



²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." ²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰ So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?" ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " ³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." ¹

HOMILY XLV

JOHN 6:28-30

Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent. They said therefore unto Him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? what dost thou work?

THERE is nothing worse, nothing more shameful, than gluttony; it makes the mind gross, and the soul carnal; it blinds, and permits not to see clearly. Observe, for instance, how this is the case with the Jews; for because they were intent upon gluttony, entirely occupied with worldly things, and without any spiritual thoughts, though Christ leads them on by ten thousand sayings, sharp and at the same time forbearing, even thus they arise not, but continue grovelling below. For consider; He said to them, *Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the bread, and were filled;* He touched them by the reproof, He shewed them what food they ought to seek, saying, *Labour not for the meat that perisheth;* He set before them the prize, saying, *but that which endureth unto everlasting life;* then provided a remedy for what might have been an objection, by declaring that He was sent from the Father.

What then did they? As though they had heard nothing, they said, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?* This they said, not that they might learn and do them, (as the sequel shews,) but to induce Him again to supply them with food, and desiring to persuade Him to satisfy them. What then saith Christ? *This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent.* On this they asked, *What sign shewest thou, that we may see and believe?*

Ver. 31. *Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness.*

Nothing more senseless, nothing more unreasonable, than these men! While the miracle was yet in their hands, as though none had been done, they spake after this manner, *What sign shewest thou?* and having thus spoken, they do not even allow Him the right of choosing the sign, but think to force Him to exhibit none other than such a one as was wrought in the days of their fathers; wherefore they say, *Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness,* thinking by this to provoke Him to work such a miracle as might supply them with carnal nourishment. Else why did they mention none other of the miracles of old, though many took place in those times, both in Egypt and at the sea and in the wilderness, but only that of the manna? Was it not because they greatly desired that one by reason of the tyranny of their bellies? Ye who when ye saw His miracle called Him a Prophet, and attempted to make Him a king, how is that now, as though

none had been wrought, ye have become thankless and ill-minded, and ask for a sign, uttering words fit for parasites, or hungry dogs? Does the manna now seem wonderful to you? Your soul is not now parched up.

Mark too their hypocrisy. They said not, "Moses did this sign, what doest thou?" thinking it would annoy Him; but for a while they address Him with great reverence, through expectation of food. So they neither said, "God did this, what doest thou?" that they might not seem to make Him equal with God; nor did they bring forward Moses, that they might not seem to lower Him, but put the matter in an intermediate form, *Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness*. He indeed might have replied, "I, but now, have wrought greater wonders than did Moses, requiring no rod, having no need of prayer, but doing all of Myself; and, if ye call to remembrance the manna, see, I have given you bread." But this was not the season for such speeches, and the one thing He earnestly desired was, to bring them to spiritual food. And observe His infinite wisdom in His manner of answering.

Ver. 32. *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

Why said He not, "It was not Moses that gave it you, but I;" but putteth God in the place of Moses, and Himself instead of manna? Because the infirmity of His hearers was great. As is seen from what followeth. For not even when He had spoken thus did He secure their attention, although He said at first, *Ye seek Me,* not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled*. Now because they sought these (carnal) things, He would have corrected them by His succeeding words, yet not even so did they desist. When He promised the Samaritan woman that He would give her *the water*, He made no mention of the Father. What saith He?* *If thou knewest Who it is that saith unto thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given unto thee living water; and again, The water which I shall give*. He referreth her not to The Father. But here He maketh mention of The Father, that thou mayest understand how great was the faith of the Samaritan woman, and how great the infirmity of the Jews.

Was then the manna not from heaven? How then is it said to be from heaven? In the same manner as Scripture speaketh of *fowls of heaven; and again,* The Lord thundered from heaven*. And He calleth that other the *true bread,* not because the miracle of the manna was false, but because it was a type, and not the very truth*. But in mentioning Moses, He doth not compare Himself to him, for the Jews did not as yet prefer Him to Moses, of whom they still had a higher opinion. So that after saying, *Moses gave not*, He addeth not that "I give," but saith that The Father, and not Moses, giveth. They, when they heard this, replied, "Give us this bread to eat;" for they yet thought that it was something material, they yet expected to gratify their appetites, and so hastily ran to Him. What doth Christ? Leading

them on little by little, He saith,

Ver. 33. *The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

Not, saith He, to Jews alone, but to all the world, not mere food, but *life*, another and an altered life. He calleth it *life*, because they all were dead in sins. Yet they still kept downward bent, saying,

