

1 Thessalonians 2:9-12

by St. John Chrysostom

Paul's labor and travail for the Thessalonians was motivated by a desire to lead them to walk worthily of God.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:14

Topics: "Persevering Faith", "Christian Ministry"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the importance of enduring all toils in the ministry without feeling burdened, following the example of Paul who worked diligently to not be a burden to his disciples. Chrysostom emphasizes the need for teachers to behave holily, righteously, and unblamably towards their followers, exhorting and encouraging them to walk worthily of God's kingdom and glory. He reminds believers that their faith should not be moved by afflictions, as they are appointed to endure trials. Chrysostom encourages believers to imitate the steadfastness of the early Church in the face of persecution, highlighting the importance of standing firm in faith.

Transcript

For you remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe: as you know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, to the end that you should walk worthily of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

The teacher ought to do nothing with a feeling of being burdened, that tends to the salvation of his disciples. For if the blessed Jacob was buffeted night and day in keeping his flocks, much more ought he, to whom the care of souls is entrusted, to endure all toils, though the work be laborious and mean, looking only to one thing, the salvation of his disciples, and the glory thence arising to God. See then, Paul, a man that was a Preacher, an Apostle of the world, and raised to so great honor, worked with his hands that he might not be burdensome to his disciples.

For you remember, he says, my brethren, our labor and travail. He had said previously, we might have been burdensome as the Apostles of Christ, as he also says in the Epistle to the Corinthians, Do you not know that they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the Temple? Even so also did Christ ordain that they which proclaim the Gospel should live of the Gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:13-14 But I, he says, would not, but I labored; and he did not merely work, but with much diligence. Observe then what he says; For you remember, he has not said, the benefits received from me, but, our labor and travail: for working

night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God. And to the Corinthians he said a different thing, I robbed other Churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you. 2 Corinthians 11:8 And yet even there he worked, but of this he made no mention, but urged what was more striking, as if he had said, I was maintained by others when ministering to you. But here it is not so. But what? Working night and day. And there indeed he says, And when I was present with you, and was in want, I was not a burden on any man, and, I took wages that I might minister unto you. 2 Corinthians 11:8-9 And here he shows that the men were in poverty, but there it was not so.

On this account he frequently addresses them as witnesses. For you are witnesses, he says, and God also; God was worthy to be believed, but this other was that which most fully assured them. For that indeed was uncertain to those who were ignorant of it; but this was without doubt to all. For do not enquire whether it was Paul who said these things. Much beyond what was necessary he gives them assurance. Wherefore he says, You are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe. It was proper to praise them again. On this account he sets these things before them, which were sufficient to persuade them. For he that stood there in want, and did not receive anything, would much more not receive anything now. How holily, says he, and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe.

As you know how we exhorted and comforted each one of you, as a father does his own children. Above having spoken of his behavior here he speaks of his love, which was more than what belonged to his rule over them. And what is said marks his freedom from pride. As a father his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, to the end that you should walk worthily of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. When he says, and testifying, then he makes mention of fathers; although we testified, it was not violently, but like fathers. Each one of you. Strange! In so great a multitude to omit no one, neither small nor great, neither rich nor poor. Exhorting you, he says; to bear. And comforting and testifying. Exhorting, therefore they did not seek glory; and testifying, therefore they did not flatter. That you should walk worthily of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. Observe again, how, in relating, he both teaches and comforts. For if He has called them unto His kingdom, if He called them unto glory, they ought to endure all things. We entreat you, not that you should grant us any favor, but that you should gain the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 13. And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that when you received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works in you that believe.

It cannot be said, he says, that we indeed do all things unblamably, but you on the other hand have done things unworthy of our course of life. For in hearing us, you gave such heed as if not hearing men, but as if God Himself were exhorting you. Whence is this manifest? Because as he shows from his own temptations and their testimony, and the way in which he acted, that he did not preach with flattery or vainglory; so from their trials, he shows also that they rightly received the word. For whence, he says, unless you had heard as if God were speaking, did you endure such perils? And observe his dignity.

