JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AS AN INTERPRETER OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS: THE SOTERIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MIMESIS

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Abstract

The goal of this work is twofold. The first goal is to demonstrate how a hermeneutics of psychagogy plays a significant role in John Chrysostom's interpretation of Paul's letter to the Philippians. The hermeneutics of psychagogy refers to Chrysostom's tendency to read scripture as a pedagogical document which has the purpose of educating the readers (and hearers) in virtue and raising up the soul to lead a moral life. Applying this to Philippians, my claim is that Chrysostom reads the text centrally as a pedagogue for the soul in its progress in virtue. My second goal here is to then interpret Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians and elucidate some of his theological concerns in light of this psychagogical hermeneutic. Specifically, I will show that mimesis and its soteriological significance plays a central role in Chrysostom's interpretation of the letter. For Chrysostom, scripture is meant to teach the soul virtue, and it does this by providing examples of virtue which the Christian is meant to imitate, and this imitation in virtue has soteriological significance. By the soteriological significance of mimesis, I mean Chrysostom's conviction that the Christian life is led by the imitation of the saints who have become perfected in virtue in Christ, Paul being a favorite example of Chrysostom. Through imitation of those who imitate Christ, the Christian becomes perfected in virtue and able to attain the resurrection.

Il y a deux objectifs présents dans cet essai. Le premier est de montrer comment une herméneutique de la psychagogie joue un rôle important dans l'interprétation par Jean Chrysostome de l'épître aux Philippiens. L'herméneutique de la psychagogie fait référence à la tendance de Chrysostome à lire l'Écriture comme un document pédagogique qui a pour but d'éduquer les lecteurs (et les auditeurs) à la vertu et d'élever l'âme pour mener une vie morale. En

appliquant cela aux Philippiens, mon affirmation est que Chrysostome lit le texte centralement comme un pédagogue pour l'âme dans son progrès dans la vertu. Mon deuxième objectif ici est d'interpréter ensuite les homélies de Chrysostome sur Philippiens et d'élucider certaines de ses préoccupations théologiques à la lumière de cette herméneutique psychagogique. Plus précisément, je montrerai que la mimèsis et ses conséquences sotériologiques jouent un rôle central dans ces homélies . Pour Chrysostome, l'Écriture est censée enseigner la vertu à l'âme , et elle le fait en fournissant des exemples de vertu que le chrétien est censé imiter. Par conséquent, la vie chrétienne est conduite par l'imitation des saints devenus parfaits en vertu dans le Christ, Paul étant un saint favori de Chrysostome. Par l'imitation de ceux qui imitent le Christ, le chrétien devient parfait en vertu et capable d'atteindre la résurrection.

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Chapter 1

Defining the Task and Method: An Exploration into John Chrysostom's Hermeneutics

In modern scholarship on John Chrysostom, much of the literature analyzes his oratory in terms of Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions,[1] placing his work alongside that of other orators from the ancient world and not necessarily giving much regard to theological content. There has also been a considerable amount of work on the social effects this rhetoric was supposed to have on the audience in terms of the creation of Christian culture in 4th-century Antioch and Constantinople.[2] There are also a number of biographies on Chrysostom which recount the details of his life and discuss his role as a presbyter and bishop.[3] This is all to say that there is a lot of interest in Chrysostom as an orator, church leader, and historical figure.

Surprisingly, however, there has been relatively little attention given to Chrysostom's thought, particularly his theological thought, and his biblical exegesis. This amount of attention is relatively little when compared to the focus that the theological thought of figures comparable to him in era and reputation, such as the Cappadocian fathers, has received. The amount of

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[1] See Leyerle Blake, *The Narrative Shape of Emotion in the Preaching of John Chrysostom*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2020; Samuel Pomeroy, *Chrysostom as exegete: scholarly traditions and rhetorical aims in the Homilies on Genesis*, Leiden: Brill, 2022; Margaret M. Mitchell, "Reading Rhetoric with Patristic Exegetes: John Chrysostom on Galatians," *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on his 70th Birthday*, ed. A. Yarbro Collins and M. Mitchell, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001, pp. 333–55; Jan Stenger, "Text Worlds and Imagination in Chrysostom's Pedagogy," *Revisioning John Chrysostom: New Approaches, New Perspectives*, ed. Chris De Wet & Wendy Mayer, Boston: Brill, 2019, pp. 206-246.

