

2 Corinthians 1:12

by St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom emphasizes the importance of a pure conscience and God's grace in sustaining faith amidst suffering and assures believers of the steadfastness of God's promises.

Scripture: Genesis 22:8, Genesis 22:11, Psalm 103:2, Isaiah 53:7, John 8:56, Ephesians 1:14, Philippians 3:20, 2 Timothy 2:11

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Christ's Sacrifice"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the exemplary faith and obedience of Abraham, highlighting his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac as a demonstration of his fear of God and trust in His providence. Chrysostom emphasizes the purity of Abraham's conscience and his unwavering commitment to God, showcasing him as a model of faith, priesthood, and prophecy. He draws parallels between Abraham's sacrifice and Christ's sacrifice on the cross, illustrating the profound spiritual significance of both acts. Chrysostom urges believers to emulate Abraham's faith and dedication, reminding them of their royal priesthood and prophetic calling through the Holy Spirit's seal.

Transcript

For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world.

Here again he opens to us yet another ground of comfort, and that not small, yea rather, exceeding great, and well fitted to upraise a mind sinking under perils. For seeing he had said, God comforted us, and God delivered us, and had ascribed all to His mercies and their prayers, lest he should thus make the hearer supine, presuming on God's mercy only and the prayers of others, he shows that they themselves had contributed not a little of their own. And indeed he showed as much even before, when he said, For as the sufferings of Christ abound [in us,] so our consolation also abounds. 2 Corinthians 1:5 But here he is speaking of a certain other good work, properly their own. What then is this? That, says he, in a conscience pure and without guile we behave ourselves every where in the world: and this avails not a little to our encouragement and comfort; yea, rather, not to comfort merely, but even unto somewhat else far greater than comfort, even to our glorying. And this he said, teaching them too not to sink down in their afflictions, but, if so be they have a pure conscience, even to be proud of them; and at the same time quietly though gently hitting at the false Apostles. And as in the former Epistle he says, Christ sent me to preach the Gospel, not in wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect: 1

Corinthians 1:17 and, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; 1 Corinthians 2:5 so here also, Not in wisdom, but in the grace of Christ.

And he hinted also something besides, by employing the words, not in wisdom, that is, 'not in deceit,' here too striking at the heathen discipline. For our glorying, says he, is this, the testimony of our conscience; that is, our conscience not having whereof to condemn us, as if for evil doings we were persecuted. For though we suffer countless horrors, though from every quarter we be shot at and in peril, it is enough for our comfort, yea rather not only for comfort, but even for our crowning, that our conscience is pure and testifies unto us that for no evil-doing, but for that which is well-pleasing to God, we thus suffer; for virtue's sake, for heavenly wisdom's, for the salvation of the many. Now that previous consolation was from God: but this was contributed by themselves and from the purity of their life. Wherefore also he calls it their glorying, because it was the achievement of their own virtue. What then is this glorying and what does our conscience testify unto us? That in sincerity, that is to say, having no deceitful thing, no hypocrisy, no dissimulation, no flattery, no ambush or guile, nor any other such thing, but in all frankness, in simplicity, in truth, in a pure and unmalicious spirit, in a guileless mind, having nothing concealed, no festering sore. Not in fleshly wisdom; that is, not with evil artifice, nor with wickedness, nor with cleverness of words, nor with webs of sophistries, for this he means by 'fleshly wisdom:' and that whereupon they greatly prided themselves, he disclaims and thrusts aside: showing very abundantly that this is no worthy ground for glorying: and that not only he does not seek it, but he even rejects and is ashamed of it.

But in the grace of God we behaved ourselves in the world.

What is, in the grace of God? Displaying the wisdom that is from Him, the power from Him given unto us, by the signs wrought, by overcoming sages, rhetoricians, philosophers, kings, peoples, unlearned as we are and bringing with us nothing of the wisdom that is without. No ordinary comfort and glorying, however, was this, to be conscious to themselves that it was not men's power they had used; but that by Divine grace they had achieved all success.

[In the world.] So not in Corinth only, but also in every part of the world.

And more abundantly to you-ward. What more abundantly to you-ward? In the grace of God we behaved ourselves. For we showed both signs and wonders among you, and greater strictness, and a life unblameable; for he calls these too the grace of God, ascribing his own good works also unto it. For in Corinth he even overleapt the goal, making the Gospel without charge, because he spared their weakness.