Ver. 14, 15, 16. For you, brethren, became imitators of the Churches of God, which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus: for you also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

For you, he says, became imitators of the Churches of God which are in Judæa. This is a great consolation. It is no wonder, he says, that they should do these things to you, inasmuch as they have done it also to their own countrymen. And this too is no little proof that the Preaching is true, that even Jews were able to endure all things. For you also, he says, have suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews. There is something more in his saying, as they also did in Judæa; it shows that everywhere they rejoiced, as having nobly contended. He says therefore, that you also suffered the same things. And again, what wonder is it, if to you also, when even to the Lord they dared do such things?

Do you see how he introduces this as containing great consolation? And constantly he adverts to it; and upon a close examination one may find it in nearly all his Epistles, how variously, upon all occasions of temptation, he brings forward Christ. Observe accordingly, that here also, when accusing the Jews, he puts them in mind of the Lord, and of the sufferings of the Lord; so well does he know that this is a matter of the greatest consolation.

Who both killed the Lord, he says -- but, perhaps, they did not know Him -- assuredly they did know Him. What then? Did they not slay and stone their own prophets, whose books even they carry about with them? And they did not do this for the sake of truth. There is therefore not only a consolation under the temptations, but they are reminded not to think that (the Jews) did it for the truth's sake, and be troubled on that account. And drove out us, he says. And we also, he says, have suffered numberless evils. And please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they may be saved. Contrary to all men, he says. How? Because if we ought to speak to the world, and they forbid us, they are the common enemies of the world. They have slain Christ and the prophets, they insult God, they are the common enemies of the world, they banish us, when coming for their salvation. What wonder if they have done such things also to you, when they have done them even in Judæa? Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved. It is a mark of envy therefore to hinder the salvation of all. To fill up their sins always. But the wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. What is to the uttermost? These things are no longer like the former. There is here no return back, no limit. But the wrath is near at hand. Whence is this manifest? From that which Christ foretold. For not only is it a consolation to have partakers in our afflictions, but to hear also that our persecutors are to be punished. And if the delay is a grievance, let it be a consolation that they will never lift up their heads again; or rather he has cut short the delay, by saying, THE wrath, showing that it was long ago due, and predetermined, and predicted.

Ver. 17. But we, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

He has not said separated, but what was much more. He had spoken above of flattery, showing that he did not flatter, that he did not seek glory. He speaks here concerning love. Because he had said above, as a father his children, as a nurse, here he uses another expression, being made orphans, which is said of children who have lost their fathers. And yet they were made orphans. No-- he says -- but we. For if any one should examine our longing, even as little children without a protector, having sustained an untimely bereavement, long for their parents, not only from the feelings of nature itself, but also on account of their deserted state, so truly do we too feel. From this also he shows his own despondency on account of their separation. And this we cannot say, he says, that we have waited a long period, but for a short time, and that in presence, not in heart. For we always have you in our mind. See how great is his love! Although having them always in his heart, he sought also their presence face to face. Tell me not of your superlative philosophy! This is truly fervent love; both to see, and to hear, and speak; and this may be of much

advantage. We endeavored the more exceedingly. What is more exceedingly? He either means to say, we are vehemently attached to you, or, as was likely, being bereaved for a season, we endeavored to see your face. Observe the blessed Paul. When of himself he cannot satisfy his longing, he does it through others, as when he sends Timothy to the Philippians, and the same person again to the Corinthians, holding intercourse with them through others, when he cannot of himself. For in loving them, he was like some mad person, not to be restrained, nor to command himself in his affection.

Ver. 18. Wherefore we would fain have come unto you.

Which is the part of love; yet here he mentions no other necessity but that we might see you. I Paul once and again, and Satan hindered us.

