

Desert Father Quotes

by Desert Fathers

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, prayer, and self-awareness in the Christian life, and provides examples from the lives of the Desert Fathers.

Scripture: Proverbs 22:4, Matthew 26:41, 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Humility"

Description

Desert Fathers emphasize the importance of humility, obedience, and vigilance in the spiritual journey, highlighting how these virtues protect the soul from temptations and passions. They caution against judging others, encourage resisting sinful desires, and stress the need for continuous self-examination and repentance. The Desert Fathers also teach about the power of prayer, the struggle against evil thoughts, and the constant battle against one's own weaknesses and the devil's deceptions.

Transcript

Before anything else we need humility. Dorotheos

Humility protects the soul from all the passions and also from every temptation. Dorotheos

Judge not him who is guilty of fornication, if you are chaste, or you will break the law like him. For He who said Do not commit fornication said also Do not judge. Pambos

Obedience responds to obedience. When someone obeys God, then God obeys his request. Mios

Abba Bessarion, when he was dying

The monk should be like the cherubim and seraphim: all eyes.

Courage stands in the middle between cowardice and foolhardiness; humility in the middle between arrogance and servility . Modesty is a mean between timidity and boldness. Dorotheos

A man who gives way to his passions is like a man who is shot at by an enemy, catches the arrow in his hands, and then plunges it into his own heart. A man who is resisting his passions is like a man who is shot at by an enemy, and although the arrow hits him, it does not seriously wound him because he is wearing a breastplate. But the man who is uprooting his passions is like a man who is shot at by an enemy, but who strikes the arrow and shatters it or turns it back into his enemy's heart. Dorotheos

The thief was on the cross and he was justified by a single word; and Judas who was counted in the number of the apostles lost all his labor in one single night and descended from heaven to hell. Therefore, let no-one boast of his good works, for all those who trust in themselves fall. Xanthias

The beginning of evil is the lack of vigilance. Poemen

Humility of soul helps more than everything else; without it no one can overcome lewdness or any other sin. Cassian

Whatever helps us to achieve purity of heart, we must follow with all our might; whatever hinders us from it, we must shun as a dangerous and hurtful thing. Moses

When we do not experience warfare, we ought so much the more to humiliate ourselves. For God seeing our weakness, protects us; when we glorify ourselves, He withdraws His protection and we are lost. Fathers

Abba Poemen said about Abba Pior that every single day he made a fresh beginning. Pior

There was in the Cells an Abba called Apollo. If someone came to find him about doing a piece of work, he would set out joyfully, saying, I am going to work with Christ today, for the salvation of my soul, for that is the reward he gives. Apollo

If a king wishes to subdue a city belonging to enemies, he first of all keeps them without bread and water, and the enemy harassed by hunger, surrenders; so it is in respect of the hostile passions, for if a man endures fasting and hunger, his enemies become stricken with weakness in the soul. John

A brother asked Abba Poemen: What does it mean to get angry at one's brother without cause? And he replied: When your brother attacks you, whatever the insults are, if you get angry at him, you are getting angry without cause. Even if he were to pull out your right eye, and to cut off your right hand, if you get angry at him, you are getting angry without cause. Yet if he were to try to take you away from God, then get angry! Poemen

Abba Moses asked Abba Sylvanus, Can a man lay a new foundation every day? The Abba said, If he works hard, he can lay a new foundation at every moment. Sylvanus

A brother said to the Abba : There does not seem to be any conflict in my heart. He received this reply: You are like a house that is open to the four winds, so that anyone who likes can go in or out without you noticing. If you only had one door to it, and choose to shut it in the face of wicked thoughts, then you would notice them and you would have to fight against them. Fathers

It is told that a thought came to a monk: Rest today and you can do penance tomorrow. He replied: No, I will do penance today and rest tomorrow. Fathers

If the inner person is not watchful, the outer person cannot be watched. Fathers

"It is dangerous for a man to try teaching before he is trained in the good life. A man whose house is about to fall down may invite travellers inside to refresh them, but instead they will be hurt in the collapse of the house. It is the same with teachers who have not carefully trained themselves in the good life; they destroy their hearers as well as themselves. Their mouth invites to salvation, their way of life leads to ruin."

"Macarius said also, 'If you are stirred to anger when you want to reprove someone, you are gratifying your own passions. Do not lose yourself in order to save another.'"

"Arsenius always used to say this, 'Why, words, did I let you get out? I have often been sorry that I have spoken, never that I have been silent.'"

"Two hermits lived together for many years without a quarrel. One said to the other, 'Let's have a quarrel with each other, as is the way of men.' The other answered, 'I don't know how a quarrel happens.' The first said, 'Look here, I put a brick between us, and I say, That's mine. Then you say, No, it's mine. That is how you begin a quarrel.' So they put a brick between them, and one of them said, 'That's mine.' The other said, 'No; it's mine.' He answered, 'Yes, it's yours. Take it away.' They were unable to argue with each other.²⁶"

"The devil appeared to a monk disguised as an angel of light, and said to him, 'I am the angel Gabriel, and I have been sent to you.' But the monk said, 'Are you sure you weren't sent to someone else? I am not worthy to have an angel sent to me.' At that the devil vanished."

"Daniel said, 'If the body is strong, the soul weakens. If the body weakens, the soul is strong.'"

"Evagrius said, 'A wandering mind is strengthened by reading, and prayer. Passion is dampened down by hunger and work and solitude. Anger is repressed by psalmody and long-suffering and mercy. But all these should be at the proper times and in due measure.'"

"Antony said to Poemen, 'Our great work is to lay the blame for our sins upon ourselves before God, and to expect to be tempted to our last breath.'"

"Mathois said, 'The nearer a man comes to God, the more he sees himself to be a sinner. Isaiah the prophet saw the Lord and knew himself to be wretched and unclean (Is. 6:5).'"

"I may be wrong but I think nothing needs so much effort as prayer to God. If anyone wants to pray, the demons try to interrupt the prayer, for they know that prayer is the only thing that hinders them. All the other efforts in a religious life, whether they are made vehemently or gently, have room for a measure of rest. But we need to pray till our dying breath. That is the great struggle."

"Evagrius said, 'Cut the desire for many things out of your heart and so prevent your mind being dispersed and your stillness lost.'"

"They did not talk, not because they hated conversation, but because they wanted to listen intently to the voice of God in silence; they did not dislike eating, but were feeding on the Word of God so that they did not have room for earthly food or time to bother with it; they did not avoid company because it bored them, but, as one of them said, 'I cannot be with you and with God.'³⁴ It was not a dislike of sleep that made them keep vigil, but an eager and longing attitude of waiting for the coming of Christ:"

"The hermit said, 'This is the way to be strong: when temptations start to speak in your mind do not answer them but get up, pray, do penance, and say "Son of God, have mercy upon me." "'

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