

1:12a *I Know Whom I Have Believed*

WE COMMEND OUR FAITH TO GOD'S KEEPING.

AUGUSTINE: Paul says [elsewhere], "I have kept the faith."²¹ but the same apostle also says, "For I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that he is able to keep that which I have deposited with him against that day." "That which I have deposited with him" means: What I have commended to him, for some [Latin] copies do not have the word depositum but commendatum, which is clearer. Now what do we commend to God's keeping save those things which we pray he will preserve? Is not our very faith among these? For what did the Lord commend for the apostle Peter, by his prayer for him, when he said to him. "I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith shall not fail"?²² This means that God would preserve his faith and that it would not fail by giving way to temptation. PROCEEDINGS OF PELAGIUS 14.35.²³

1:12b *To Guard Until That Day*

1:12c *What Has Been Entrusted to Me*

THE FAITH PREACHED OR THE FAITHFUL PEOPLE.

CHRYSOSTOM: What is "that which has been entrusted to me"?²⁷ The faith, the preaching of the gospel. God, who committed this to us, will preserve it unimpaired. I suffer everything, that I may not be despoiled of this treasure. I am not ashamed of these things, so long as the faith is preserved uninjured. Or by "that which is entrusted to me" he may be referring to the faithful people who God has committed to him. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 2.²⁸

1:13 *The Pattern of the Sound Words*

AN IMPRESSED IMAGE.

CHRYSOSTOM: After the manner of artists, Paul is saying, I have impressed on you the image of virtue, fixing in your soul a sort of rule and model and outline of all things pleasing to God. Hold fast to these things, whether you are meditating on any matter of faith or love or of a sound mind. Form your ideas from this pattern in the future. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 3.²⁹

1:14a *The Truth Entrusted to You*

PRESERVE THE HEAVENLY SEED.

JOHN OF DAMASCUS: Before all things, keep that truth which is committed to your trust, the holy Word of faith by which you have been taught and instructed, And let no weeds of heresy grow up among you, but preserve the heavenly seed pure and sincere, that it may yield a great harvest to the master, when he comes to demand account of our lives. He shall reward us according to our deeds, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, but darkness and everlasting shame shall cover the sinners. BARLAAM AND IOASAPH 36.335.30

1:14b *The Holy Spirit Dwells Within Us*

THE SPIRIT IN ME.

BASIL THE GREAT: If we offer glory to God in the Spirit, we mean that the Spirit enables us to fulfill the requirements of true religion. According to this usage, then, we say we are in the Spirit, but it is not objectionable for someone to testify, “the Spirit of God is in me, and I offer glory because his grace has given me the wisdom to do so.” The words of Paul are appropriate: “I think that I have the Spirit of God,”³¹ and “guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.” ON THE HOLY SPIRIT 26.63.32

1:15 *All Who Are in Asia Turned Away from Me*

MOST TURNED ASIDE.

CHRYSOSTOM: It seems that there were then in Rome many persons from the regions of Asia. “But no one stood by me,” he says. No one acknowledged me. All were alienated. Take note of what his soul loves. He only mentions their conduct. He does not curse them, but he praises him who showed kindness to him and invokes a thousand blessings upon him, without any curse on them. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 3.33

1:16 Grant Mercy to the Household of Onesiphorus

ENCOURAGING FELLOW COMBATANTS.

CHRYSOSTOM: Such ought the faithful to be—like Onesiphorus. Neither fear nor threats nor disgrace should deter them from assisting one another, standing by them and succoring them as in war. For they do not so much benefit those who are in danger, as themselves, by the service they render to them, making themselves partakers of the crowns due to them... . For as in the service of kings, not only those who fight the battle but those who guard the baggage share in the honor. Even more, they frequently even have an equal portion of the spoils, though they have not soaked their hands in blood, nor stood in array, nor even seen the ranks of the enemy. So it is in these conflicts. For he who relieves the combatant, when wasted with hunger, who stands by him, encouraging him by words and rendering him every service, is not inferior to the combatant. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 3.35

2:1 Be Strong in Grace

AS WITH ME, SO WITH YOU.

