

# Three Homilies on the Devil - Part 2

by St. John Chrysostom

---

*The Devil's power is not inherent, but rather comes from our own slothfulness and carelessness, and the key to salvation is repentance.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:1, Job 1:13, Job 2:7, Job 6:2, Job 42:1

**Topics:** "Temptation And Suffering", "Enduring Faith"

---

## Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the story of Adam and Job, highlighting the contrast between their responses to temptation and suffering. He emphasizes the importance of vigilance, courage, and steadfastness in the face of trials, using Job as an example of enduring faith despite extreme hardships. Chrysostom urges the listeners to draw strength from Job's resilience and to find comfort in his unwavering trust in God, even amidst the most severe afflictions.

---

## Transcript

I will state another solution of this question, in order that you may learn, that the Devil does not injure, but their own slothfulness everywhere overthrows those who do not take heed. Let the Devil be allowed to be exceeding wicked, not by nature, but by choice and conviction. For that the Devil is not by nature wicked, learn from his very names. For the Devil, the slanderer that is, is called so from slandering; for he slandered man to God saying Does Job reverence you for nought?

But put out your hand, and touch what he has, see if he will not blaspheme you to your face. He slandered God again to man saying Fire fell from heaven and burnt up the sheep. For he was anxious to persuade him, that this warfare was stirred up from above, out of the heavens, and he set the servant at variance with the master, and the master with his servant; rather he did not set them at variance, but attempted to indeed, but was not able, in order that whenever you may set another servant at variance with his master, Adam with God, and believing the Devil's slander, you may learn that he gained strength, not owing to his own power but from that man's slothfulness and carelessness.

He is called the Devil therefore on that account. But to slander, and to refrain from slander is not natural, but an action which takes place and which ceases to take place, occurring and ceasing to occur. Now such things do not reach the rank of the nature or of the essence of a thing. I know that this consideration about essence and accident is hard to be grasped by many. But there are they who are able to lend a finer ear, wherefore also we have spoken these things. Do you wish that I should come to another name?

You shall see that that also is not a name which belongs to his essence or nature. He is called wicked. But his wickedness is not from his nature, but from his choice. For even this at one time is present, at another time is absent. Do not thou then say this to me that it always remains with him. For it was not indeed with him at the beginning, but afterwards came upon him; wherefore he is called apostate. Although many men are wicked, he alone is called wicked by pre-eminence.

Why then is he thus called? Because though in no way wronged by us, having no grudge whether small or great, when he saw mankind had in honour, he straightway envied him his good. What therefore could be worse than this wickedness, except when hatred and war exist, without having any reasonable cause. Let the Devil then be let alone, and let us bring forward the creation, in order that you may learn that the Devil is not the cause of ills to us, if we would only take heed: in order that you may learn that the weak in choice, and the unprepared, and slothful, even were there no Devil, falls, and casts himself into many a depth of evil.

The Devil is evil. I know it myself and it is acknowledged by all, yet give heed strictly to the things which are now about to be said. For they are not ordinary matters, but those about which many words, many times, and in many places arise, about which there is many a fight and battle not only on the part of the faithful against unbelievers but also on the part of the faithful against the faithful. For this is that which is full of pain.

3. The Devil then is acknowledged, as I said, to be evil by all. What shall we say about this beautiful and wondrous creation? Pray is the creation too, wicked? And who is so corrupt, who so dull, and demented as to accuse the creation? What then shall we say about this? For it is not wicked, but is both beautiful and a token of the wisdom and power and lovingkindness of God. Hear at least how the prophet marvels at it, saying, How are your works magnified O Lord! In wisdom You have made them all. He did go through them one by one, but withdrew before the incomprehensible wisdom of God. And that he has made it thus beautiful and vast hear a certain one saying, From the vastness and beauty of the creatures, the originator of them is proportionably seen. Hear too Paul saying, For the invisible things of Him, since the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made. For each of these by which he spoke declared that the creation leads us to the knowledge of God, because it causes us to know the Master fully. What then? If we see this beautiful and wondrous creation itself becoming a cause of impiety to many, shall we blame it? In no wise, but them who were unable to use the medicine rightly. Whence then is this which leads us to the knowledge of God, a cause of impiety? The wise says he were darkened in their understandings, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator. The Devil is nowhere here, a Demon is nowhere here, but the creation alone is set before us, as the teacher of the knowledge of God. How then has it become the cause of impiety? Not owing to its own nature, but owing to the carelessness of those who do not take heed. What then? Shall we take away even the creation? Tell me.

