

The Easter Sermon of John Chrysostom

for John Liberman

If any be pious and a lover of God,
let him rejoice in this fair and radiant festival.
If any be a faithful servant
let him enter into the joy of his Lord.
If any be weary with fasting,
let him now enjoy his payment.

If anyone has labored from the first hour,
let him receive today his just reward.
If anyone has come after the third hour,
let him now be thankful that the feast is at hand,
If anyone has waited until after the sixth hour,
let him not be anxious, no loss shall be his own.
If anyone has tarried until the ninth hour,
let him draw near also, shedding all his doubts.
If anyone has come only at the eleventh hour,
let him not be fearful because of his delay.

For the Master is bountiful
and receives the last even as the first.
He gives repose to him who came at the eleventh hour
just as to one who labored from the first.
The tardy are shown mercy
and the timely are made whole.
To the one he gives,
on the other he bestows.
He honors the deed and praises the intention.

Come, everyone now and enter into the joy of our Lord
The first and the latter come receive your wages
Come, rich and poor, joined in dance together
You sober, and you heedless, come celebrate this day
You fasters, and you feasters, fill this day with your joy.

The table is full-laden
The feast will fill you all.
The calf is fatted,
No one goes hungry today..
You all shall drink at the banquet of faith
You all shall taste the goodness of this food.

Do not lament your poverty,
For here is the kingdom of all.
And do not weep for falling down,
Forgiveness rises up from the empty tomb.
And have no fear even of death itself,
For the death of the Savior has set us free.

He quenched death when it had tasted his flesh.
He stripped Hell bare when he descended thereto.
Foreseeing this, Isaiah cried:

'Hell was embittered when it met you face to face.'

It was embittered for it was made void,
It was embittered for it was mocked,
It was embittered for it was slain,
It was embittered for it was despoiled.
It was embittered for it was led off in chains.

It seized a body and encountered God,
It gathered up earth and came face to face with heaven.
It grabbed at what it saw and fell where it could not see.

Death where is thy sting,
And Hell, where is thy conquest?

Christ is risen and you are cast down,
Christ is risen and the demons are fallen,
Christ is risen and the angels *shout for joy*,
Christ is risen and life is made free.
Christ is risen and there is none dead in the tomb.
Christ is risen, and the tombs have lost all their spoil.

For Christ is risen from the dead as the first fruits of those that fell asleep.
His be the glory and the power, always and forever and beyond forever. Amen.

Translated by Frank Dobbs

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