What do you say? Does Satan hinder? Yes, truly, for this was not the work of God. For in the Epistle to the Romans, he says this, that God hindered him from Romans 15:22; and elsewhere Luke says, that the Spirit hindered them from going into Asia. Acts 16:7 And in the Epistle to the Corinthians he says, that it is the work of the Spirit, but here only of Satan. But what hindrance of Satan is he speaking of? Some unexpected and violent temptations: for a plot, it says, being formed against him by the Jews, he was detained three months in Greece. But it is another thing to remain for the sake of the dispensation, and willingly. For there he says, Wherefore having no more place in these parts Romans 15:23, and, To spare you I forbore to come unto Corinth. 2 Corinthians 1:23 But here nothing of this sort. But what? That Satan hindered him. Even I Paul, he says, both once and again. Observe, how ambitious he is, and what a display he makes, in his willingness to show that he loved them most of all. I Paul, he says, instead of Although no others. For they indeed were only willing, but I even attempted it.

Ver. 19. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even you before our Lord Jesus at His coming?

Are the Macedonians, tell me, your hope, O blessed Paul? Not these alone, he says. Therefore he has added, Are you not also? For what, he says, is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Observe then the words, which are those of women, inflamed with tenderness, talking to their little children. And crown of glorying, he says. For the name of crown was not sufficient to express the splendor, but also of glorying. Of what fiery warmth is this! Never could either mother, or father, yea if they even met together, and commingled their love, have shown their own affection to be equivalent to that of Paul. My joy and crown, he says, that is, I rejoice in you more than in a crown. For consider how great a thing it is, that an entire Church should be present, planted and rooted by Paul. Who would not rejoice in such a multitude of children, and in the goodness of those children? So that this also is not flattery. For he has not said you, but you also together with the others.

Ver. 20. For you are our glory and our joy.

Chap. 3:1, 2. Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone. Instead of saying, we chose. And sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister and our fellow-worker in the Gospel of Christ.

And this he says, not as extolling Timothy, but honoring them, that he sent them the fellow-worker, and minister of the Gospel. As if he had said, Having withdrawn him from his labors we have sent to you the minister of God, and our fellow-laborer in the Gospel of Christ.

To establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith.

Ver. 3. That no man be moved by these afflictions.

What then does he say here? Because the temptations of the teachers trouble their disciples, and he had then fallen into many temptations, as also he himself says, that Satan hindered us, always saying this; both once, he says, and again I would have come to you, and was not able, which was a proof of great violence. And it was reasonable that this should trouble them, for they are not so much troubled at their own temptations, as at those of their teachers; as neither is the soldier so much troubled at his own trials, as when he sees his general wounded. To establish you, he says; not that they were at all deficient in faith, nor that they required to learn anything.

And to comfort you concerning your faith; that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed.

Ver. 4. For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and you know.

You ought not, he says, to be troubled, for nothing strange, nothing contrary to expectation is happening; which was sufficient to raise them up. For do you see that on this account also Christ foretold to His disciples? For hear Him saying, Now I have told you before it came to pass, that when it has come to pass you may believe. John 14:29 For greatly indeed, greatly does it tend to the comfort of others, to have heard from their teachers what is to happen. For as he that is sick, if he hear from his physician that this or that is taking place, is not much troubled; but if anything happen unexpectedly, as if he too were at a loss, and the disorder was beyond his art, he is afflicted and troubled; so also is it here. Which Paul foreknowing, foretold to them, we are about to be afflicted, as it came to pass, and you know. He not only says that this came to pass, but that he foretold many things, and they happened. Hereunto we are appointed. So that not only you ought not to be troubled and disturbed about the past, but not even about the future, if any such thing should happen, for hereunto we are appointed.

Moral . Let us hear, who have ears to hear. The Christian is appointed hereunto. For concerning all the faithful is this said, Hereunto we are appointed. And we, as if we were appointed for ease, think it strange if we suffer anything; and yet what reason have we for thinking anything strange? For no season of affliction or temptation has overtaken us, but what is common to man. It is a fit season for us to say to you, You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin Hebrews 12:4. Or rather, this is not seasonable for us to say to you -- but what? You have not yet despised riches. For to them indeed these words were said with reason, when they had lost all their own possessions, but this is said to those who retain theirs. Who has been robbed of his riches for Christ's sake? Who has been beaten? Who has been insulted? Even in words, I mean. What have you to boast of? What confidence have you to say anything? So many things Christ suffered for us when we were enemies. What can we show that we have suffered for Him? Nothing that we have suffered indeed, but infinite good things that we have received from Him. Whence shall we have confidence in that Day? Do you not know, that the soldier too, when he can show numberless wounds and scars, will then be able to shine in the presence of the king? But if he has no good action to show, though he may have done no harm, he will take rank among the least.