[2] See Jaclyn Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his congregation in Antioch*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006; James Daniel Cook, *Preaching and Popular Christianity: Reading the Sermons of John Chrysostom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018; Aideen Hartney, *John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City*, London: Duckworth, 2004.

[3] See J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom - Ascetic, Preacher, and Bishop*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995; Donald Attwater, *St. John Chrysostom: Pastor and Preacher*, London: Harvill Press, 1953; Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol. 1-2, trans. M. Gonzaga, Westminster: Newman Press, 1959-60. Any biography on John Chrysostom will tell you that 'Chrysostom' is not a last name, though it can sometimes be treated as one; it is instead a moniker that was most likely applied to John of Antioch (c. 347-407) only well after his death, becoming commonplace around the middle of the sixth century (Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol. II, p. 471). Avoiding the anachronism, some modern scholars often refer to him simply as John. However, following traditional nomenclature, I will refer to him as Chrysostom so that, if for no other reason, he can be easily differentiated from the countless other men named John in ancient Christianity.

scholarship on Chrysostom's thought and exegesis is also relatively small when compared to the amount of scholarship on his rhetorical skills and socio-historical significance.

There are a number of possible reasons for this. In modern scholarship, Chrysostom has acquired the reputation of a moralizer,[4] and, like many moralizers, he is seen as an unimaginative one at that. Therefore, it may not be seen as worthwhile to analyze his thought or exegesis, as he was not so much of a theologian and more of a pastor and preacher who "subscribed vigorously to what were rapidly becoming the orthodox trinitarian and Christological dogmatic formulas of the ancient Church and did not care to speculate of these subjects."[5] Scholars then direct their focus to his role as a rhetorician or a social meaning maker, or they, especially those more theologically inclined, turned their attention to other Church fathers altogether. Another possible reason for dearth of scholarship in the aforementioned areas is that most of Chrysostom's works are homilies, along with a surviving few letters to particular people, and Western scholarship tends to prefer commentaries and treatises for theological and exegetical comment.

It is also worth mentioning that the amount of attention that Chrysostom's theology, or lack thereof, has received in modern scholarship is perhaps not commensurate with the significance with which he has been viewed in the history of Christianity. Not only is one of the most used liturgies of the Greek Orthodox Church named after him, with some developments in the liturgy even dating back to his time and possibly correctly attributed to him,[6] but simply the vast corpus of his work that survives to this day, including long sets of homilies that survive in their completeness,[7] also testifies to the importance that the ancients placed on him, especially

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[4] Attwater, *St. John Chrysostom: Pastor and Preacher*, p. 179.
[5] Peter Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine*, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1983, p. 133.
[6] J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom: Clerics between Desert and Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 269: "One of the most used Greek orthodox liturgies is called the Liturgy of John Chrysostom, and the Anaphora, the central part of it, describing the inauguration of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, may in fact go back to him, or at least to his time."
[7] Attwater, *St. John Chrysostom*, p. 54.

for the monastic communities that preserved his works, taking him as a worthy expositor of monastic virtues.[8] Moreover, according to Gorday, around the middle of the 5th century, when "first-hand exegesis of Scripture all but disappeared, to be replaced by the emergence of tradition and authority as the recognized norms for biblical interpretation,"[9] Chrysostom became one of the authoritative figures in the realm of biblical interpretation, especially in the interpretation of Paul. He says, "In the interpretation of Paul, their immediate followers largely repeated, therefore, the views of Chrysostom and Augustine respectively."[10]