2 Corinthians 1:13

For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or even acknowledge.

For since he spoke great things of himself and seemed to be bearing witness to himself, an odious thing, he again appeals to them as witnesses of what he says. For, he says, let no one think that what I say is a boastful flourish of writing; for we declare unto you what yourselves know; and that we lie not ye more than all others can bear us witness. For, when you read, you acknowledge that what ye know that we perform in our actions, this we say also in our writings, and your testimony does not contradict our epistles; but the knowledge which you had before of us is in harmony with your reading.

2 Corinthians 1:14

As also ye did acknowledge us in part.

For your knowledge of us, he says, is not from hearsay but from actual experience. The words in part he added from humility. For this is his wont, when necessity constrains him to say any high sounding thing, (for he never does so otherwise,) as desiring quickly to repress again the elation arising from what he had said.

And I hope you will acknowledge even to the end.

2. Do you see again how from the past he draws pledges for the future; and not from the past only, but also from the power of God? For he affirmed not absolutely, but cast the whole upon God and his hope in Him.

That we are your glorying, even as you also are our's, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here he cuts at the root of the envy that his speech might occasion, by making them sharers and partners in the glory of his good works. 'For these stick not with us, but pass over unto you also, and again from you to us.' For seeing he had extolled himself, and produced proof of the past and given security for the future; lest his hearers should reflect on him for talking proudly, or, as I have said, be hurried to enviousness, he makes the rejoicing a common one and declares that this crown of praises is theirs. For if, he says, we have shown ourselves to be such, our praise is your glory: even as when you also are approved, we rejoice and leap for joy and are crowned. Here also again he displays his great humility by what he says. For he so levels his expressions, not as a master discoursing to disciples, but as a disciple unto fellow disciples of his own rank. And observe how he lifts them on high and fills them with philosophy, sending them on to That Day. For, he says, tell me not of the present things, that is, the reproaches, the revilings, the scoffings of the many, for the things here are no great matter, neither the good nor the painful; nor the scoffings nor the praises which come from men: but remember, I pray, that day of fear and shuddering in the which all things are revealed. For then both we shall glory in you, and you in us; when you shall be seen to have such teachers, who teach no doctrine of men nor live in wickedness nor give [men] any handle; and we to have such disciples, neither affected after the manner of men nor shaken, but taking all things with readiness of mind, and unseduced by sophistries from whatever side. For this is plain even now to those that have understanding, but then to all. So that even if we are afflicted now, we have this, and that no light, consolation which the conscience affords now, and the manifestation itself then. For now indeed our conscience knows that we do all things by the grace of God, as you also know and shall know: but then, all men as well will learn both our doings and yours: and shall behold us glorified through each other. For that he may not appear himself alone to derive lustre from this glorying, he gives to them also a cause of boasting, and leads them away from their present distresses. And as he did in respect to the consolation when he said, We are comforted for your sakes, 2 Corinthians 1:6 so he does here also, saying, 'we glory on your account, as you also on ours,' every where making them partakers of every thing, of his comfort, his sufferings, his preservation. For this his preservation he ascribes to their prayers. For God delivered us, he says, ye helping together by prayer. In like manner also he makes the gloryings common. For as in that place he says, Knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also of the consolation: so here too, we are your glorying, as you also are ours.

2 Corinthians 1:15

And in this confidence I was minded to come before unto you.

What confidence? 'In relying exceedingly on you, glorying over you, being your glorying, loving you exceedingly, being conscious to myself of nothing evil, being confident that all is spiritual with us, and having you as witnesses of this.'

I was minded to come unto you, and by you to pass into Macedonia.

And yet he promised the contrary in his former Epistle, saying thus: Now I will come unto you when I shall have passed through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. 1 Corinthians 16:5 How is it then that he here says the contrary? He does not say the contrary: away with the thought. For it is contrary indeed to what he wrote, but not contrary to what he wished.

Wherefore also here he said not, 'I wrote that I would pass by you into Macedonia; but, 'I was minded.' 'For though I did not write on that wise,' he says, 'nevertheless I was greatly desirous, and 'was minded,' even before, to have come unto you: so far was I from wishing to be later than my promise that I would gladly have come before it.' That you might have a second benefit. What is, a second benefit? 'That you might have a double benefit, both that from my writings, and that from my presence.' By benefit he here means pleasure.

