

~Other Speakers A-F: John Chrysostom:

Let no man deceive himself. If any man (ἀ'¼•Î½ά'½—Î¼άζ—Î½ omitted.) thinks that he is wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

As I said before, having launched out before the proper time into accusation of the fornicator, and having half opened it obscurely in a few words, and made the man's conscience to quail, he hastens again to the battle with heathen wisdom, and to his accusations of those who were puffed up there-with, and who were dividing the Church: in order that having added what remained and completed the whole topic with accuracy, he might thenceforth suffer his tongue to be carried away with vehement impulse against the unclean person, having had but a preliminary skirmishing with him in what he had said before. For this, Let no man deceive himself, is the expression of one aiming chiefly at him and quelling him beforehand by fear: and the saying about the stubble, suits best with one hinting at him. And so does the phrase, Do you not know that you are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you? For these two things are most apt to withdraw us from sin; when we have in mind the punishment appointed for the sin; and when we reckon up the amount of our true dignity. By bringing forward then the hay and the stubble, he terrifies; but by speaking of the dignity of that noble birth which was theirs, he puts them to shame; by the former striving to amend the more insensible kind, by the latter the more considerate.

2. Let no man deceive himself; if any man thinks that he is wise in this world, let him become a fool.

As he bids one become, as it were, dead unto the world "and this deadness harms not at all, but rather profits, being made a cause of life:" so also he bids him become foolish unto this world, introducing to us hereby the true wisdom. Now he becomes a fool unto the world, who slights the wisdom from without, and is persuaded that it contributes nothing towards his comprehension of the faith. As then that poverty which is according to God is the cause of wealth, and lowliness, of exaltation, and to despise glory is the cause of glory; so also the becoming a fool makes a man wiser than all. For all, with us, goes by contraries.

Further: why said he not, Let him put off wisdom, but, Let him become a fool? That he might most exceedingly disparage the heathen instruction. For it was not the same thing to say, Lay aside your wisdom, and, become a fool. And besides, he is also training people not to be ashamed at the want of refinement among us; for he quite laughs to scorn all heathen things. And for the same sort of reason he shrinks not from the names, trusting as he does to the power of the things [which he speaks of].

Wherefore, as the Cross, though counted ignominious, became the author of innumerable blessings, and the foundation and root of glory unspeakable; so also that which was accounted to be foolishness became unto us the cause of wisdom. For as he who has learned anything ill, unless he put away the whole, and make his soul level and clear, and so offer it to him who is to write on it, will know no wholesome truth for certain; so also in regard of the wisdom from without. Unless thou turn out the whole and sweep your mind clear, and like one that is ignorant yield up yourself unto the faith, you will know accurately nothing excellent. For so those also who see imperfectly if they will not shut their eyes and commit themselves unto others, but will be trusting their own matters to their own faulty eyesight, they will commit many more mistakes than those who see not.

But how, you will say, are men to put off this wisdom? By not acting on its precepts.

3. Then, seeing that he bade men so urgently withdraw themselves from it, he adds the cause, saying, For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For not only it contributes nothing, but it even hinders. We must then withdraw ourselves from it, as doing harm. Do you mark with what a high hand he carries off the spoils of victory, having proved that so far from profiting us at all, it is even an opponent?

And he is not content with his own arguments, but he has also adduced testimony again, saying, For it is written, Job 5:13 He takes the wise in their own craftiness. By craftiness, i.e. by their own arms getting the better of them. For seeing that they made use of their wisdom to the doing away of all need of God, by it and no other thing He refuted them, showing that they were specially in need of God. How and by what method? Because having by it become fools, by it, as was meet, they were taken. For they who supposed that they needed not God, were reduced to so great a strait as to appear inferior to fishermen and unlettered persons; and from that time forth to be unable to do without them. Wherefore he says, In their own craftiness He took them. For the saying I will destroy their wisdom, was spoken in regard to its introducing nothing useful; but this, who takes the wise in their own craftiness, with a view of showing the power of God.

what is unnecessary the things which are not yours? Do you not know that for this we are soon to be put on our trial, that is, if we have used them badly? But seeing that they are not our's but our Master's, it were right to expend them upon our fellow-servants. It is worth considering that the omission of this was the charge brought against that rich man: and against those also who had not given food to the Lord. Luke 14:21. Matthew 25:42