And why do I speak about the creation? Let us come to our own members. For even these we shall find to be a cause of destruction if we do not take heed, not because of their own nature, but because of our sloth. And look; an eye was given, in order that you may behold the creation and glorify the Master. But if you dost not use the eye well, it becomes to you the minister of adultery. A tongue has been given, in order that you may speak well, in order that you may praise the Creator. But if you give not excellent heed, it becomes a cause of blasphemy to you. And hands were given you that you may stretch them forth unto prayer. But if you are not wary, you stretch them out unto covetousness. Feet were given in order that you may run unto good works, but if you art careless you will cause wicked works by means of them: Do you

see that all things hurt the weak man? Do you see that even the medicines of salvation inflict death upon the weak, not because of their own nature but because of his weakness? God made the heaven in order that you may wonder at the work, and worship the master. But others leaving the creator alone, have worshipped the heaven; and this from their own carelessness and senselessness. But why do I speak of the creation? Assuredly what could be more conducive to salvation than the Cross? But this Cross has become an offense to the weak. For the word of the Cross is to them that are perishing, foolishness: but to those which are being saved, it is the power of God. And again, we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block and unto Gentiles foolishness. What could be more fit for teaching than Paul, and the apostles? But the Apostles became a savour of death to many. He says at least to one a savour from death unto death: to the other a savour from life unto life. Do you see that the weak is hurt even by Paul, but the strong is injured not even by the Devil?

4. Do you wish that we should exercise the argument in the case of Jesus Christ? What is equal to that salvation? What more profitable than that presence? But this very saving presence, so profitable, became an additional means of chastening to many. For for judgment says he came I into this world, that they which see not may see, and that they which see may become blind. What do you say? The light became a cause of blindness? The light did not become a cause of blindness, but the weakness of the eyes of the soul was not able to entertain the light.

You have seen that a weak man is hurt on all sides, but the strong is benefited on all sides. For in every case, the purpose is the cause, in every case the disposition is master. Since the Devil, if you would understand it, is even profitable to us, if we use him aright, and benefits us greatly, and we gain no ordinary advantages; and this, we showed in a small degree from the case of Job. And it is possible also to learn this from Paul: for writing about the fornicator he thus speaks Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved.

Behold even the Devil has become a cause of salvation, but not because of his own disposition, but because of the skill of the Apostle. For as the physicians taking serpents and cutting off their destructive members, prepare medicines for antidotes; so also did Paul. He took whatever was profitable of the chastening that proceeds from the Devil, and left the rest alone; in order that you may learn that the Devil is not the cause of salvation, but that he hasted to destroy and devour mankind.

But that the Apostle through his own wisdom cut his throat: hear in the second epistle to the Corinthians, what he saith about this very fornicator, confirm your love towards him, lest by any means such an one should be swallowed up by over much sorrow. And, we be taken advantage of by Satan. We have snatched beforehand the man from the gullet of the wild beast, he saith. For the Apostle often used the Devil as an executioner. For the executioners punish those who have done wrong, not as they choose, but as the judges allow.

For this is the rule for the executioner, to take vengeance, giving heed to the command of the judge. Do you see to what a dignity the Apostle mounted? He who was invested with a body, used the bodiless as an executioner; and that which their common master saith to the Devil, concerning Job: charging him thus, Touch his flesh, but you shall not touch his life; giving him a limit, and measure of vengeance, in order that the wild beast might not be impetuous and leap upon him too shamelessly; this too the Apostle does.

For delivering the fornicator over to him he says For the destruction of the flesh, that is you shall not touch his life. Do you see the authority of the servant? Fear not therefore the Devil, even if he be bodiless: for he

has come in contact with him. And nothing is weaker than he who has come into such contact even though he be not invested with a body, as then nothing is stronger than he who has boldness even though he bear about a mortal body.

5. All these things have been now said by me, not in order that I may discharge the Devil from blame, but that I may free you from slothfulness. For he wishes extremely to attribute the cause of our sins to himself, in order that we being nourished by these hopes, and entering on all kinds of evil, may increase the chastening in our own case, and may meet with no pardon from having transferred the cause to him. Just as Eve met with none. But let us not do this. But let us know ourselves. Let us know our wounds. For thus shall we be able to apply the medicines. For he who does not know his disease, will give no care to his weakness. We have sinned much: I know this well. For we are all liable for penalties. But we are not deprived of pardon; nor shall we fall away from repentance for we still stand in the arena, and are in the struggles of repentance. Are You old, and have you come to the last outlet of life? Do not consider even thus that you have fallen from repentance, nor despair of your own salvation, but consider the robber who was freed on the cross. For what was briefer than that hour in which he was crowned? Yet notwithstanding even this was enough for him, for salvation. Art thou young? Do not be confident in your youth, nor think that you have a very fixed term of life, For the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. On this account he has made our end invisible, in order that we might make our diligence and our forethought plain. Do you not see men taken away prematurely day after day? On this account a certain one admonishes make no tarrying to turn to the Lord and put not off from day to day, lest at any time, as you delay, you are destroyed. Let the old man keep this admonition, let the young man take this advice. Yea, are you in security, and are you rich, and do you abound in wealth, and does no affliction happen to you? Still hear what Paul says when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them. Affairs are full of much change. We are not masters of our end. Let us be masters of virtue. Our Master Christ is loving.