Ver. 34. *Give us this bread.*

Then He, to rebuke them, because while they supposed that the food was material they ran to Him, but not when they learned that it was a spiritual kind, said,

Ver. 35, 36. *I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen Me, and believe Me not.*

[2.] Thus also John crieth, saying beforehand, "He speaketh that He knoweth,* and testifieth that He hath seen," and no man receiveth His testimony;* and again Christ Himself, *We speak that We do know, and testify that We have seen*, "and ye believe not." This He doth to prevent them, and to shew them that the matter doth not trouble Him, that He desireth not honour, that He is not ignorant of the secrets of their minds, nor of things present, nor of things to come.

I am the bread of life. Now He proceedeth to commit unto them mysteries. And first He discourseth of His Godhead, saying, *I am the bread of life.* For this is not spoken of His Body, (concerning that He saith towards the end, *And the bread which I shall give is My flesh*,) but at present it referreth to His Godhead. For That, through God the Word, is Bread, as this bread also, through the Spirit descending on it, is made Heavenly Bread. Here He useth not witnesses, as in His former address, for He had the miracle of the loaves to witness to Him, and the Jews themselves for a while pretending to believe Him; in the former case they opposed and accused Him. This is the reason why here He declareth Himself. But they, since they expected to enjoy a carnal feast, were not disturbed until they gave up their hope. Yet not for that was Christ silent, but uttered many words of reproof. For they, who while they were eating called Him a Prophet, were here offended, and called Him the carpenter's son; not so while they ate the loaves, then they said, "He is The Prophet," and desired to make Him a king. Now they seemed to be indignant at His asserting that He *came down from heaven*, but in truth it was not this that caused their indignation, but the thought that they should not enjoy a material table. Had they been really indignant, they ought to have asked and enquired how He was the *bread of life*, how He had *come down from heaven*; but now they do not this, but murmur. And that it was not this which offended them is plain from another circumstance. When He said, *My Father giveth you the bread*, they exclaimed not, "Beseech Him that He give;" but what? *Give us*

that bread; yet He said not, "I give," but, My Father giveth; nevertheless, they, from desire of the food, thought Him worthy to be trusted to for its supply. Now how should they, who deemed Him worthy of their trust for giving, be afterward offended when they also heard that the Father giveth? What is the reason? It is that when they heard that they were not to eat, they again disbelieved, and put forth by way of a cloak for their disbelief, that "it was a high saying." Wherefore He saith, Ye have seen Me, and believe not; alluding partly to His miracles, partly to the testimony from the Scriptures; For they, He saith,* are they which testify of Me; and, I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not; and, How can ye believe which receive honour of men?*

Ver. 37. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.

[3.] Observe how He doeth all things for the sake of them that are saved; therefore He added this, that He might not seem to be trifling and speaking these things to no purpose. But what is it that He saith,* *All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me,** and, *I will raise it up in the last day?* Wherefore speaketh He of the common resurrection, in which even the ungodly have a part, as though it were the peculiar gift of those who believe on Him? Because He speaketh not simply of resurrection, but of a particular kind of resurrection. For having first said, *I will not cast him out, I shall lose nothing of it,* He then speaketh of the resurrection. Since in the resurrection some are cast out, (*Take him,* and cast him into outer darkness,*) and some are destroyed. (*Rather fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*) And the expression, *I give eternal life,* declareth this: for they that have done evil shall go forth to the resurrection of damnation,* and they that have done good to the resurrection of life. This then,* the resurrection to good things, is that which He here designed. But what meaneth He by saying, *All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me?* He toucheth their unbelief, shewing that whosoever believeth not on Him transgresseth the will of the Father. And thus He saith it not nakedly, but in a covert manner, and this He doth every where, wishing to shew that unbelievers are at variance with the Father, not with Him alone. For if this is His will, and if for this He came, that He might save man, those who believe not transgress His will. "When therefore," He saith, "the Father guideth any man, there is nothing that hindereth him from coming unto Me;" and in another place,* *No man can come unto Me, except the Father draw him.*" And Paul saith, that He delivereth them up unto the Father;* *When He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.* Now as the Father when He giveth doth so without first depriving Himself, so the Son when He delivereth up doth so without excluding Himself. He is said to deliver us up, because through Him we have access (to the Father). And the "by whom" is also applied to the Father,* as when the Apostle

saith,* *By Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son:* and, "By the will of the Father." And again; *Blessed art thou,* Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.* What He here intimateth is something of this kind, that "faith in Me is no ordinary thing, but needeth an impulse from above;" and this He established throughout His discourse, shewing that this faith requires a noble sort of soul, and one drawn on by God.