The Task

In order to fill some of the gaps in Chrysostom scholarship, however slightly I might be able to do so, I will analyze his exegesis of one book on the Bible with an eye towards capturing some of his theological thought. The goal of my work here is twofold. The first goal is to demonstrate how a hermeneutics of psychagogy plays a significant role in John Chrysostom's interpretation of Paul's letter to the Philippians. The hermeneutics of psychagogy refers to Chrysostom's tendency to read scripture as a pedagogical document which has the purpose of educating the readers (and hearers) in virtue and raising up the soul to lead a moral life. This also means that psychagogy is not just a hermeneutical principle for Chrysostom. When he is engaging in psychagogy, he is taking part and Christianizing the classical philosophical tradition. As Maxwell says, "In their sermons, Chrysostom and his contemporaries drew upon classical

[8] Mitchell notes the importance of Chrysostom's works for monastic communities who preserved his works: "Chrysostom's writings were abundantly copied, translated, and preserved in the monasteries of both East and West, where they served as hortatory kindling for future monastic communities. Nearly 4,000 manuscripts are extant… Chrysostom's exegetical homilies, the most extensively preserved of those by any patristic interpreter, bequeathed to each new generation John's moralizing style of interpretation, in which biblical figures are viewed as exemplars of monastic virtues for all time" (Margaret Mitchell, "St. John Chrysostom," *Encyclopedia of monasticism*, ed. William M. Johnston, New York: Routledge, 2013 (ebook), p. 292).
[9] Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis*, p. 15.
[10] Ibid.

traditions of psychagogy, or spiritual guidance. As we have seen, philosophers, especially those influenced by the Second Sophistic… hoped to mold the minds of the young to inculcate knowledge that would lead to a virtuous way of life. Their goals and many of their methods would have been common sense to people like Chrysostom: Christians did not hesitate to use the methods and imagery inherited from the philosophical traditions."[11] Of course, throughout Christian history, scripture has been used for teaching, but it is exactly the thing that is being taught here that I want to focus on. My claim is that Chrysostom reads the texts centrally as a pedagogue for the soul in its progress in virtue, with abstract theological concerns gaining their relevance primarily in relation to psychagogical concerns. Furthermore, at least with Philippians, Chrysostom does not only *apply* the text psychagogically in his homilies, extracting moral lessons for his *own* congregation, but, when I say that he interprets the text through a psychagogical hermeneutics, I mean that Chrysostom interprets Paul's own rhetoric in terms of the moral progress of the Philippians. To Chrysostom, Paul's purpose in writing to the Philippians is their progress in virtue, so Chrysostom interprets the text as such.

My second goal here is to then interpret Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians and elucidate some of his theological concerns in light of this psychagogical hermeneutic. Previous scholarship has shown the significant place of mimesis in Chrysostom's rhetoric, and some have even ventured to discuss the topic theologically.[12] I will show both that mimesis and its soteriological consequences play a central role in Chrysostom's interpretation of the letter and that Chrysostom's hermeneutics of psychagogy makes sense of him emphasizing mimesis and its soteriological implications. For Chrysostom, scripture is meant to teach the soul virtue, and it does this by providing examples of virtue which the Christian is meant to imitate, and this

[11] Jaclyn Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his congregation in Antioch*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 89.
[12] See next two sections.

imitation in virtue has soteriological significance. I am focusing my analysis on the homilies on Philippians because, one, scholarship has for the most part avoided analyzing sets of Chrysostom's exegetical homilies as wholes, so analyzing the set on Philippians is task worthwhile in itself, and, two, I believe that Chrysostom's interpretation of Philippians is a good demonstration of both the psychagogical hermeneutics he apples to scripture and the soteriological weight that he places on mimesis. By the soteriological significance of mimesis, I mean Chrysostom's conviction that the Christian life is led by the imitation of the saints who have become perfected in virtue in Christ, Paul being a favorite example of Chrysostom. Through imitation of those who imitate Christ, the Christian becomes perfected in virtue and able to attain the resurrection.