6. Do you wish that I shall speak of the ways of repentance? They are many, and various, and different, and all lead to heaven. The first way of repentance is condemnation of sins. Declare first your sins that you may be justified. Wherefore also the prophet said I said, I will speak out, my transgression to the Lord, and you remitted the iniquity of my heart. Condemn yourself therefore for your sins. This is enough for the Master by way of self-defense. For he who condemns his sins, is slower to fall into them again.

Awake your conscience, that inward accuser, in order that you may have no accuser at the judgment seat of the Lord. This is one way of repentance, the best; and there is another not less than this, not to bear a grudge against your enemies to overcome anger, to forgive the sins of our fellow-servants. For so will those which have been done against the master be forgiven us. See the second expiation of sins: For if ye forgive says he, your debtors, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Do you wish to learn a third way of repentance? Fervent and diligent prayer, and to do this from the bottom of the heart. Have you not seen that widow, how she persuaded the shameless judge? But you have a gentle Master, both tender, and kind. She asked, against her adversaries, but you do not ask against your adversaries, but on behalf of your own salvation. And if you would learn a fourth way, I will say almsgiving. For this has a great power and unspeakable. For Daniel saith to Nebuchadnezzar when he had come to all kinds of evil, and had entered upon all impiety, O King let my counsel be acceptable unto you, redeem your sins by almsgiving and your iniquities by compassion on the poor.

What could be compared with this lovingkindness? After countless sins, after so many transgressions, he is promised that he will be reconciled with him he has come into conflict with if he will show kindness to his own fellow-servants. And modesty, and humility, not less than all words spoken, exhaust the nature of sins. And the publican is proof, being unable to declare his good deeds, in sight of all, bringing forward his humility, and laying aside the heavy burden of his sins.

See we have shown five ways of repentance: first the condemnation of sins, next the forgiveness of our neighbours' sins, thirdly that which comes of prayer, fourth that which comes of almsgiving, fifth that which comes of humility. Do not thou then be lazy; but walk in all these day by day. For the ways are easy, nor can you plead poverty. And even if you live poorer than all, you are able to leave your anger, and be humble, and to pray fervently, and to condemn sins, and your poverty is in no way a hindrance.

And why do I speak thus, when not even in that way of repentance in which it is possible to spend money (I speak of almsgiving), not even there is poverty any hindrance to us from obeying the command? The widow who spent the two mites is a proof. Having learned then the healing of our wounds, let us constantly apply these medicines, in order that we may return to health and enjoy the sacred table with assurance; and with much glory, reach Christ the king of glory, and attain to everlasting good by the grace, and compassion, and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom be glory, power, honour, to the Father, together with the all holy, and good and quickening Spirit, now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

### Homily 3. On the Power of Man to Resist the Devil.

That evil comes of sloth, and virtue from diligence, and that neither wicked men, nor the devil himself, are able to do the wary man any harm. The proof of this from many passages, and amongst others from those which relate to Adam and to Job.

1. The day before yesterday we set on foot our sermon concerning the Devil, out of our love for you. But others, the day before yesterday while these matters were being set on foot here, took their places in the theatre, and were looking on at the Devil's show. They were taking part in lascivious songs; you were having a share in spiritual music. They were eating of the Devil's garbage: you were feeding on spiritual unguents. Who pray decoyed them? Who pray separated them from the sacred flock? Did the Devil pray deceive them? How did he not deceive you? You and they are men alike; I mean as regards your nature. You and they have the same soul, you have the same desires, so far as nature is concerned. How is it then that you and they were not in the same place? Because you and they have not the same purpose. On this account they indeed are under deception, but you beyond deception. I do not say these things again as discharging the Devil from accusation, but as desiring earnestly to free you from sins. The Devil is wicked; I grant this indeed, but he is wicked for himself not towards us if we are wary. For the nature of wickedness is of this kind. It is destructive to those alone who hold to it. Virtue is the contrary. It is not only able to profit those who hold to it, but those nearest at hand too. And in order that you may learn that evil is evil in itself, but good is also good to others, I provide you with proverbial evidence: My son, says he, if you have become evil, you shall bear your evils alone, but if wise, for yourself and your neighbour.