2 Corinthians 1:16-17

And by you to pass into Macedonia, and to come again from Macedonia unto you, and of you to be set forward on my journey unto Judaea. When I therefore was thus minded, did I show fickleness?

3. Here in what follows, he directly does away with the charge arising out of his delay and absence. For what he says is of this nature. I was minded to come unto you. 'Wherefore then did I not come? Is it as light-minded and changeable?' for this is, did I show fickleness? By no means. But wherefore? Because what things I purpose, I purpose not according to the flesh. What is, not according to the flesh? I purpose not 'carnally.'

2 Corinthians 1:17. That with me there should be the yea yea and the nay nay.

But still even this is obscure. What is it then he says? The carnal man, that is, he that is riveted to the present things and is continually occupied in them, and is without the sphere of the Spirit's influence, has power to go every where, and to wander wherever he will. But he that is the servant of the Spirit, and is led, and led about by Him, cannot everywhere be lord of his own purpose, having made it dependent upon the authority thence given; but it so fares with him as if a trusty servant, whose motions are always ruled by his lord's biddings and who has no power over himself nor is able to rest even a little, should make some promise to his fellow-servants, and then because his master would have it otherwise should fail to perform his promise. This then is what he means by, I purpose not according to the flesh. I am not beyond the Spirit's governance, nor have liberty to go where I will. For I am subject to lordship and commands, the Comforter's, and by His decrees I am led, and led about. For this cause I was unable to come, for it was not the Spirit's will. As happened also frequently in the Acts; for when he had purposed to come to one place, the Spirit bade him go to another. So that it was not from lightness, that is, fickleness in me that I came not, but that being subject to the Spirit I obeyed Him. Did you mark again his accustomed logic? That by which they thought to prove that he purposed according to the flesh, namely, the non-fulfilment of his promise, he uses as the special proof that he purposed according to the Spirit, and that the contrary had been purposing according to the flesh. What then? Says one: was it not with the Spirit that he promised what he did? By no means. For I have already said that Paul did not foreknow every thing that

was to happen or was expedient. And it is for this reason that he says in the former Epistle, that you may set me forward on my journey wherever I go; 1 Corinthians 16:6 entertaining this very fear that after he had said, 'into Judaea,' he might be compelled to go elsewhere; but now when his intention had been frustrated, he says it, And of you be set forward on my journey unto Judaea. So much as was of love, he states, namely, the coming to them; but that which had no reference to them, his going, namely, from them into Judaea, he does not add definitely. When however he had been proved wrong, he afterwards says here boldly, toward Judaea. And this too befell for good, lest any among them should conceive of them the Apostles, Acts 14:13 more highly than they deserved. For if in the face of these things they wished to sacrifice bulls to them, upon what impiety would they not have driven, had they not given many instances of human weakness? And why marvel if he knew not all things that were to happen, seeing that oftentimes he even in prayers knows not what is expedient.

For, says he we know not what we should pray for as we ought. And that he may not seem to be speaking modestly, he not only says this, but instances wherein he knew not in prayers what was expedient. Wherein then was it? When he entreated to be delivered from his trials, saying, There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice. And he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you: for My power is made perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 Do you see how he knew not to ask what was expedient, and so although he asked often he obtained not.

2 Corinthians 1:18

But as God is faithful, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

He skillfully overturns a rising objection. For one might say, If after having promised, you have put off coming, and yea is not yea, and nay nay, with you, but what you say now you unsay afterwards, as you did in the case of this Journey: woe is unto us, if all this were the case in the Preaching too. Now lest they should have these thoughts and be troubled thereat, he says, But as God is faithful, our word toward you was not yea and nay. This, says he, was not the case in the Preaching, but only in our travels and journeyings; whereas whatever things we have said in our preaching, these abide steadfast and unmoveable, (for he calls his preaching here, word.) Then he brings proof of this that cannot be gainsaid, by referring all to God. What he says is this; 'the promise of my coming was my own and I gave that promise from myself: but the preaching is not my own, nor of man, but of God, and what is of God it is impossible should lie.' Whereupon also he said, God is faithful, that is, true. 'Mistrust not then what is from Him, for there is nought of man in it.'

4. And seeing he had said word, he adds what follows to explain what kind of word he means. Of what kind then is it?

2 Corinthians 1:19

For the Son of God, says he, Who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Silvanus, and Timothy, was not yea and nay.