But perhaps some one will say, "If all that the Father giveth, and whomsoever He shall draw, cometh unto Thee, if none can come unto Thee except it be given him from above, then those to whom the Father giveth not are free from any blame or charges." These are mere words and pretences. For we require our own deliberate choice also, because whether we will be taught is a matter of choice, and also whether we will believe. And in this place, by the *which the Father giveth Me,* He declareth nothing else than that "the believing on Me is no ordinary thing, nor one that cometh of human reasonings, but needeth a revelation from above, and a well-ordered soul to receive that revelation." And the, "He that cometh to Me shall be saved," meaneth that he shall be greatly cared for. "For on account of these," He saith, "I came, and took upon Me the flesh, and entered into the form of a servant." Then He addeth;

Ver. 38. *I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.*

What sayest Thou? Why, is Thy will one, and His another? That none may suspect this, He explaineth it by what follows, saying;

Ver. 40. *And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life.*

Is not then this Thy will? And how sayest Thou,* *I am come to send fire upon the earth, and what have I desired to see, if that be already kindled?* For if Thou also desirest this, it is very clear that Thy will and the Father's is one. In another place also He saith,* *For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.* But what is the will of the Father? Is it not, that not so much as one of them should perish?* This Thou willest also. So that the will of the One differeth not from the will of the Other. So in another place He is seen establishing yet more firmly His equality with the Father, saying, "I and My Father *will come,* and will make Our abode with him.* What He saith then is this; "I came not to do any thing other than that which the Father willeth, I have no will of Mine own different from that of the Father, for all that is the Father's is Mine, and all that is Mine is the Father's." If now the things of the Father and the Son are in common, He saith with reason, *Not that I might do Mine own will.* But here He speaketh not so, but reserveth this for the end. For, as I have said, He concealeth and veileth for a while high matters, and desireth to prove that had He even

said, "This is My will," they would have despised Him. He therefore saith, that "I cooperate with that Will," desiring thus to startle them more; as though He had said, "What think ye? Do ye anger Me by your disbelief? Nay, ye provoke My Father."* *For this is the will of Him that sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing.* Here He sheweth that He needeth not their service, that He came not for His own advantage, but for their salvation; and not to get honour from them. Which indeed He declared in a former address,* saying, *I receive not honour from men;** and again, *These things I say that ye may be saved.* Since He every where laboureth to persuade them that He came for their salvation. And He saith, that He obtaineth honour to the Father, in order that He may not be suspected by them. And that it is for this reason He thus speaketh, He hath more clearly revealed by what follows. For He saith,* *He that seeketh his own will seeketh his own glory; but He that seeketh His glory that sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. And this is the will of the Father, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him,* may have everlasting life.*

And I will raise him up at the last day. Why doth He continually dwell upon the Resurrection? It is that men may not judge of God's providence by present things alone; that if they enjoy not results here, they become not on that account desponding, but wait for the things that are to come, and that they may not, because their sins are not punished for the present, despise Him, but look for another life.

Now those men gained nothing, but let us take pains to gain by having the Resurrection continually sounded in our ears; and if we desire to be grasping, or to steal, or to do any wrong thing, let us straightway take into our thoughts that Day, let us picture to ourselves the Judgment-seat, for such reflections will check the evil impulse more strongly than any bit. Let us continually say to others, and to ourselves, "There is a resurrection, and a fearful tribunal awaiteth us." If we see any man insolent and puffed up with the good things of this world, let us make the same remark to him, and shew him that all those things abide here: and if we observe another grieving and impatient, let us say the same to him, and point out to him that his sorrows shall have an end; if we see one careless and dissipated, let us say the same charm over him, and shew that for his carelessness he must render account. This saying is able more than any other remedy to heal our souls. For there is a Resurrection, and that Resurrection is at our doors, not afar off, nor at a distance. *For yet a little while,* and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* And again,* *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;* that is, both bad and good, the one to be shamed in sight of all, the other in sight of all to be made more glorious. For as they who judge here punish the wicked and honour the good publicly, so too will