They were deceived in the theatre, but you were not deceived. This is the greatest proof of things, a clear testimony, and unquestionable reasoning, that in every case, the purpose is master. Do thou accordingly use this method of proof, and if you see a man living in wickedness, and exhibiting all kinds of evil; then blaming the providence of God, and saying that by the necessity of fortune and fate and through tyranny of

Demons He gave us our nature, and on all sides shifting the cause from himself indeed, and transferring it to the creator who provides for all; silence his speech not by word, but by deed, showing him another fellow servant living in virtue and forbearance. There is no need of long speeches, no need of a complex plan, nor even of syllogisms. By means of deeds the proof is brought about. He said to him: you are a servant, and he is a servant; you are a man and he is a man. You live in the same world: you are nourished with the same nourishment under the same heaven: How is it that you are living in wickedness, he in virtue? On this account God allowed the wicked to be mingled with the good; and did not give one law to the wicked indeed, and appointed another world as a colony for the good, but mixed these and those; conferring great benefit. For the good appear more thoroughly approved when they are in the midst of those who try to hinder them from living rightly, and who entice them to evil, and yet keep hold of virtue. For there must he saith be also heresies among you that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Therefore also on this account he has left the wicked to be in the world, in order that the good may shine the brighter. Do you see how great is the gain? But the gain is not owing to the wicked, but owing to the courage of the good. On this account also we admire Noe, not because he was righteous nor yet because he was perfect alone, but because in that perverse and wicked generation he preserved his virtue, when he had no pattern of virtue, when all men invited him to wickedness; and he went his whole way contrary to them, like some traveller, pursuing his way while the great multitude is being borne along vehemently. On this account he did not simply say Noe was just, perfect, but added in his generation in that perverse, that desperate generation, when there was no acquisition of virtue. To the good indeed then this was the gain from the wicked. Thus at all events, also trees tossed about by contrary winds, become stronger. And there is a gain to the wicked from their mixing with the good. They feel confusion, they are ashamed, they blush in their presence; and even if they do not abstain from evil, yet nevertheless they dare what they dare with secrecy. And this is no small thing not to have transgression publicly committed. For the life of the others becomes the accuser of the wickedness of these. Hear at least what they say about the righteous man. He is grievous to us, even when beheld, and it is no small beginning of amendment to be tormented at his presence. For if the sight of the righteous man did not torment them, this word would not have been uttered. But to be stung, and pinched in conscience at his presence, would be no little hindrance to indulging in wickedness with pleasure, Do you see how great is the gain both to the good from the wicked, and to the wicked from the good? On this account God has not set them apart, but allowed them to be mingled together.

2. Let our argument also about the Devil be the same. For on this account He has left him also to be here, in order that he might render you the stronger, in order that he may make the athlete more illustrious, in order that the contests may be greater. When therefore any one says, why has God left the Devil here? Say these words to him, because he not only does no harm to the wary and the heedful, but even profits them, not owing to his own purpose (for that is wicked), but owing to their courage who have used that wickedness aright. Since he even fixed upon Job not on this account that he might make him more illustrious, but in order that he might upset him. On this account he is wicked both because of such an opinion and such a purpose. But notwithstanding he did no harm to the righteous man, but he rather rejoiced in the conflict as we accordingly showed. Both the Demon showed his wickedness and the righteous man his courage. But he does upset many says one: owing to their weakness, not owing to his own strength: for this too has been already proved by many examples. Direct your own intention aright then, and you shall never receive harm from any, but shall get the greatest gain, not only from the good but even from the wicked. For on this account, as I have before said, God has suffered men to be with one

another, and especially the wicked with the good, in order that they may bring them over to their own virtue. Hear at least what Christ saith to his disciples, The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a woman who took leaven and hid it in three measures of meal. So that the righteous have the power of leaven, in order that they may transfer the wicked to their own manner of conduct. But the righteous are few, for the leaven is small. But the smallness in no way injures the lump, but that little quantity converts the whole of the meal to itself by means of the power inherent in it. So accordingly the power also of the righteous has its force not in the magnitude of their number, but in the grace of the Spirit. There were twelve Apostles. Do you see how little is the leaven? The whole world was in unbelief. Do you see how great is the lump? But those twelve turned the whole world to themselves. The leaven and the lump had the same nature but not the same manner of conduct. On this account he left the wicked in the midst of the good, that since they are of the same nature as the righteous they may also become of the same purpose.

