

Step 9 on Remembrance of Wrongs

by St. John Climacus

St. John Climacus teaches that remembrance of wrongs is a destructive passion that can be overcome through love, forgiveness, and prayer.

Scripture: Matthew 6:14, Luke 6:37, Ephesians 4:31, James 5:16

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Repentance"

Description

St. John Climacus preaches about the destructive nature of remembrance of wrongs, describing it as the consummation of anger and the ruin of virtues, emphasizing the importance of overcoming this dark passion through love and forgiveness. He highlights that harboring enmities leads to endless suffering, while banishing revenge through love brings freedom. St. John Climacus encourages believers to be vigilant against malicious thoughts and to seek release from sins through constant repentance and prayer.

Transcript

1. The holy virtues are like Jacob's ladder, and the unholy vices are like the chains that fell from the chief Apostle Peter. For the virtues, leading from one to another, bear him who chooses them up to Heaven; but the vices by their nature beget and stifle one another. And as we have just heard senseless anger calling remembrance of wrongs its own offspring, it is appropriate that we should now say something about this.
2. Remembrance of wrongs is the consummation of anger, the keeper of sins, hatred of righteousness, ruin of virtues, poison of the soul, worm of the mind, shame of prayer, stopping of supplication, estrangement of love, a nail stuck in the soul, pleasureless feeling beloved in the sweetness of bitterness, continuous sin, unsleeping transgression, hourly malice.
3. This dark and hateful passion, I mean remembrance of wrongs, is one of those that are produced but have no offspring. That is why we do not intend to say much about it.
4. He who has put a stop to anger has also destroyed remembrance of wrongs; because childbirth continues only while the father is alive.
5. He who has obtained love has banished revenge; but he who nurses enmities stores up for himself endless sufferings.
6. A banquet of love dispels hatred, and sincere gifts soothe a soul. But an ill-regulated banquet is the mother of boldness, and through the window of love gluttony leaps in.

7. I have seen hatred break the bond of long-standing fornication, and afterwards remembrance of wrongs, in an amazing way, did not allow the severed union to be renewed. Wonderful sight--a demon curing a demon! But perhaps this is the work not of demons but of Divine Providence.

8. Remembrance of wrongs is far from strong natural love, but fornication easily comes near it, just as a hidden louse can some times be seen in a dove.

9. Be malicious and spiteful against the demons, and be at constant enmity with your body. The flesh is a headstrong and treacherous friend. The more you care for it, the more it injures you.

10. Remembrance of wrongs is an interpreter of Scripture of the kind that adjusts the words of the Spirit to its own views. Let it be put to shame by the Prayer of Jesus² which cannot be said with it.

1 Or, 'resentment', 'malice', 'rancour', 'spite'.

2 The 'Prayer of Jesus' used in the Orthodox Church is 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me'. What is said in this paragraph applies equally to the Lord's Prayer, especially the clause 'forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors'.

11. When, after much struggling, you are still unable to extract this thorn, you should apologize to your enemy, even if only in word. Then perhaps you may be ashamed of your long-standing insincerity towards him, and, as your conscience stings you like fire, you may feel perfect love towards him.

12. You will know that you have completely got rid of this rot,¹ not when you pray for the person who has offended you, nor when you exchange presents with him, nor when you invite him to your table, but only when, on hearing that he has fallen into spiritual or bodily misfortune, you suffer and weep for him as for yourself.

13. A malicious anchorite² is an adder hidden in a hole, which carries about within itself deadly poison.

14. The remembrance of Jesus' sufferings cures remembrance of wrongs which is mightily shamed by His forbearance.

15. Worms grow in a rotten tree, and malice finds a place in falsely meek and silent people. He who has cast it out has found forgiveness, but he who sticks to it is deprived of mercy.

16. Some, for the sake of forgiveness, give themselves up to labours and struggles, but a man who is forgetful of wrongs excels them. If you forgive quickly, then you will be generously forgiven.³

17. The forgetting of wrongs is a sign of true repentance. But he who dwells on them and thinks that he is repenting is like a man who thinks he is running while he is really asleep.

18. I have seen resentful people recommend forgiveness to others. Yes, and being put to shame by their own words, they rid themselves of the passion.

19. Let no one regard dark spite as a harmless passion, for it often manages to reach out even to spiritual men.

The ninth step. Let him who has reached it boldly ask the Saviour Jesus for release from his sins for the future.

1 Vices are forms of decay or corruption. 2 Or, 'hesychast'.

3 Cf. St Luke vi, 37.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-climacus/step-9-on-remembrance-of-wrongs/>

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