

## **6:2 *The Day of Salvation***

### **The Present Acceptable Time.**

Basil: "Now is the acceptable time," says the apostle, "now is the day of salvation." This is the time for repentance; the next life, for reward. Now is the time to endure; then will be the day of consolation. Now God is the helper of such as turn aside from the evil way; then he will be the dread and unerring inquisitor of the thoughts and words and deeds of humankind. Now we enjoy his longanimity; then we shall know his just judgment, when we have risen, some to never-ending punishment, others to life everlasting, and everyone shall receive according to his works. *The Long Rules*.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Acceptable Time.**

Chrysostom: Let us not let the opportunity slip, but rather let us display a zeal worthy of his grace. We press on because we know that the time is both short and opportune. The acceptable time is the time of the gift, the time of grace, when it is decreed that not only will no account of our sins be demanded from us, but that we shall also enjoy abundant blessings, righteousness, sanctification and all the rest. *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 12.1.<sup>8</sup>

### **Heavenly Medicine for Dreadful Wounds.**

Maximus of Turin: The holy apostle presents testimony from the prophets when he says: "At an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you." And this follows: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Hence I also testify to you that these are the days of redemption, that this is the time, as it were, of heavenly medicine, when we shall be able to heal every stain of our vices and all the wounds of our sins. We shall do so if we faithfully implore the physician of our souls and do not, as people scarcely worthy of the undertaking, despise his precepts. For a person wearied of his illness has found healing when he very carefully observes his doctor's orders; but if he does one thing when another is ordered, then the transgressor and not the physician is guilty if the sickness is aggravated. *Sermon* 35.<sup>13</sup>

### **Persistence in Prayer.**

Sahdona: If we go on crying out and do not receive any answer, this is for our advantage: instead of losing heart and growing weary, we should go on brazenly asking God, for it is certain that "at an acceptable time" and at the appropriate hour he will answer us and deliver us. *Book of Perfection*.<sup>14</sup>

### ***6:3 No Fault with Paul's Ministry***

### ***6:4 Commended as Servants of God***

#### **The Graceful Perception of Present Pain.**

Gregory of Nyssa: This is the grace of the Holy Spirit, possessing the entire soul and filling the dwelling place with gladness and power, making sweet for the soul the sufferings of the Lord, and taking away the perception of the present pain because of the hope of the things to come. *On the Christian Mode of Life.*<sup>17</sup>

#### **As Servants of God.**

Chrysostom: It is one thing to be free from accusation, but it is a far greater thing to appear as servants of God. To be acquitted of all accusation is not nearly as grand as to be covered with praise. *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 12.2.<sup>18</sup>

#### **A Warning Against Indifference.**

Gregory of Nyssa: For this is the grace of the Holy Spirit, possessing the entire soul and filling the dwelling place with gladness and power, making sweet for the soul the sufferings of the Lord and taking away the perception of the present pain because of the hope of the things to come. So, govern yourselves thus as you are about to ascend to the highest power and glory through your co-operation with the Spirit; endure every suffering and trial with joy with a view toward appearing to be worthy of the dwelling of the Spirit within you and worthy of the inheritance of Christ. Never be puffed up or enfeebled by indifference to the point of falling yourselves or being the cause of another's sin. *On the Christian Mode of Life.*<sup>19</sup>

### ***6:5 Present Sufferings***

#### **Through Great Endurance.**

Chrysostom: Any one of these things is intolerable, but taken together, think what kind of soul is needed to endure them! *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 12.2. <sup>20</sup>

## **6:6 Means of Endurance**

### **By the Holy Spirit.**

Chrysostom: By “purity” Paul means either chastity, or general purity, or lack of corruption or even his free preaching of the gospel. By “knowledge” he means the wisdom given by God, which is the only true knowledge. When he unexpectedly mentions the Holy Spirit in this list, Paul means more than just that he does everything in the power of the Spirit. He is saying here that the Spirit himself has been given to him and that it is because of this indwelling presence that he has received the spiritual gifts. “Genuine love” was the motivating power of all these good things. It is that which made Paul what he was. It was also love which caused the Spirit to abide with him, with whose help he did everything in the right way. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 12.2.<sup>21</sup>

## **6:7 The Weapons of Righteousness**

### **For Both Hands.**

Didymus the Blind: The man who rightly seeks righteousness according to human understandings is equipped with the arms of righteousness for the left hand. The man who does the same according to the teachings of the truth and who has been sought out for this task by the Son of righteousness bears the weapons of the right hand. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.<sup>23</sup>

