

## Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom

*St. John Chrysostom (347—407) was Archbishop of Constantinople. He is famous for his eloquence as well as his compassion for those in need. He was named 'Chrysostom' after his death, which is Greek for 'golden-mouthed'. This sermon of his is read at Pascha (Easter), the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, universally throughout the Orthodox Church.*

If anyone is devout<sup>1</sup> and a lover of God, let him enjoy this beautiful and radiant festival.

If anyone is a wise servant, let him, rejoicing, enter into the joy of his Lord.

If anyone has wearied himself in fasting, let him now receive his recompense<sup>2</sup>.

If anyone has laboured from the first hour<sup>3</sup>, let him today receive his just reward. If anyone has come at the third hour, with thanksgiving let him keep the feast. If anyone has arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; for he shall suffer no loss. If anyone has delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near without hesitation. If anyone has arrived even at the eleventh hour, let him not fear on account of his delay. For the Master is gracious and receives the last, even as the first; he gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, just as to him who has laboured from the first. He has mercy upon the last and cares for the first; to the one he gives, and to the other he is gracious. He both honours the work and praises the intention.

Enter all of you, therefore, into the joy of our Lord, and, whether first or last, receive your reward. O rich and poor, one with another, dance for joy! O you ascetics and you negligent, celebrate the day! You that have fasted and you that have disregarded the fast, rejoice today! The table is rich-laden; feast royally, all of you! The calf is fatted; let no one go forth hungry!

Let all partake of the feast of faith. Let all receive the riches of goodness.

Let no one lament his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed.

Let no one mourn his transgressions, for pardon has dawned from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Saviour's death has set us free.

He that was taken by death has annihilated it! He descended into hades<sup>4</sup> and took hades captive! He embittered<sup>5</sup> it when it tasted his flesh! And anticipating<sup>6</sup> this, Isaiah exclaimed, "Hades was embittered when it encountered thee in the lower regions." It was embittered, for it was abolished! It was embittered, for it was mocked! It was embittered, for it was purged! It was embittered, for it was despoiled! It was embittered, for it was bound in chains!

It took a body and, face to face, met God! It took earth and encountered heaven! It took what it saw but crumbled before what it had not seen!

"O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy victory?"<sup>7</sup>

Christ is risen, and you are overthrown!

Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!

Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!

Christ is risen, and life reigns!

Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in a tomb!

For Christ, being raised from the dead, has become the First-fruits<sup>8</sup> of them that slept.

To him be glory and might unto ages of ages. Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> Having deep religious commitment

<sup>2</sup> Reward

<sup>3</sup> Referring to Jesus' parable in which workers who begin at different times of the day all receive the same pay at the end.

<sup>4</sup> The underworld; the land of the dead

<sup>5</sup> To make someone angry or resentful at things that are or seem unfair

<sup>6</sup> Expecting or predicting

<sup>7</sup> From St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:55

<sup>8</sup> The first harvest of produce of a season, often given as an offering to God

## Going Deeper

1. Write seven words in the sermon that have joyful connotations (emotional meanings).

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Highlight all of the exclamation marks (!), question marks (?) and quotation marks (“ ”).

3. What is the effect of using so many exclamatory statements (sentences that end with exclamation marks)? \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Anaphora** is a specific kind of repetition in which a word or phrase is repeated at the start of a sentence, line or paragraph. Find three examples of anaphora in the sermon:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the effect of using anaphora? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is something you like about this sermon? \_\_\_\_\_

7. **Imperative verbs** are verbs that command someone to do something. For example, in the phrase ‘Clean your room’, ‘clean’ is an imperative verb. Find three examples:

\_\_\_\_\_

8. **Emotive language** is language that engages emotions. Find three examples:

\_\_\_\_\_

9. A **simple sentence** is often short and has only one independent clause (a complete phrase) with no other clauses. It has no commas; for example, ‘It is sunny today.’ Find one example:

\_\_\_\_\_

10. A **compound sentence** has two equal independent clauses connected with a conjunction, such as ‘and’, ‘so’ or ‘but’; for example, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease’. Find one example:

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Find three examples of **repetition**: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Why do you think St. John Chrysostom repeats so much in the sermon? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. *Practice*: In your exercise book, practise writing sentences using the following techniques or

features:  Imperative verb  Emotive language  Repetition  Anaphora

Exclamatory sentence  Rhetorical question  Sentence with quotation marks

Simple sentence  Compound sentence

14. If you could ask St. John Chrysostom one thing about his sermon, what would it be? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. *Creative writing*: Write a short speech celebrating something (such as a wedding or graduation – use

your imagination!). Use all of the techniques above.  Imperative verb  Emotive language

Repetition  Anaphora  Exclamatory sentence  Rhetorical question  Sentence with

quotation marks  Simple sentence  Compound sentence