For on this account he brings before them the company of the teachers also, as thence too giving credibility to the testimony by those who taught, and not who heard it only. And yet they were disciples; however in his modesty he counts them as in the rank of teachers. But what is, was not yea and nay? I have never, he says, unsaid what before I said in the Preaching. My discourse to you was not now this,

now that. For this is not of faith, but of an erring mind.

But in Him was the yea. That is, just as I said, the word abides unshaken and steadfast.

2 Corinthians 1:20

For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea, and in Him the Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

What is this, how many soever the promises of God? The Preaching promised many things; and these many things they proffered and preached. For they discoursed of being raised again, and of being taken up, and of incorruption, and of those great rewards and unspeakable goods. As to these promises then, he says that they abide immoveable, and in them is no yea and nay, that is, the things spoken were not now true, and now false, as was the case about my being with you, but always true. And first indeed he contends for the articles of the faith, and the word concerning Christ, saying, My word and my preaching, was not yea and nay; next, for the promises for how many soever be the promises, of God, in Him is the yea. But if the things He promised are sure and He will certainly give them, much more is He Himself and the word concerning Him, sure, and it can not be said that He is now, and now is not, but He always is, and is the same. But what is, In Him is the yea, and the Amen. He signifies that which shall certainly be. For in Him, not in man, the promises have their being and fulfilment. Fear not, therefore; for it is not man so that you should mistrust; but it is God Who both said and fulfills. Unto the glory of God through us. What is, unto [His] glory through us? He fulfills them by us, that is, and by His benefits towards us unto His glory; for this is for the glory of God. But if they be for the glory of God, they will certainly come to pass. For His own glory He will not think little of, even did He think little of our salvation. But as it is, He thinks not little of our salvation either, both because He loves mankind exceedingly, and because our salvation is bound up with His glory from these things accruing. So that if the promises are for His glory, our salvation also will certainly follow; to which also, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, he reverts continually, saying, to the maintenance of His glory ; Ephesians 1:14 and every where he lays down this, and shows the necessity of this result. And in this regard he here says, that His promises lie not: for they not only save us, but also glorify Him. Dwell not on this therefore that they were promised by us; and so doubt. For they are not fulfilled by us, but by Him. Yea, and the promises were by Him; for we spoke not to you our own words, but His.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

Now He which establishes us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; Who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Again, from the past He establishes the future. For if it is He that establishes us in Christ; (i.e., who suffers us not to be shaken from the faith which is in Christ;) and He that anointed us and gave the Spirit in our hearts, how shall He not give us the future things?

For if He gave the principles and the foundations, and the root and the fount, (to wit, the true knowledge of Him, the partaking of the Spirit,) how shall He not give the things that come of these: for if for the sake of these those are given, much more will he supply those. And if to such as were enemies he gave these, much more when now made friends will He freely give to them those. Wherefore He said not simply the Spirit, but named earnest, that from this you might have a good hope of the whole as well. For did He not purpose to give the whole, He would never have chosen to give the earnest and to waste it without object

or result. And observe Paul's candor. For why need I say, says he, that the truth of the promises stands not in us? The fact of your standing unwavering and fixed is not in us, but this too is of God; for says he, He who establishes us is God. It is not we who strengthen you: for even we also need Him that establishes. So then let none imagine that the Preaching is hazardous in us. He has undertaken the whole, He cared for the whole.

And what is, anointed, and sealed? Gave the Spirit by Whom He did both these things, making at once prophets and priests and kings, for in old times these three sorts were anointed. But we have now not one of these dignities, but all three preeminently. For we are both to enjoy a kingdom and are made priests by offering our bodies for a sacrifice, (for, says he, present your members a living sacrifice unto God;) and withal we are constituted prophets too: for what things eye has not seen, nor ear heard, 1 Corinthians 2:9 these have been revealed unto us.

5. And in another way too we become kings: if we have the mind to get dominion over our unruly thoughts, for that such an one is a king and more than he who wears the diadem, I will now make plain to you. He has many armies, but we again have thoughts exceeding them in number; for it is impossible to number the infinite multitude of the thoughts within us. Nor is their multitude all that one is to consider, but also that in this multitude of thoughts, there are many generals, and colonels, and captains, and archers, and slingers.