All this being said, I am not trying to construct something that can be called Chrysostom's one true soteriological model, merely to draw attention to one aspect of his soteriological thought. In order to provide some balance, I will also point out other ways that Chrysostom talks about salvation in these homilies, ways that are not necessarily connected with imitation or virtue. Specifically, I will also discuss the way in which Chrysostom applies the language of κοινωνία, or fellowship, which is not discussed so much in the literature, and the way that he connects it with salvation. I will show that, like mimesis, his discourse around κοινωνία is also a psychagogical strategy for Chrysostom that he reads from scripture and presents to his audience. However, I will not try to conceptually harmonize κοινωνία and the imitation of virtue. It will suffice for me to point out that Chrysostom does not always present paradigms of the Christian life to his audience in such a way that he exhorts them to imitate their virtue but instead calls upon them to participate in their life. Instead, Chrysostom brings forth examples of the Christian life from scripture, such as Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles, so that

his congregation is exhorted to join themselves to and partake in (have κοινωνία with) the life these figures, mostly significantly by joining with them in redemptive suffering.

Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet*

When it comes to scholarship that will form the base of our investigation, even though the study of his homilies has in recent times been concerning itself with social history and technical rhetoric, one recent work that deals with Chrysostom's thought and biblical interpretation, while at the same time still treating the social and rhetorical aspects of his homilies, is Margaret Mitchell's *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation*. It is also one of the better-known and influential works in the recent study of John Chrysostom. Seeing as both her work and the task that I am trying accomplish are concerned with the same topic, namely Chrysostom's interpretation of Paul, her work is a good place to start in our investigate, as it will provide us with a useful theoretical framework through which we can interpret at least some parts of Chrysostom's homilies.

For Mitchell, the central issue around which her investigation is structured is "the relationship between Chrysostom's rich and imaginative depictions of the person of Paul and the way in which he understands the letters he is reading as sacred scripture."[13] In other words, her claim here is that Chrysostom depicts Paul the way he does, making ample use of encomia, because he understands himself, when he is reading Paul's letters, as reading scripture. This leads Mitchell to the conviction that "Chrysostom's living sense of his hero Paul," as expressed in his encomia of him, "is not a charming side dish to the 'meat of his interpretation of the theology in Paul's epistles, but is instead central to it, and important in its own right."[14] She even goes on to

[13] Margaret M Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000, p. 20.
[14] Ibid., p. 21.

say that "one cannot adequately comprehend Chrysostom's exegetical work without paying direct attention to his devotion to his subject."[15] She says this because "[w]hen one pays attention to the inherently rhetorical quality and function of these interpretative *speeches* [sic] [i.e. Chrysostom's homilies], the hermeneutical dimensions of biblical interpretation as a scripted encounter with the author, carried out according to the rules and expectations of the larger literary culture, come unmistakably to the fore."[16] More simply, her claim is that Chrysostom understands reading scripture as a living encounter with the dead author and that, in his homilies, he brings the author back to life through his rhetoric, employing "the standard rhetorical techniques of his day,"[17] in order for his audience to have this encounter. As Mitchell says, "In awakening Paul from his grave to speak to contemporary audiences and be paraded forth as an example of piety before their eyes, the orator-exegete always has a contemporary end in view."[18] For Mitchell, if one is to understand Chrysostom's exegesis in his homilies, it is necessary to pay attention to the hermeneutical principle that scripture is an encounter with the author and to the rhetorical art of bringing the author back to life.