7. Say not then, I am but spending my own, and of my own I live delicately. It is not of your own, but of other men's. Other men's, I say, because such is your own choice: for God's will is that those things should be yours, which have been entrusted unto you on behalf of your brethren. Now the things which are not your own become yours, if you spend them upon others: but if you spend on yourself unsparingly, your own things become no longer yours. For since you use them cruelly, and sayest, That my own things should be altogether spent on my own enjoyment is fair: therefore I call them not your own. For they are common to you and your fellow-servants; just as the sun is common, the air, the earth, and all the rest. For as in the case of the body, each ministration belongs both to the whole body and to each several member; but when it is applied to one single member only, it destroys the proper function of that very member: so also it comes to pass in the case of wealth. And that what I say may be made plainer; the food of the body which is given in common to the members, should it pass into one member, even to that it turns out alien in the end. For when it cannot be digested nor afford nourishment, even to that part, I say, it turns out alien. But if it be made common, both that part and all the rest have it as their own.

So also in regard of wealth. If you enjoy it alone, you too have lost it: for you will not reap its reward. But if you possess it jointly with the rest, then will it be more your own, and then will you reap the benefit of it. Do you see not that the hands minister, and the mouth softens, and the stomach receives? Does the stomach say, Since I have received, I ought to keep it all? Then do not thou I pray, in regard to riches, use this language. For it belongs to the receiver to impart. As then it is a vice in the stomach to retain the food and not to distribute it, (for it is injurious to the whole body,) so it is a vice in those that are rich to keep to themselves what they have. For this destroys both themselves and others. Again, the eye receives all the light: but it does not itself alone retain it, but enlightens the entire body. For it is not its nature to keep it to itself, so long as it is an eye. Again, the nostrils are sensible of perfume; but they do not keep it all to themselves, but transmit it to the brain, and affect the stomach with a sweet savor, and by their means refresh the entire man. The feet alone walk; but they move not away themselves only, but transfer also the whole body. In like manner do thou, whatsoever you have been entrusted withal, keep it not to yourself alone, since you are doing harm to the whole and to yourself more than all.

And not in the case of the limbs only may one see this occurring: for the smith also, if he chose to impart of his craft to no one, ruins both himself and all other crafts. Likewise the cordwainer, the husbandman, the baker, and everyone of those who pursue any necessary calling; if he chose not to communicate to anyone of the results of his art, will ruin not the others only but himself also with them.

And why do I say, the rich? For the poor too, if they followed after the wickedness of you who are covetous and rich, would injure you very greatly and soon make you poor; yea rather, they would quite destroy you, were they in your want unwilling to impart of their own: the tiller of the ground, (for instance,) of the labor of his hands; the sailor, of the gain from his voyages; the soldier, of his distinction won in the wars.

Wherefore if nothing else can, yet let this at least put you to shame, and do you imitate their benevolence. Do you impart none of your wealth unto any? Then should you not receive any thing from another: in which case, the world will be turned upside down. For in every thing to give and receive is the principle of numerous blessings: in seeds, in scholars, in arts. For if any one desire to keep his art to himself, he subverts both himself and the whole course of things. And the husbandman, if he bury and keep the seeds in his house, will bring about a grievous famine. So also the rich man, if he act thus in regard of his wealth, will destroy himself before the poor, heaping up the fire of hell more grievous upon his own head.

8. Therefore as teachers, however many scholars they have, impart some of their lore unto each; so let your possession be, many to whom you have done good. And let all say, such an one he freed from poverty, such an one from dangers. Such an one would have perished, had he not, next to the grace of God, enjoyed your patronage. This man's disease you cured, another you rid of false accusation, another being a stranger you took in, another being naked you clothed. Wealth inexhaustible and many treasures are not so good as such sayings. They draw all men's gaze more powerfully than your golden vestments, and horses, and slaves. For these make a man appear even odious: (ἰτίλι, ἰτίλι, ἰτίλι, a conj. of Saville's for ἰτίλι, ἰτίλι) they cause him to be hated as a common foe; but the former proclaim him as a common father and benefactor. And, what is greatest of all, Favor from God waits on you in every part of your proceedings. What I mean is, let one man say, He helped to portion out my daughter: another, And he afforded my son the means of taking his station among