What else makes a king? His apparel? But this one too is arrayed in a better and braver robe, which neither does moth devour nor age impair. A crown too he has of curious workmanship, that of glory, that of the tender mercies of God. For says [the Psalmist], Bless the Lord, O my soul, that crowns you with pity and tender mercies. Psalm 103:2-4 Again, that of glory: For you have crowned him with glory and honor. Psalm 8:6 And with favor You have crowned us with a shield. Psalm 5:12.

Septuagint Again, that of grace: For you shall receive a crown of grace upon your head. Proverbs 1:9. Septuagint Do you see this diadem of many wreaths, and surpassing the other in grace. But let us institute anew and from the beginning a stricter inquiry into the condition of these kings. That king has dominion over his guards, and issues orders to all, and all obey and serve him; but here I show you greater authority. For the number here is as great or even greater: it remains to inquire into their obedience.

And bring me not forth those that have ruled amiss, since I too bring those that have been driven from their kingdom and murdered by their very body guards. Let us then bring forth these instances, but seek for those of either kind who have ordered well their kingdom. And do thou put forward whom you will. I oppose unto you the patriarch against all. For when he was commanded to sacrifice his son, consider how many thoughts then rose up against him. Nevertheless, he brought all under submission, and all trembled before him more than before a king his guards; and with a look only he stilled them all and not one of them dared so much as mutter; but down they bowed and as unto a king gave place, one and all, though much exasperated and exceeding relentless.

For even the heads of spears raised upright by many soldiers are not as fearful as were then those fearful thoughts, armed not with spears, but what is harder to deal with than many spears, the sympathy of nature! Wherefore they had power to pierce his soul more than sharpened spear point. For never spear could be so sharp as were the goads of those thoughts, which, sharpened and upraised from beneath, from his affections, were piercing through and through the mind of that righteous man.

For here there needs time and purpose and a stroke and pain, and then death follows; but there, there needed none of these, so much were the wounds speedier and acuter. But still though so many thoughts were then in arms against him, there was a deep calm, and they stood all in fair array; adorning rather than daunting him. See him at least stretching out the knife, and set forth as many as you will, kings, emperors, Cæsars, yet shall you tell of nought like this, have no like mien to point to, so noble, so worthy of the heavens.

For that righteous man erected a trophy at that movement over the most arbitrary of tyrannies. For nothing is so tyrannical as nature; and find ten thousand tyrannicides, one like this shall you never show us. For it was the triumph in that moment of an angel, not a man. For consider. Nature was dashed to the ground with all her weapons, with all her host: and he stood with outstretched hand, grasping not a crown, but a knife more glorious than any crown, and the throng of angels applauded, and God from heaven proclaimed him conquerer.

For seeing that his citizenship was in heaven, thence also he received that proclamation. Philippians 3:20 What could be more glorious than this? Rather, what trophy could ever be equal to it? For if on occasion of a wrestler's success, not a herald below but the king above should have risen up and himself proclaimed the Olympic Victor, would not this have seemed to him more glorious than the crown, and have turned the gaze of the whole theatre upon him? When then no mortal king, but God Himself, not in this theatre but in the theatre of the universe, in the assembly of the angels, the archangels, proclaims his name with uplifted voice shouting from heaven, tell me what place shall we assign to this holy man?

6. But if you will, let us listen too to the voice itself. What then was the voice? Abraham, Abraham, lay not your hand upon Isaac, neither do thou any thing unto him. For now I know that you fear God, and hast not spared your son, your well-beloved, for My sake. Genesis 22:11-12 What is this? He that knows all things before they are, did He now know! And yet even to man the Patriarch's fear of God was evident: so many proofs had he given that his heart was right toward God, as when He said to him, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred; Genesis 12:1 when for His sake and the honor due to Him he relinquished to his sister's son his priority; when He delivered him out of so great perils; when He bade him go into Egypt, and on his wife's being taken from him, he repined not, and more instances besides; and as I said, from these things even man would have learned the Patriarch's fear of God, much more than God Who waits not for the acts to know the end. And how too justified he him, if He knew not? For it is written, Abraham believed, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3