CHRYSOSTOM: The young sailor at sea is inspired with great confidence if the master of the ship has been preserved in a shipwreck. For he will not consider that it is from the master's inexperience that he is exposed to the storm, but from the nature of things, and this has no little effect upon his mind. In war also the captain, who sees his general wounded and recovered again, is much encouraged. And thus it produces some consolation to the faithful that the apostle should have been exposed to great sufferings and not been rendered weak by the utmost of them... . For if I, Paul, endure these things, much more ought you to bear them. If the master much, more the disciple. And this exhortation he introduces with much affection, calling him "son," and not only so, but "my son." If you are a son, he implies, imitate your father. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 4.1

2:2a What You Have Heard from Me

NOT IN SECRET.

CHRYSOSTOM: As if he had said: You have not heard in secret, nor apart, but in the presence of many, with all openness of speech. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 4.4

THE ANGELS ALSO ARE WITNESSES.

BASIL THE GREAT: One does not speak of the Spirit and of angels as if they were equals. The Spirit is the Lord of life. The angels are our helpers, our fellow servants, faithful witnesses of the truth. It is customary for the saints to deliver God's commandments in the presence of witnesses. St. Paul says to Timothy: "what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men." He asks the angels to testify with him, because he knows that angels will be present when the Lord comes in the glory of his father to judge the world in righteousness. ON THE HOLY SPIRIT 13.29.5

2:2b Entrust to Faithful People

2:3 A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus

KEEP THE FORT.

ORIGEN: The true soldiers of Christ must, in every way, form a fortification for truth and nowhere permit an opening for persuasive falsehood, so far as they are able. COMMENTARY ON JOHN 6.32.12

ENDURE HARDNESS.

CHRYSOSTOM: "YOU therefore must endure rough times as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." ... Observe the kings on earth, how great an honor it is esteemed to serve under them. If therefore the soldier of the king ought to endure hardness, not to endure hardness is not the part of any soldier. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 4.13

2:4a No Soldier Entangled in Civilian Pursuits

NO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

JEROME: How can the clergy be managers and stewards of other men's households and estates when they are bidden to disregard even their own interests? LETTERS 52.16.15

THE SOLDIER OF VIRTUE.

CHRYSOSTOM: You are a spiritual soldier. This kind of soldier does not sleep on an ivory bed but on the ground. He is not anointed with perfumed oils. These are the concern of those corrupt men who dally

with courtesans, of those who act on the stage, of those who live carelessly. You must not smell of perfumes but of virtue. ON LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN 1.16

NO THOUGHT OF TOMORROW.

AUGUSTINE: We are not anxious about the necessities of life, because, when we can perform these labors, he feeds and clothes us as men in general are fed and clothed. When, however, we are not able to work, then he feeds and clothes us just as the birds are fed and the lilies clothed, since we are of more value than they. Therefore, in this warfare of ours, we give no thought to the morrow, because it is not by temporal concerns pertaining to the morrow but by eternal matters, the concern of the everlasting today, that we have proved ourselves to him whom we cannot please if we are entangled in worldly affairs. THE WORK OF MONKS 27.35.17

2:4b Satisfying the One Who Enlisted Us

IN SERVICE TOGETHER.

IGNATIUS: Pay attention to the bishop so that God will pay attention to you. I give my life as a sacrifice (poor as it is) for those who are obedient to the bishop, the presbyters and the deacons. Along with them may I get my share of God's reward! Share your hard training together —wrestle together, run together, suffer together, retire together, get up together, as God's stewards, assessors and assistants. Give satisfaction to him in whose ranks you serve and from whom you get your pay. Let none of you be a deserter. Let your baptism be your arms; your faith, your helmet; your love, your spear; your endurance, your armor.¹⁹ LETTER TO POLYCARP 6.1–2.20

TO BE HOLY.

ORIGEN: If you have understood how either an animal or a vessel or a garment is called holy, understand too that a person is also called holy by these observances and laws. For if anyone should devote himself to God, if anyone should not entangle himself in secular affairs. "in order to please him who appointed him," if anyone was separated and set apart from the rest of men who live carnally and are bound with mundane affairs and does not seek things which are upon the earth but which are in heaven. 21 that person is deservedly called holy. HOMILIES ON LEVITICUS 11.4.22

IN THE KING'S CARE.

BASIL THE GREAT: Where is Christ, the King? In heaven, to be sure. In this direction it behooves you, soldier of Christ, to direct your course. Forget all earthly delights. A soldier does not build a house. He does not aspire to the possession of lands. He does not concern himself with devious, coin-purveying trade.... The soldier enjoys a sustenance provided by the king. He need not furnish his own nor vex himself in this regard. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ASCETICAL LIFE.²³

CLERICAL DISCIPLINE.