Remember these things. With these stop the mouths of the indolent, the dissolute, the slothful, the indisposed towards the labours of virtue, those who accuse their common Master. You have sinned he saith be still. Do not add a second more grievous sin. It is not so grievous to sin, as after the sin to accuse the Master. Take knowledge of the cause of the sin, and you will find that it is none other than yourself who hast sinned. Everywhere there is a need of a good intention. I have shown you this not from simple reasoning only, but from the case of fellow-servants living in the world itself. Do thou also use this proof. Thus too our common master will judge us. Learn this method of proof, and no one will be able to reason with you. Is any a fornicator? Show him another who is self-restrained. Is any covetous and rapacious? Show him one who gives alms. Does he live in jealousy and envy? Show him one clean from passion. Is he overcome by anger? Bring into the midst one who is living in wisdom, for we must not only have recourse to ancient example, but take our models from present times. For even today by the grace of God, good deeds are done not less than of old. Is a man incredulous? And does he think that the scriptures are false? Does he not believe that Job was such as he was? Show him another man, emulating the life of that righteous person. Thus will the Master also judge us: He places fellow servants with fellow-servants, nor does he give sentence according to his own judgment, in order that no one may begin to say again, as that servant said, who was entrusted with the talent, and who instead of a talent brought the accusation. You are an austere man. For he ought to mourn, because he did not double the talent, but rendered his sin the more grievous, by adding to his own idleness, his accusation against the Master. For what says he? I knew you that you are an austere man. O miserable, and wretched, ungrateful and lazy man! You ought to have accused your own idleness, and to have taken away somewhat from your former sin. But thou in bringing an account against the master hast doubled your sin instead of doubling your talent.

3. On this account God places together servants and servants in order that the one set may judge the other, and that some being judged by the others may not be able for the future to accuse the master. On this account, he saith The Son of Man comes in the glory of his Father. See the equality of the glory: he does not say in glory like to the glory of the Father, but in the glory of the Father, and will gather together all the nations. Terrible is the tribunal: terrible to the sinful, and the accountable. Since to those who are conscious to themselves of good works, it is desirable and mild. And he will place the sheep on his right hand, and the kids on his left. Both these and those are men. For what reason then are those indeed sheep but these kids? Not that you may learn a difference in their nature, but the difference in their purpose. But for what reason are they who did not show compassion kids? Because that animal is unfruitful and is not able to contribute services, either by its milk, or by progeny, or by its hair, to those who possess it, being on all sides destitute of such a contribution as this, on account of the immaturity of its age. On this account he has called those who bear no fruit, by comparison, kids, but those on the right

hand sheep. For from these the offering is great, both of their natural wool, their progeny, and their milk. What then does he say to them? You saw me hungering and ye fed me, naked and ye clothed me, a stranger and ye took me in. Again to those he says the contrary. And yet both these and those were alike men, both these and those received the same promises, the same rewards were assigned to both on doing right. The same person came both to these and to those, with the same nakedness: and to these and to those with the same hunger, and in the same way and a stranger. All things were alike to those and to these.

How then was the end not the same? Because the purpose did not permit it. For this alone made the difference. On this account the one set went to Gehenna, but the other to the Kingdom. But if the Devil were the cause to them of their sins, these would not be destined to be chastened, when another sinned and drove them on. Do you see here both those who sin, and those who do good works? Do you see how on seeing their fellow-servants they were silenced? Come and let us bring our discourse to another example for your benefit.

There were ten virgins he says. Here again there are purposes which are upright, and purposes which are sinful, in order you may see side by side, both the sins of the one and the good works of the others. For the comparison makes these things the plainer. And these and those were virgins; and these were five, and also those. All awaited the bridegroom. How then did some enter in, and others did not enter in? Because some indeed were churlish, and others were gentle and loving.

Do you see again that the purpose determined the nature of the end, not the Devil? Do you see that the judgments were parallel, and that the verdict given proceeds from those who are like each other? Fellow-servants will judge fellow-servants. Do you wish that I should show you a comparison arising from contrasts? For there is one also from contrasts so that the condemnation may become the greater. The men of Nineveh he saith shall rise up, and shall condemn this generation.

The judged are no longer alike, for the one are barbarians, the others are Jews. The one enjoyed prophetic teaching, the others were never partakers of a divine instruction. And this is not the only difference, but the fact that in that case a servant went to them, in this the master; and that man came and proclaimed an overthrow; but this man declared the glad tidings of a kingdom of heaven. Which of these was it the more likely, would believe? The barbarians, and ignorant, and they who had never partaken of divine teaching, or they who had from their earliest age been trained in prophetic books?

