she speaks by the very actions.

For what do you know, O woman, whether you shall save your husband? 1 Corinthians 7:16 As then now you shall give account both for yourself and for him, so if you put off all this vanity you shall have a double crown, wearing your crown and triumphing with your husband through those unalloyed ages, and enjoying the everlasting good things, which may we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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