But, you say, it is not the season of war. But if it was, tell me, who would contend? Who would attack? Who would break through the phalanx? Perhaps no one. For when I see that you do not despise riches for the sake of Christ, how shall I believe that you will despise blows? Tell me, do you bear manfully those

who insult you, and do you bless them? You do not -- but you disobey. What is attended with no danger, you do not; and will you endure blows, in which there is much pain and suffering? Do you not know that it is proper in peace to keep up the exercises of war? Do you not see these soldiers, who though no war disturbs them, but it is profound peace, brightening up their arms, and going forth with the teachers who teach them tactics, into the broad and level plains, I may say, every day, keep up with the greatest strictness the exercises of war? Of our spiritual soldiers, who has done this? No one. For this reason we become in war weak and ignoble, and easily led captive by any.

But what stupidity is this, not to think the present a season of war, when Paul is crying out, Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution 2 Timothy 3:12; and Christ says, In the world you shall have tribulation. John 16:33 And again the blessed Paul with a loud voice cries out, saying, Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, and again, Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth. Ephesians 6:12-14 Why do you arm us, tell me, when it is not war?

Why do you give us trouble to no purpose? You put breastplates on the soldiers, when it is allowed them to rest and revive. But he would have said, Certainly, however, though it were not war, it would be right to attend to the concerns of war. For he who in peace considers the business of battle, will be formidable in the season of battle; but he who is without experience in the things of war, will be more troubled even in peace. Why so? Because he will weep for the things which he possesses, and not being able to fight for them, will be in anguish.

For the possessions of the cowardly and inexperienced and ignoble in war, are the property of all who are brave and warlike. So that on this account first I arm you. But then also the whole time of our life is the season of war. How and in what respect? The devil is ever at hand. Hear what it says, As a roaring lion, he walks about, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8 Numberless bodily affections assail us, which it is necessary to enumerate, that we may not vainly deceive ourselves.

For tell me, what does not war against us? Riches, beauty, pleasure, power, authority, envy, glory, pride? For not only does our own glory war against us, forbidding us to descend to humility; but the glory of others also, leading us to envy and ill-nature. But what do their opposites, poverty, dishonor, the being despised, rejected, the having no power? These things indeed are in us. But from men proceed wickedness, plots, deceits, slanders, assaults innumerable. In like manner on the part of the demons, principalities, powers, the world rulers of this darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness.

Some of us are rejoicing, others grieving, both are deviations from the right course. But health and sickness (war against us). From what quarter will not man be falling into sin? Would you that I should tell you from the beginning, commencing even immediately from Adam? What took captive the first created? Pleasure, and eating, and the love of dominion. What the son who came next after him? Grudging and envy. What those in the time of Noah? Fleshly pleasures, and the evils issuing from them.

What his son? Insolence and irreverence. What the Sodomites? Insolence, wantonness; and fullness of bread. But often even poverty has this effect. On this account a certain wise man said, Give me neither poverty nor riches. Proverbs 30:8 However it is neither poverty nor riches, but the will that cannot use either of them. Acknowledge, he says, that you pass through the midst of snares. Sirach 9:13

The blessed Paul has admirably said, Hereunto we are appointed. He has not said merely, that we are tempted, but that hereunto we are appointed, as if he had said, For this were we born. This is our business, this our life, and do you seek rest? The executioner does not stand over us, lacerating our sides,

and compelling us to sacrifice; but the desire of riches, and of possessing more, is instant, tearing out our eyes. No soldier has kindled a pile, nor placed us on a gridiron, but more than this, the flames of the flesh set fire on our souls. No king is present promising numberless bounties, and putting us out of countenance. But there is present a rage for glory, tickling us worse than he. A great war, truly, exceedingly great, if we would watch.