To every one, it is plain, that the Jews would be more likely to believe. But the contrary took place. And these disbelieved the Master when he preached a kingdom of heaven, but those believed their fellow-servant when he threatened an overthrow: in order that their goodness, and these men's folly might be manifested to a greater degree. Is there a Demon? A Devil? Chance? Or Fate? Has not each become the cause to himself both of evil, and of virtue? For if they themselves were not to be liable to account, he would not have said that they shall judge this generation.

Nor would he have said that the Queen of the South would condemn the Jews. For then indeed not only will one people condemn another people, but one man will often judge a whole people, when they who, it is allowed, might readily have been deceived, are found to remain undeceived, and they who ought in every way to have the advantage, turn out to be worsted. On this account, we made mention of Adam and of Job, for there is necessity to revert to that subject, so as to put the finish to our discourse.

He attacked Adam indeed by means of mere words, but Job by means of deeds. For the one he denuded of all his wealth, and deprived of his children. But from this man he took not away anything, great or little of his possessions. But let us rather examine the very words and the method of the plot. The serpent came says he and said to the woman, What is it that God has said, ye shall not eat of every tree which is in the garden? Here it is a serpent; there a woman, in the case of Job: mean while great is the difference between the counsellors.

The one is a servant, the other a partner of the man's life. She is a helpmate, but the other is under subjection. Do you see how unpardonable this is? Eve indeed, the servant in subjection deceived: but him not even his partner, and helpmate could overthrow. But let us see what he saith. What is this that God has said, you shall not eat of every tree? Assuredly indeed God did not say this but the opposite. See the villany of the Devil. He said that which was not spoken, in order that he might learn what was spoken.

What then did the woman? She ought to have silenced him, she ought not to have exchanged a word with him. In foolishness she declared the judgment of the Master. Thereby she afforded the Devil a powerful handle.

4. See what an evil it is to commit ourselves rashly to our enemies, and to conspirators against us. On this account Christ used to say, Give not holy things to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before the swine, lest they turn and rend you. And this happened in the case of Eve. She gave the holy things to the dog, to the swine. He trod under foot the words: and turned and rent the woman. And see how he works evil. You shall not die the death says he.

Give me your attention on this point, that the woman was able to understand the deceit. For he immediately announced his enmity, and his warfare against God, he immediately contradicted Him. Let it be so. Before this you declared the judgment to one who wished to learn it. After this why did you follow one who said the opposite? God said you shall die the death. The Devil made answer to this and said you shall not die the death. What could be clearer than this warfare? From what other quarter ought one to learn the enemy and the foe, than from his answer returned to God?

She ought then immediately to have fled from the bait, she ought to have started back from the snare. You shall not die the death, says he for God knows, that on the day on which you eat, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods. In hope of a greater promise she cast away the goods in her hand. He promised that he would make them Gods, and cast them down into the tyranny of death. Whence then O woman did you believe the Devil? What good did you discern? Was not the trustworthiness of the lawgiver sufficient to prove that the one was God, both creator and framer of the world, and the other the Devil and an enemy?

And I do not say the Devil. You thought that he was a mere serpent. Ought a serpent to claim such equality that you should tell him the Master's judgment? You see that it was possible to perceive the deceit, but she would not, and yet God gave many proofs of his own beneficence and showed forth his care of his works. For he formed man, who had not existed before; and breathed a soul into him, and made him according to his image, making him ruler of all things upon the earth, and granted him a helpmate, planted Paradise, and having committed to him the use of the rest of the trees, refused him the taste of one only: and this very prohibition he made for man's advantage.

But the Devil manifested no good things by his deed, whether little, or great: but exciting the woman with mere words and puffing her up with vain hopes, thus he deceived her. But nevertheless she considered

the Devil to be more worthy of credit than God, although God showed forth his good will by his works. The woman believed in one who professed mere words, and nothing else. Do you see how, from folly alone and sloth, and not from force, the deceit happened? And in order that you may learn it more clearly hear how the scripture accuses the woman: For it does not say, being deceived, but seeing the tree that it was fair, she ate.

So that the blame belongs to her uncontrolled vision, not to the deceit alone which comes from the Devil. For she was defeated by yielding to her own desire, not by the wickedness of the Demon. On this account she did not have the benefit of pardon, but though she said, the serpent deceived me, she paid the uttermost penalty. For it was in her power not to have fallen. And in order that you may understand this more clearly, come, let us conduct our discourse to the case of Job; from the defeated to the vanquisher, from the conquered to the conqueror.