Mitchell, therefore, believes that, for Chrysostom, "a key function of *preaching* [was] to sketch for the hearers with words the very person of the saints."[19] She sees his homilies as "employing a type of *ekphrasis* - an ancient rhetorical form that was designed expressly to merge the literary and graphic arts, and create with words a vivid, lifelike encounter between an audience and a person or work of art they were unable to see."[20] Mitchell, therefore, calls Chrysostom's hermeneutics, in which portraits of the author and his virtues play a key role, an

[15] p. 21
[16] p. 22
[17] p. 22
[18] p. 22
[19] p. 41
[20] p. 41-42

"author-centered hermeneutics,"[21] for Chrysostom "has utter confidence that Paul's epistles afford the reader an opportunity to 'gaze into Paul's soul, just as into a certain archetypal image.'"[22] Mitchell says that this hermeneutic is rooted in three distinct but connected aspects of Chrysostom's thought: "his overall view of Scripture, Greco-Roman epistolary theory, and ancient ethical theory of learning by imitation."[23]

First, in regard to Chrysostom's view of scripture, Mitchell says that, to Chrysostom, scripture is akin to the relics of the saints and communicates their virtues. In the late fourth century, "[e]very single detail about the saints of old, even what they ate, where they slept, and what they wore, is of edification value."[24] The lives of saints, then, "are mediated to later generations in a variety of ways - by their 'relics,'"[25] with scripture being counted within this category. The hermeneutics that looks for the specific details of the lives of the saints, searching for edification, "well-entrenched in the emergent Christian piety of the late fourth-century, roots religious authority in the very lives of the saints."[26] The exegesis of scripture, therefore, "has as its purpose 'bring[ing] the virtues of the just into the public eye.'"[27] In relation to Paul's letters in particular, Mitchell also says that "Chrysostom sees this hermeneutical function of the letters to be rooted in Paul's own literary-epistolary intention to make himself present to churches and colleagues when separated from them. And he does so through the power of his letters, which constitute verbal icons of the apostle himself."[28] Therefore, not only do the "apostolic writings have the power to mediate the presences of the absent dead through preservation of their word,"[29]

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[21] p. 43
[22] p. 43. quoting from *hom. in Gen.* 11.5 [53.95], her translation
[23] p. 43
[24] p. 44
[25] p. 44
[26] p. 44
[27] p. 44. *hom. in Gen*. 36.8 [53.331]. Her translation.
[28] p. 46-47
[29] p. 46

but they also had this function while the apostles were still alive yet absent from the recipient communities.

This view of scripture fits well with Mitchell's next foundation of Chrysostom's author-centered hermeneutics and that is the epistolary theory of his day. To Mitchell, letters in the ancient world communicated the soul of the author because they were seen within the social dynamic of managing relationships when absent. She says that "the letter is considered the medium of communication between absent friends who desire one another's company and conversation."[30] She also quotes Chrysostom saying, "Thus Paul knew his presence was everywhere a great thing, and always, though absent, he makes himself present."[31] Therefore, "it is no surprise that when he turned to the collection of Paul's writings - which are genuine letters employing epistolary forms and commonplaces - that these assumptions about the relationship between epistolary author, the text, and its readers played a central role in John's hermeneutics."[32] In other words, because Chrysostom read Paul's epistles as epistles, and epistles communicate the voice of an absent author to the recipient, not only did he interpret the letters as such but he also extended this communication of presence into his own time. Paul's letters, therefore, mediate his presence both to his recipient in his own time and to the reader in Chrysostom's time.

This idea of presence leads into Mitchell's third foundation of Chrysostom's hermeneutics: "the ancient ethical and pedagogical theory which held that learning takes place by imitation of exemplary figures."[33] According to Mitchell, Chrysostom had a "powerful sense that Paul the apostle is a supreme example of lived virtue to be imitated."[34] "In the case of Paul,"