And the present season too has its crowns. Hear Paul saying, Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give me...and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8 When you have lost a beloved and only son, whom thou were bringing up in much wealth, displaying good hopes, himself being the only one to succeed to your inheritance; do not complain, but give thanks to God, and glorify Him who has taken him, and in this respect you will not be worse than Abraham. For as he gave him to God, when he commanded it, so you have not complained, when He has taken him. Have you fallen into a severe sickness, and do many come, constraining you, some with charms, some with amulets, and others with other things, to remedy the evil? And have you borne it firmly and unflinchingly from the fear of God, and would you have chosen to suffer all things rather than submit to do any of those idolatrous practices? This brings to you the crown of martyrdom. Doubt it not. And how and by what means, I will tell you. For as such an one bears firmly the pains of torture, so as not to worship the image, so thou also bearest the sufferings of your disease, so as to want nothing of those remedies which the other offers, nor to do the things which he prescribes. But those pains are more violent -- yes, but these are of longer duration, so that it is the same in the end; nay often these are more violent too. For tell me, when fever is raging and burning within, and you reject the charm that others recommend to you, have you not bound on you the crown of martyrdom?

Again, has any one lost money? Many advise you to have recourse to diviners; but thou, from fear of God, because it is forbidden, chooseth rather not to receive your money than to disobey God -- you have a reward equal to him who has given it to the poor, if having lost, you give thanks, and when able to have recourse to diviners, you bear not to receive, rather than so to receive it. For as he from the fear of God has given all to the needy, so thou also from fear of God, when they have plundered you, hast not recovered it.

We are the masters of injuring or not injuring ourselves. And if you will, let us make the whole matter plain in the case of theft itself. The thief has cut through the wall, he has rushed into the chamber, he has carried off costly golden vessels, and precious stones, in short, he has cleared your whole treasure, and has not been taken. The fact is grievous, and it seems to be a loss; still as yet it is not so but it depends on you to make it either a loss or a gain. And how, do you say, can this be a gain? I will endeavor to show you how, if you are willing, it will be a great gain, but if unwilling, the loss will be severer than that which has taken place. For as in the case of artificers, when material is before them, he who is skilled in his art uses it to good purpose, but he that is unskillful spoils it, and makes it a loss to him, so also in these matters. How then will it be a gain? If you give thanks to God, if you dost not wail bitterly, if you utter the words of Job, The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Naked came I out of my mother's womb, naked shall I also go away. Job 1:21, Septuagint

What? do you say, the Lord has taken away? The thief has taken away, and how can you say, the Lord has taken away? Wonder not, for even Job, of things which the devil took away, said, These the Lord has taken away? And shall not thou say of what the thief took, The Lord has taken away? Tell me, whom do you admire? Him who has bestowed all his goods upon the poor, or Job for these words? Is he, who did not then give, inferior to him, who has given alms? For say not, I feel no thankfulness. The matter was not

done with my consent, or knowledge, or will. The robber took it. What will be my reward? Neither did these things happen with Job's knowledge or will. For how could it be? Nevertheless, he wrestled.

And it is in your power to receive as great a reward, as if you had cast it away willingly. And perhaps we admire this man more, who thankfully suffers wrongs, than him who gives spontaneously. And why? Because the latter indeed is fed with praises, and supported by conscience, and has good hopes; and having before borne manfully the privation of his goods, he then cast them away; but the former, while yet bound to them, was forcibly deprived of them. And it is not the same thing, having first been induced to part with riches, in that way to bestow them, as it is while yet longing to be deprived of them. If you will say these words, you will receive many times as much, and even more than Job. For he received twice as much here, but to you Christ has promised a hundred fold. From the fear of God, you have not blasphemed? You have not had recourse to diviners? Suffering wrong, you have been thankful? You are like one who despises wealth, for you could not do this, had you not first despised it. And it is not the same thing in a long time to practice the contempt of riches, and all at once to bear a loss that has happened. Thus the loss becomes gain, and you will not be injured, but even benefited by the devil.