For this man will give us greater zeal, so that we may raise our hands against the Devil. There he who deceived and conquered was a serpent; here the tempter was a woman, and she did not prevail: and yet at least she was far more persuasive than he. For to Job after the destruction of his wealth, after the loss of his children, after being stripped bare of all his goods, her wiles were added. But in the other case there was nothing of this kind. Adam did not suffer the destruction of his children, nor did he lose his wealth: he did not sit upon a dunghill, but inhabited a Paradise of luxury and enjoyed all manner of fruits, and fountains and rivers, and every other kind of security.

Nowhere was there labour or pain, or despair and cares, or reproaches, and insults, or the countless ills which assailed Job: but nevertheless, when nothing of this kind existed, he fell and was overthrown. Is it not evident that it was on account of sloth? Even so therefore as the other, when all these things beset him, and weighed upon him, stood nobly and did not fall, is it not evident that his steadfastness was owing to his vigilance of soul?

5. On both sides, beloved, reap the utmost gain, and avoid the imitation of Adam knowing how many ills are begotten of indolence: and imitate the piety of Job, learning how many glorious things spring from earnestness. Consider him, the conqueror throughout, and you shall have much consolation in all pain and peril. For as it were in the common theatre of the world that blessed and noble man stands forth, and by means of the sufferings which happened to him discourses to all to bear all things which befall them nobly, and never give in to the troubles which come upon them.

For verily, there is no human suffering which cannot receive consolation from thence. For the sufferings which are scattered over the whole world, these came together, and bore down upon one body, even his. What pardon then shall there be for him who is unable to bear with thankfulness his share of the troubles which are brought upon him? Since he appears not bearing a part only, but the entire ills of all men, and in order that you may not condemn the extravagance of my words, come, and let us take in hand severally the ills that came upon him, and bring forward this fulfilment of them.

And if you wish, let us first bring forward that which seems to be the most unendurable of all, I mean poverty, and the pain which arises from it. For everywhere all men bewail this. What was poorer than Job, who was poorer than the outcasts at the baths, and those who sleep in the ashes of the furnace, poorer in fact than all men? For these indeed have one ragged garment, but he sat naked, and had only the garment which nature supplies, the clothing of the flesh, and this the Devil destroyed on all sides, with a distressing kind of decay.

Again these poor folk are at least under the roof of the porches at the baths, and are covered with a shelter. But he continued always to pass his nights in the open air, not having even the consolation of a bare roof. And, what is still greater, the fact that these are conscious of many terrible evils within themselves, but he was conscious of nothing against himself. For this is to be noticed in each of the things which happened to him, a thing which caused him greater pain, and produced more perplexity; the ignorance of the reason of what took place.

These persons then, as I said, would have many things with which to reproach themselves. And this contributes no little to consolation in calamity; to be conscious in oneself of being punished justly. But he was deprived of this consolation, and while exhibiting a conversation full of virtue, endured the fate of those who had dared to do extreme wickedness. And these folk who are with us, are poor from the outset, and from the beginning are versed in calamity. But he endured calamity in which he was unversed, experiencing the immense change from wealth.

As then the knowledge of the cause of what takes place, is the greatest consolation; so it is not less than this, to have been versed in poverty from the beginning, and so to continue in it. Of both these consolations that man was deprived, and not even then, did he fall away. Do you see him indeed come to extreme poverty, even in comparison with which it is impossible to find a fellow? For what could be poorer than the naked who has not even a roof over him? Yea rather not even was it in his power to enjoy the bare ground, but he sat upon the dunghill.

Therefore whenever you see yourself come to poverty, consider the suffering of the just one, and straightway you shall rise up, and shake off every thought of despondency. This one calamity therefore seems to men to be the groundwork of all sufferings together. And the second after it, yea rather before it, is the affliction of the body. Who then was even so disabled? Who endured such disease? Who received or saw any one else receive so great an affliction? No one. Little by little his body was wasted, and a stream of worms on every side issued from his limbs, the running was constant, and the evil smell which surrounded him was strong, and the body being destroyed little by little, and decaying with such putrefaction, used to make food distasteful and hunger was to him strange and unusual.

For not even was he able to enjoy the nourishment which was given to him. For says he I see my food to be loathsome. Whenever then you fall into weakness, O man, remember that body and that saintly flesh. For it was saintly and pure, even when it had so many wounds. And if any one belong to the army, and then unjustly and without any reasonable pretext, be hanged upon the pillory, and has his sides rasped to pieces, let him not think the matter to be a reproach, nor let him give way to the pain when he thinks upon this saint.