### **Painful Things of the Left Hand.**

Chrysostom: The things on the left refer to those things which seem to be painful, because it is these which bring the reward. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 12.3.<sup>24</sup>

### **Keep the Goal in View.**

Gregory of Nyssa: But to one who is elevated in thought, all things appear to be of equal honor, and none is preferred to another, because the course of life is run equally by opposites, and there is present in the destiny of each person the power to live well or badly, “with the armor on the right hand and on the left,” as the apostle says, “in honor and dishonor.” Accordingly, the one who has purified his mind and rightly examined the truth of reality will go on his way in the time assigned to him from birth to death, not spoiled by pleasures or cast down by austerity, but, in accordance with the custom of travelers, he will be little affected by what he encounters. For it is customary for travelers to hasten on to the end of their journey

whether they go through meadows and fertile fields or through deserts and rough terrain; pleasure does not delay them, nor does the unpleasant impede them. So he himself will also hurry on without distraction to the goal before him, turning off into none of the byways. He will pass through life looking only to heaven, just like some good captain who guides his ship to its lofty destination. On Virginité 4.<sup>26</sup>

## **6:8 *In Honor and Dishonor***

### **In Honor and Dishonor.**

Chrysostom: It may seem that it is easier to bear honor than dishonor, but honor too has its perils, because the one who enjoys it may be thrown back and break his neck. Paul therefore glories in both circumstances, because he showed brightly in each of them. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 12.3.<sup>28</sup>

### **Only One Person's Opinion Matters.**

Jerome: Do not angle for compliments, lest while you win the popular applause, you dishonor God. "If I yet pleased men," says the apostle, "I should not be the servant of Christ."<sup>29</sup> He ceased to please men when he became Christ's servant. Christ's soldier marches on through good report and evil report, the one on the right hand and the other on the left. No praise elates him, no reproaches crush him. He is not puffed up by riches nor depressed by poverty. Joy and sorrow he alike despises. The sun will not burn him by day nor the moon by night.<sup>30</sup> Letter 52.<sup>31</sup>

### **Well-Known and Recognized.**

Origen: If we have lived a life deserving "good repute" and have been spoken well of, now let us also bear up under "ill repute" from the ungodly. Still more, if we have been admired as "true" by those who love truth, now let us laugh at being called "imposters." During the many dangers from which we have been delivered many said that we were "well known" by God; now let the one who wishes call us "unknown," when we are probably better known. Thus, in bearing what has happened to us we are "punished" and yet "not killed," and though "rejoicing," we resemble those who are "sorrowful." An Exhortation to Martyrdom 43.<sup>32</sup>

## **6:9 *Dying, Yet We Live***

## **6:10 *Having Nothing Yet Everything***

### **Sorrowful, Yet Rejoicing.**

Chrysostom: People outside the church may think we are sorrowful, but in fact we are always rejoicing. We may look poor, but in fact we have enormous riches, both spiritual and physical. As usual, the Christian life is the exact opposite of what it appears to be on the surface. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 12.4.35

### **Keep What Matters.**

Augustine: It could happen that some public official would say to a Christian: “Either you will stop being a Christian, or, if you persist in being one, you shall have no house or property.” That will be the time when those rich men, who had decided to keep their riches in order to win merit with God by using them for good works, will choose to give them up for Christ’s sake rather than Christ for their sake.... Thus they become as men “having nothing, yet possessing all things” — and everlasting life in the world to come, lest by giving up Christ for the sake of riches they be cast into everlasting death. Letter 157, To Hilarius.37

## **6:11 *Our Heart is Wide***

### **Speaking Freely.**

Chrysostom: Paul means by this that he talks to the Corinthians freely, as he would to people whom he loves. He holds nothing back and suppresses nothing. Nothing is wider than Paul’s heart, which loved all the believers with all the passion which one might have toward the object of one’s affection. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 13.1.2

## **6:12 *Restricted Affections***

### **Lacking Love, Restrictions Appear.**

Chrysostom: The heart of one who loves is wide open. He walks with great freedom. It is when love is lacking that restrictions appear. Paul did not want to accuse them openly of lack of love. He merely points to the behavioral result and encourages them to perceive the cause for themselves. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 13.1.3

## **6:13 *Widen Your Hearts***

### **Respond to Love.**

Chrysostom: The return is not equal, because to respond to love is not as great as to offer it in the first place. Even if the amount is the same, it still comes in second place. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 13.13.4