MAXIMUS OF TURIN: Clerics do not seem to be on military service in the world, yet they are nonetheless soldiers for God and the Lord. As the apostle says, No one soldiering for God involves himself in secular affairs. We seem, I say, not to be soldiers in our loose and flowing tunics, but we have our military belt, by which we are bound to an interior purity. SERMONS 26.4.²⁴

2:5a An Athlete Is Not Crowned

THE WORLD AN ARENA.

AMBROSE: What is the world but an arena full of fighting? Therefore the Lord says in the Apocalypse, "To the victor I shall give the crown of life,"²⁵ and Paul says, "I have fought the good fight,"²⁶ and elsewhere, "No one is crowned unless he has competed according to the rules." He who initiated the contest is actually almighty God. When one initiates a contest in this world, does he not prepare all that is necessary for the contest, and only after he has made ready the wreaths for rewards call those who are to contend for the crown, so that the winner may not meet with delay but depart after being given his reward? The rewards of man are the fruits of the earth and the lights of heaven. The former are for his use in the present life; the latter, for his hope of life eternal. Like an athlete, then, he comes last into the arena... It is he who poises the blow, it is Christ who strikes; he lifts his heel, Christ directs it to the wound. ... In preaching Christ he deals wounds to all those spiritual evils which are his enemies. Not undeservedly, then, does man enter the stadium last, and a crown is prepared for him so that heaven might go before him as being his reward. LETTERS 49.²⁷

2:5b Competing According to the Rules

MORTAL LIFE ITSELF THE CONTEST.

ORIGEN: We who are concerned with the business of our Creator will live according to the laws of God. We have no desire to serve the laws of sin.... If necessary, we will also partake of the joys of this life and endure the appointed evils as trials of the soul... . In them the soul of the man who is being tested, like gold in the fire, is either convicted of failure or is manifested as reliable... . Moreover, no one is crowned unless he strives lawfully even here upon earth with the body of humiliation. AGAINST CELSUS 8.56.28

DO ALL THAT IS FITTING.

CHRYSOSTOM: What is meant by “lawfully”? It is not enough that he enters into the lists, that he is anointed, and even engages, unless he comply with all the laws of the exercise. This includes those that pertain to diet, to temperance and sobriety, and all the rules of the wrestling school. Unless, in short, he goes through all that is befitting for a wrestler, he is not crowned. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 4.29

THE ATHLETIC ANALOGY.

CHRYSOSTOM: You say that her clothes are shabby, but virginity resides not in clothing nor in one’s complexion but in the body and soul. Is it not strange that we have different standards? We will not judge the philosopher by his hair or his staff or his tunic but by his way of life, his character and soul. The soldier too we will not approve for his mantle or belt but for his strength and manliness. Yet the virgin, who represents a state so admirable and superior to all others, we will simply and offhandedly assume practices her virtue because of the squalor of her hair, her dejected look and gray cloak. We do not strip her soul bare and scrutinize closely its inner state. But he who has drawn up the rules for this contest does not permit this. He orders that those who have entered not be judged by their clothing but by the convictions of their souls. “Athletes,” Paul says, “deny themselves all sorts of things,”³⁰ anything that would trouble the health of the soul. “If one takes part in an athletic contest, he cannot receive the winner’s crown unless he has kept the rules.” What, then, are the laws of this contest? Hear again his words, or rather Christ himself, who has established the contest: “The virgin is concerned with things of the Lord, in pursuit of holiness in body and spirit.”³¹ ON VIRGINITY 7.1–2.32

EXPECT A RIGOROUS LIFE.

CHRYSOSTOM: In a word, it is absolutely necessary for one who hopes to please God and to be acceptable and pure, not to pursue a relaxed and slippery and dissolute life, but a laborious life, groaning with much

toil and sweat. For no one is crowned, Paul says, “unless he competes according to the rules.” ON LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN 3.³³

YOU NEED A GOOD COACH.

BASIL THE GREAT: But, if you place yourself in the hands of a man rich in virtue, you will become the heir of the good qualities he possesses and you will be supremely blessed with God and men. On the other hand, if, to spare the body, you seek a master who will condescend or, rather, degrade himself to the level of your vices, all in vain did you endure the struggle of renunciation, since you have surrendered yourself to a life of gratifying your passions by choosing a blind guide who will lead you into the pit. ON RENUNCIATION OF THE WORLD.³⁴

THE NECESSITY OF THE OPPONENT.