But this man, says one, has much comfort and consolation in knowing that God was bringing these sufferings upon him. This indeed especially troubled and disturbed him, to think that the just God who had in every way been served by him, was at war with him. And he was not able to find any reasonable pretext for what took place, since, when at least he afterwards learned the cause, see what piety he showed, for when God said to him Do you think that I have had dealings with you in order that you might appear righteous? conscious-stricken he says I will lay my hand upon my mouth, once have I spoken but to a second word I will not proceed, and again as far as the hearing of the ear I have heard you before, but now mine eye has seen you, wherefore I have held myself to be vile, and am wasted away, and I consider myself to be earth and ashes.

6. But if you think that this is sufficient for consolation, you will yourself also be able to experience this comfort. And even if you do not suffer any of these misfortunes at the hands of God but owing to the insolence of men; and yet give thanks and do not blaspheme him who is able to prevent them indeed, but who permits them for the sake of testing you: just as they who suffer at the hands of God are crowned, so also you shall obtain the same reward, because you have borne nobly the calamities which were brought upon you from men, and gave thanks to him who was able indeed to hinder them, but not willing.

Behold then! You have seen poverty and disease, and both in the extremest degree brought upon this just man. Do you wish that I should show you the warfare at nature's hands, in such excessive degree waged then against this noble man? He lost ten children, the ten at one fell swoop, the ten in the very bloom of youth, ten who displayed much virtue, and that not by the common law of nature, but by a violent and pitiable death. Who could be able to recount so great a calamity? No one. Whenever therefore you lose son and daughter together, have recourse to this just man, and you shall find altogether much comfort for yourself. Were these then the only misfortunes which happened to him? The desertion and treachery of his friends, and the gibes, and raillery, and the mockery and derision, and the tearing in pieces by all, was something intolerable. For the character of calamities is not of such a kind, that they who reproach us about our calamities are wont to vex our soul. Not only was there no one to soothe him but many even on many sides beset him with taunts. And you see him lamenting this bitterly, and saying but even you too fell upon me. And he calls them pitiless, and says My neighbours have rejected me, and my servants spoke against me, and I called the sons of my concubines, and they turned away from me. And others says he sport upon me, and I became the common talk of all. And my very raiment says he abhorred me. These things at least are unbearable to hear, still more to endure in their reality, extreme poverty, and intolerable disease new and strange, the loss of children so many and so good, and in such a manner, reproaches and gibes, and insults from men. Some indeed mocked and some reproached and others despised; not only enemies, but even friends; not only friends, but even servants, and they not only mock and reproach, but even abhorred him, and this not for two or three, or ten days, but for many months; and (a circumstance which happened in that man's case alone) not even had he comfort by night, but the delusions of terrors by night were a greater aggravation of his misfortunes by day. For that he endured more grievous things in his sleep, hear what he says why dost thou frighten me in sleep, and terrify me in visions? What man of iron, what heart of steel could have endured so many misfortunes? For if each of these was unbearable in itself, consider what a tumult their simultaneous approach excited. But nevertheless he bore all these, and in all that happened to him he sinned not, nor was there guile in his lips.

7. Let the sufferings of that man then be the medicines for our ills, and his grievous surging sea the harbour of our sufferings, and in each of the accidents which befall us, let us consider this saint, and seeing one person exhausting the misfortunes of the universe, we shall conduct ourselves bravely in those which fall to our share, and as to some affectionate mother, stretching forth her hands on all sides, and receiving and reviving her terrified children, so let us always flee to this book, and even if the pitiable troubles of all men assail us, let us take sufficient comfort for all and so depart. And if you say, he was Job, and for this reason bore all this, but I am not like him; you supply me with a greater accusation against yourself and fresh praise of him. For it is more likely that you should be able to bear all this than he. Why pray? Because he indeed was before the day of grace and of the law, when there was not much strictness of life, when the grace of the Spirit was not so great, when sin was hard to fight against, when the curse prevailed and when death was terrible. But now our wrestlings have become easier, all these things being removed after the coming of Christ; so that we have no excuse, when we are unable to reach the same

standard as he, after so long a time, and such advantage, and so many gifts given to us by God. Considering therefore all these things, that misfortunes were greater for him, and that when the conflict was more grievous, then he stripped for the contest; let us bear all that comes upon us nobly, and with much thankfulness, in order that we may be able to obtain the same crown as he, by the grace and lovingkindness of Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom be glory to the Father together with the Holy Spirit, now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-chrysostom/three-homilies-on-the-devil-part-2/>

# *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)**