it be there, that the one sort may have the greater shame, and the other more conspicuous glory. Let us picture these things to ourselves every day. If we are ever revolving them, no care for present things will be able to sting us. *For the things which are seen are temporal,* but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Continually let us say to ourselves and to others, "There is a Resurrection, and a Judgment, and a scrutiny of our actions;" and let as many as deem that there is such a thing as fate repeat this, and they shall straightway be delivered from the rottenness of their malady; for if there is a Resurrection, and a Judgment, there is no fate, though they bring ten thousand arguments, and choke themselves to prove it. But I am ashamed to be teaching Christians concerning the Resurrection: for he that needeth to learn that there is a Resurrection, and who hath not firmly persuaded himself that the affairs of this world go not on by fate, and without design, and as chance will have them, can be no Christian. Wherefore, I exhort and beseech you, that we cleanse ourselves from all wickedness, and do all in our power to obtain pardon and excuse in that Day.

Perhaps some one will say, "When will be the consummation? When will be the Resurrection? See how long a time hath gone by, and nothing of the kind hath come to pass?" Yet it shall be, be sure. For those before the flood spake after this manner, and mocked at Noah, but the flood came and swept away all those unbelievers, but preserved him who believed. And the men of Lot's time expected not that stroke from God, until those lightnings and thunderbolts came down and destroyed them all utterly. Neither in the case of these men, nor of those who lived in the time of Noah, was there any preamble to what was about to happen, but when they were all living daintily, and drinking, and mad with wine, then came these intolerable calamities upon them. So also shall the Resurrection be; not with any preamble, but while we are in the midst of good times. Wherefore Paul saith, *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them,* as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.* God hath so ordered this, that we may be always struggling, and be not confident even in time of safety. What sayest thou? Dost thou not expect that there will be a Resurrection and a Judgment? The devils confess these, and art thou shameless? *Art Thou come, they say, to torment us before the time?* now they who say that there will be "torment," are aware of the Judgment,* and the reckoning, and the vengeance. Let us not then besides daring evil deeds, anger God by disbelieving the word of the Resurrection. For as in other things Christ hath been our beginning, so also hath He in this;* wherefore He is called *the first-born from the dead.* Now if there were no Resurrection, how could He be *the first-born,* when no one of *the dead* was to follow Him? If there were no Resurrection, how would the justice of God be preserved, when so many evil men prosper, and so many good men are afflicted and

die in their affliction? Where shall each of these obtain his deserts, if so be that there is no Resurrection? No one of those who have lived aright disbelieves the Resurrection, but every day they pray and repeat that holy sentence, "Thy Kingdom come." Who then are they that disbelieve the Resurrection? They who have unholy ways and an unclean life: as the Prophet saith,* *His ways are always polluted. Thy judgments are far above out of his sight.* For a man cannot possibly live a pure life without believing in the Resurrection; since they who are conscious of no iniquity both speak of, and wish for, and believe in it, that they may receive their recompense. Let us not then anger Him, but hear Him when He saith,* *Fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell;* that by that fear we may become better, and being delivered from that perdition, may be deemed worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven. Which may we all attain to, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom and with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, now and ever and to the endless ages of eternity. Amen.²

Reflection: John Chrysostom was considered one of the greatest preachers of the Early Church. Here he makes a connection between the sin of gluttony and our desire for miracles - and particularly our hunger for the return of Christ. Are we looking for the return of Christ so that we may escape the troubles of this world or are we truly seeking the resurrection ourselves, so that we, having eaten the bread of life would be so filled with God that we would never hunger again and be able to transform a troubled world with the baskets of leftovers that come from meals with Jesus?

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2001). (Jn 6:27–40). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

² John Chrysostom. (1848). *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Gospel of St. John* (Vol. 2, pp. 383–393). Oxford; London: John Henry Parker; F. and J. Rivington.