What then means this, Now I know? The Syriac has, Now you have made known; that is, to men. For I knew of old, even before all those commandments. And why, to men even, now? for were not those acts enough to prove his mind was right toward God? They were enough indeed, but this one so much greater than them all that they appear nothing beside it. As exalting then this good work and showing its superiority to all, He so spoke. For of things which exceed and surpass all that went before, most men are wont to speak so: for instance, if one receive from another a gift greater than any former one, he often says, Now I know that such an one loves me, not hereby meaning that he knew not in the time past, but as intending to declare what is now given to be greater than all. So also God, speaking after the manner of men, says, Now I know, intending only to mark the exceeding greatness of the exploit; not that He then came to know either his fear or the greatness of it. For when He says, Come, let Us go down and see, Genesis 11:7; 18:21 He says it not as needing to go down, (for He both fills all things and knows all things certainly,) but to teach us not to give sentence lightly. And when He says, The Lord looked down from Heaven: Psalm 14:2 it describes His perfect knowledge by a metaphor taken from men. So also here He

says, Now I know, to declare this to be greater than all which had preceded it. Of this itself too He furnishes proof by adding, Because you spared not your son, your well-beloved, for My sake; He says not your son only, but yet more, your well-beloved. For it was not nature only, but also parental fondness, which having both by natural disposition and by the great goodness of his child, he yet dared in him to spurn. And if about worthless children parents are not easily indifferent, but mourn even for them; when it is his son, his only-begotten, and his well-beloved, even Isaac, and the father himself is on the point of immolating him; who can describe the excessiveness of such philosophy? This exploit outshines thousands of diadems and crowns innumerable. For the wearer of that crown, both death oftentimes assails and annoys, and before death, assaults of circumstances without number; but this diadem shall no one have strength to take from him that wears it; no not even after death; neither of his own household, nor of strangers. And let me point you out the costliest stone in this diadem. For as a costly stone, so this comes at the end and clasps it. What then is this? The words, for My sake? for not herein is the marvel, that he spared not, but that it was for His sake.

Oh! blessed right hand, of what a knife was it accounted worthy? Oh! Wondrous knife, of what a right hand was it accounted worthy? Oh! Wondrous knife, for what a purpose was it prepared? To what an office did it serve? To what a type did it minister? How was it bloodied? How was it not bloodied? For I know not what to say, so awful was that mystery. It touched not the neck of the child, nor passed through the throat of that holy one: nor was crimsoned with the blood of the righteous; rather it both touched, and passed through, and was crimsoned, and was bathed in it, yet was not bathed. Perchance I seem to you beside myself, uttering such contradictions. For, in truth, I am beside myself, with the thought of the wondrous deed of that righteous man; but I utter no contradictions. For indeed the righteous man's hand thrust it in the throat of the lad, but God's Hand suffered it not, so thrust, to be stained with blood of the lad. For it was not Abraham alone that held it back, but God also: and he by his purpose gave the stroke, God by His voice restrained it. For the same voice both armed and disarmed that right hand, which, marshalled under God, as if under a leader, performed all things at His beck, and all were ministered at His voice. For observe; He said, Slay, and straightway it was armed: He said, Slay not, and straightway it was disarmed: for every thing [before] had been fully prepared.

And now God showed the soldier and general to the whole world; this crowned victor to the theatre of the angels; this priest, this king, crowned with that knife beyond a diadem, this trophy-bearer, this champion, this conqueror without a fight. For as if some general having a most valiant soldier, should use his mastery of his weapons, his bearing, his ordered movements to dismay the adversary; so also God, by the purpose, the attitude, the bearing only of that righteous man, dismayed and routed the common enemy of us all, the Devil. For I deem that even he then shrunk away aghast. But if any one say, 'And why did he not suffer that right hand to be bathed, and then immediately raise him up after being sacrificed?' Because God might not accept such bloody offerings; such a table were that of avenging demons. But here two things were displayed, both the loving kindness of the Master, and the faithfulness of the servant. And before, indeed, he went out from his country: but then he abandoned even nature. Wherefore also he received his principal with usury: and very reasonably. For he chose to lose the name of father, to show himself a faithful servant. Wherefore he became not a father only, but also a priest; and because for God's sake he gave up his own, therefore also did God give him with these His own besides. When then enemies devise mischief, He allows it to come even to the trial, and then works miracles; as in the case of the furnace and the lions; Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 but when Himself bids, readiness attained, He stays His bidding. What then, I ask, was wanting further in this noble deed? For did Abraham foreknow what would happen? Did he bargain for the mercy of God? For even though he were a prophet, yet the prophet knows

not all things. So the actual sacrifice afterwards was superfluous and unworthy of God. And if it was fit he should learn that God was able to raise from the dead, by the womb he had learned this much more marvellously, or rather he learned it even before that proof, for he had faith.