GREGORY OF NYSSA: How can there be a lawful contest if there is no opponent? If there is no opponent, there is no crown. Victory does not exist by itself, without there being a defeated party. ON PERFECTION.³⁵

THE COST OF THE CONTEST.

JEROME: Christ’s athlete is not crowned unless he has competed according to the rules, unless he has accepted and sustained the challenge, unless his face is black and blue from the fray and bathed in blood. It is the discolored bruises that deserve a crown, and suffering and pain that merit joy. HOMILIES 43.1.³⁶

LOOK FIRST AT THE RULES OF THE CONTEST.

JOHN CASSIAN: One who wants to extinguish the natural desires of the flesh should first hasten to overcome those vices whose ground is contrary to our nature. For if we desire to test out the force of the apostle’s counsel, we ought first to learn what are the laws and what the discipline of the world’s contest. This is so that finally by a comparison with these, we may be able to know what the blessed apostle meant to teach to us who are striving in the spiritual contest. INSTITUTES 5.12. ³⁷

2:8 Remember Jesus Christ

THE DIVINE CONDESCENSION.

CHRYSOSTOM: Why is this mentioned? It is directed chiefly against the heretics, at the same time to encourage Timothy, by underscoring the divine blessings accompanying sufferings, since Christ, our

Master, himself overcame death by suffering For upon this point many had already begun to subvert God's providence, being ashamed at the immensity of God's love for humanity. For of such a nature are the benefits which God has conferred upon us that we were embarrassed to as-cribe them to God and could not believe he had so far condescended. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 4.38

THE CENTRALITY OF RESURRECTION.

AUGUSTINE: Let us believe in Christ crucified; but in him as the one who rose again on the third day. That's the faith that distinguishes us from them, distinguishes us from the pagans, distinguishes us from the Jews—the faith by which we believe that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. The apostle says to Timothy, "Remember that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel." And again the same apostle, "Because if you believe in your heart," he says, "that Jesus is Lord, and confess with your lips that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." 41 This is the salvation, the well-being, the safety and the soundness, which I discussed yesterday. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. 42 I know that you believe; you will be saved. Hold firmly in your hearts, profess it with your lips, that Christ has risen from the dead. SERMONS 234.3.43

2:9a The Gospel for Which I Am Suffering

PAUL TAUGHT FROM PRISON.

CHRYSOSTOM: For just as it is not possible to bind a sunbeam or to shut it up within the house, so neither can the preaching of the word be bound. And what was much more, when the teacher was bound, the word flew abroad. He inhabited the prison, and yet his teaching winged its way everywhere throughout the world! HOMILIES CONCERNING THE STATUES 16.5.44

MORE CONSOLATION.

CHRYSOSTOM: Out of his own story he once again brings consolation and encouragement. He prepares his hearer's mind in two phases: First that he should be ready to endure hard times. Second, he does this for a useful purpose, gaining though he suffers harm. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 4.45

2:9b *The Word of God Is Not Fettered*

TONGUES UNBOUND.

CHRYSOSTOM: But now God has made us such that nothing can subdue us. For our hands are bound but not our tongue, since nothing can bind the tongue but cowardice and unbelief. Where these are not, though you fasten chains upon us, the preaching of the gospel is not bound. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 4.46

LIGHT AMID STORMS.

CHRYSOSTOM: Any cloud passing over our skies may from time to time make us gloomy. But Paul's heart had no such storms sweeping over it. Or better, there did sweep over him, and often, many storms, but his day was not darkened. Rather in the midst of the temptations and dangers the light shone out. Thus when bound with his chain he kept exclaiming. "The word of God is not bound." Thus continually by means of that tongue the Word was sending forth its rays. HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS 13.4. 47

THE SOUL DRAWN TO THE WORD.

AMBROSE: On this account also it is said to the soul, "Your youth shall be renewed like the eagle's." 48 For the psalmist spoke to the soul and said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." 49 And therefore the soul hastens to the Word and asks that she be drawn to him, so that she may not, perhaps, be left behind, for "the Word of God runs and is not bound." ISAAC, OR THE SOUL 3.10. 50

2:10 *They Also May Obtain Salvation*

FOR OTHERS.

CHRYSOSTOM: Behold another incentive. I endure these things, he says, not for myself but for the salvation of others. It was in my power to have lived free from danger; to have suffered none of these things, if I had consulted my own interest. On what account then do I suffer these things? For the good of others, that others may obtain eternal life. HOMILIES ON 2 TIMOTHY 4.51