But how does the loss also become grievous? When you lose your soul! Tell me, the thief has deprived you of your possessions: will you deprive yourself of salvation? Wherefore, grieving at the evils which you have suffered from others, do you plunge yourself into more evils? He perhaps has involved you in poverty: but thou perversely injurest yourself in things that are fatal. He has deprived you of things that are without you, and that hereafter would spring away from you even against your will. But you deprive yourself of the eternal riches. The devil has grieved you by taking away your wealth; do thou also grieve him, and do not delight him. If you have recourse to diviners, you delight him. If you render thanks to God, you give him his death-blow.

And see what happens. You will not still find it, if you go to the diviners, for it is not in their power to know; and even if by any chance they have told you, thou both lovest your own soul besides, and you will be derided by your brethren, and again will lose it wretchedly. For the demon, knowing that you can not bear your loss, but for the sake of these things deniest even your God, again gives you wealth, that he may have an opportunity of deceiving you again, and making you fall away. And if the diviners should tell you, wonder not. The demon is without body: he is everywhere going about. It is he who arms the robbers themselves. For these things do not take place without the demon. If therefore he arms them, he knows also where it is deposited. He is not ignorant of his own ministers. And this is not wonderful. If he sees you grieving at the loss, he adds yet another to it. If he sees you laughing at it, and despising it, he will desist from this course. For as we deal to our enemies those things by which we grieve them, but if we see that they do not grieve, we henceforth desist, as being unable to plague them; so does the devil also.

What do you say? Do you not see those who sail on the sea, how, when a storm arises, they regard not their wealth, but even throw overboard their substance? O man, what do you say? Are you coöperating with the storm and the shipwreck? Before the wave has taken away your wealth, do you do it with your own hands? Why, before the shipwreck, do you wreck yourself? But indeed a rustic inexperienced in the trials of the sea might say this. But the naval man, and one who truly knows what are the causes of calm, and what of storm, will even laugh at him who talks thus. For I throw it overboard, he says, that there may be no whelming sea. So he who is experienced in the events and trials of life, when he sees the storm impending, and the spirits of evil wishing to cause shipwreck, throws overboard even the remainder of his wealth. Have you been plundered? Do alms, and you lighten the ship. Have robbers ravaged you? Give what remains to Christ. So you will console your poverty from your former loss. Lighten the ship, do not

hold fast what remains, lest the vessel fill with water. They, to preserve their bodies, throw their goods overboard, and wait not for the assailing wave to overturn the vessel. And will you not stay the shipwreck, that you may save souls?

Make the trial, I beseech you -- if you disbelieve, make the trial, and you will see the glory of God. When anything grievous has happened, immediately give alms; render thanks that it has happened, and you will see how much joy will come upon you. For spiritual gain, though it be small, is so great as to throw into the shade all bodily loss. As long as you have to give to Christ, you are rich. Tell me, if when you were robbed, the king coming to you held out his hand, begging to receive something from you, would you not then think yourself richer than all, if the king not even after so great poverty was ashamed of you? Be not carried away with your wealth, only overcome yourself, and you will overcome the assault of the devil. It is in your power to acquire great gain.

Let us despise wealth, that we may not despise the soul. But how can any one despise it? Do you not see in the case of beautiful bodies, and the lovers of them, how as long as they are in their sight the fire is kindled, the flame rises bright; but when any one has removed them afar off, all is extinguished, all is lulled to sleep; so also in the case of wealth, let no one provide gold, nor precious stones, nor necklaces; when seen, they ensnare the eyes. But if you would be rich like the ancients, be rich not in gold, but in necessary things, that you may bestow on others from that which you have ready. Be not fond of ornament. Such wealth is both easy to be plotted against by robbers, and a thing that brings us cares. Not vessels of gold and silver, but let there be stores of bread and wine and oil, not that being sold again they may procure money, but that they may be supplied to those who need. If we withdraw ourselves from those superfluities, we shall obtain the heavenly goods; which God grant that we may all obtain, in Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, etc.

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