7. Do not then only admire this righteous man, but also imitate him, and when you see him amid so great uproar and surge of waves sailing as in a calm, take thou in hand in like way the helm of obedience and fortitude. For look, pray, not only at this that he built up the altar and the wood; but remember too the voice of the lad, and reflect what hosts like snow storms assaulted him to dismay him, when he heard the lad say, My father, where is the lamb? Bethink you how many thoughts were then stirred up armed not with iron, but with darts of flame; and piercing into and cutting him through on every side.

If even now many, and those not parents, are broken down, and would have wept, did they not know the end: and many, I see, do weep, though they know it; what must it be thought he would feel, who begot, who nurtured him, in old age had him, had him only, him such an one, who sees, who hears him, and is presently about to slay him? What intelligence in the words! What meekness in the question! Who then is here at work? The Devil that he might set nature in a flame? God forbid!

But God, the more to prove the golden soul of the righteous man. For when indeed the wife of Job speaks, a Devil is at work. For of such sort the advice is. But this one utters nothing blasphemous, but what is both very devout and thoughtful; and great the grace that overspread the words, much the honey that dropped therefrom, flowing from a calm and gentle soul. Even a heart of stone these words were enough to soften. But they turned not aside, nay, shook not that adamant. Nor said he, 'Why do you call him father, who in a little while will not be your father, yea, who has already lost that title of honor?'

And why does the lad ask the question? Not of impertinence merely, not of curiosity, but as anxious about what was proposed. For he reflected that had his father not meant to make him a partner in what was done, he would not have left the servants below, and taken him only with him. For this reason, too, surely, it is that when they were alone, then he asks him, when none heard what was said. So great was the judgment of the lad. Are you not all warmed towards him, both men and women?

Does not each one of you mentally infold and kiss the child, and marvel at his judgment; and venerate the piety which, when he was both bound and laid on the wood, made him not be dismayed nor struggle nor accuse his father as mad; but he was even bound and lifted up and laid upon it, and endured all in silence, like a lamb, yea, rather like the common Lord of all. For of Him he both imitated the gentleness, and kept to the type. For He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before his shearer.

Isaiah 53:7 And yet Isaac spoke; for his Lord spoke also. How dumb then? This means, he spoke nothing wilful or harsh, but all was sweet and mild, and the words more than the silence manifested his gentleness. For Christ also said, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you smite Me? John 18:23 and manifested His gentleness more than if He had held His peace. And as this one speaks with his father from the altar, so too does He from the Cross, saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

What then said the Patriarch? Genesis 22:8 God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering, my son. Either uses the names of nature; the former, father; the latter, son; and on either side arduous is the war stirred up, and mighty the storm, and yet wreck no where: for religion triumphed over all. Then after he heard of God, he spoke no further word nor was impertinently curious. Of such judgment was the child even in the very bloom of youth. Do you see the king, over how many armies, in how many battles which

beset him, he has been victorious?

For the barbarians were not so fearful to the city of Jerusalem when they assaulted her oftentimes, as were to this man the thoughts on every side besieging him: but still he overcame all. Would you see the priest also? The instance is at hand. For when you have seen him with fire and a knife; and standing over an altar, what do you doubt after as to his priesthood? But if you would see the sacrifice also, lo, here a twofold one. For he offered a son, he offered also a ram, yea, more and above all, his own will.

And with the blood of the lamb he consecrated his right hand, with the sacrifice of his son, his soul. Thus was he ordained a priest, by the blood of his only-begotten, by the sacrifice of a lamb; for the priests also were consecrated by the blood of the victims which were offered to God. Would you see the prophet also? It is written, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad. Leviticus 8; John 8:56

So also art you yourself made king and priest and prophet in the Laver; a king, having dashed to earth all the deeds of wickedness and slain your sins; a priest, in that you offer yourself to God, having sacrificed your body and being yourself slain also, for if we died with Him, says he, we shall also live with Him; 2 Timothy 2:11 a prophet, knowing what shall be, and being inspired of God, and sealed. For as upon soldiers a seal, so is also the Spirit put upon the faithful. And if you desert, you are manifest [by it] to all. For the Jews had circumcision for a seal, but we, the earnest of the Spirit. Knowing then all this, and considering our high estate, let us exhibit a life worthy of the grace, that we may obtain also the kingdom to come; which may we all obtain through the grace and love towards men of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom, to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

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