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[30] p. 48
[31] p. 49. *hom. in Col.* 1.1 [62.300]
[32] p. 49
[33] p. 49
[34] p. 49

she says, "he is to be imitated as the perfect exemplar of ἀρετή, virtue."[35] As evidence, she quotes from Chrysostom when he calls him the archetype of virtue, "I exhort you not only to marvel at, but also to imitate this archetype of virtue."[36] Paul, to Chrysostom, is the model to humans of what a human being is capable of, and Chrysostom's "Pauline portraits were an essential means by which he defined what human life in the body *truly* is, or should be."[37] According to Mitchell, "Chrysostom maintained repeatedly that Paul, in the example afforded by his life, taught the exalted height of virtue of which human nature, in the body, is capable, but only if one can overcome the passions [τὰ πάθη] by προθυμία and προαίρεσις."[38] At the same time, however, Paul was only able to reach these heights of virtue by the grace of God, so his example for humanity is inseparably also "the perfect paradigm of Christian life, faith, and citizenship."[39] Mitchell says that "though he rose to almost unimaginable heights in his praise of Paul, Chrysostom's Pauline portraits did not eclipse Christ. Without the Christ-infusion which Paul claimed to have continually experienced… the Pauline portraits would themselves have been of no interest. Thus the portraits of Paul in John's eyes are portraits of Christ, portraits of what a human being who has Christ speaking in him looks like."[40]

Now we have all the components necessary to understand why Chrysostom read Paul's letters with an eye towards his virtues - his author-centered hermeneutics. Paul's letters communicated Paul's presence to his recipients in his absence in his own time, and in Chrysostom's time they are relics that can nevertheless preserve the communication of Paul's presence through the generations. Paul's presence is important because he is a high model of virtue to be imitated on the ethical level. This is where the *ekphrasis*, the literary portraiture,

[35] p. 49-50
[36] p. 50. *laud. Paul.* 2 [SC 300.158]
[37] p. 404
[38] p. 404
[39] p. 403
[40] p. 396

comes in, as "in order to cast themselves according to this Pauline model, later readers are required to formulate from the texts of the letters… a portrait of the author to be imitated."[41] Mitchell goes on, "Creating such a portrait becomes the task for exegesis and homiletics, carried out with all the sophisticated tools of rhetoric which were in Chrysostom's employ. Paul, the perfect copy of Christ, is the example for Christians to follow. Thus artistic and ethical theory merge in the conception of μίμησις."[42]

Mitchell dedicates the majority of her work to analyzing different types and examples of Pauline encomia in Chrysostom's homilies, paying special attention to the seven homilies whose focus is the praise of Paul, *de laudibus sancti Pauli* 1-7.[43] Mitchell analyzes Chrysostom's use of epithets for Paul, details from Paul's life, and descriptions of Paul's body and soul, arguing that all of these have a role in Chrysostom's *ekphrasis*[44] of Paul in the attempt to inspire imitation from his congregation. She says, "Through the construction of all of these portraits - of body, soul, and accessories - Chrysostom the Christian orator has facilitated his congregation's imitation of Paul the saintly author by bringing him back to life, piece by piece (body part by body part, virtue by virtue, accessory by accessory). By composing such vivid life-size mosaics from a host of biblical allusions and other creative adaptations, Chrysostom revivifies Paul and brings him into the sanctuary for contemplation and, most importantly, reduplication."[45] This will be somewhat useful in our analysis of his homilies on Philippians, as Chrysostom does offer praise to Paul, though not as much as in some other sets of homilies of Paul's letters, as there is

[41] p. 51
[42] p. 51
[43] cf. Jean Chrysostome, *Panégyriques de S. Paul*, ed. Auguste Piédagnel, SC 300, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964.
[44] Mitchell turns *ekphrasis* into a somewhat technical term and uses it idiosyncratically to mean verbal portraiture of some figure.
[45] Mitchell, *Heavenly Trumpet*, p. 195.

no well-known passage of extended praise and *ekphrasis* as there is in some other sets of homilies.[46]

What will be more relevant to our analysis, however, is Mitchell's concept of an author-centered hermeneutics, or as Mitchell sometimes calls it, a love hermeneutic, as Chrysostom's rhetorical and catechetical purpose was "to orchestrate through his preaching a living encounter between Paul and his hearers which would generate the same loving response he himself felt for the apostle, which, he hoped, would lead to deeper emulation of that model of virtue."[47] According to Mitchell, Chrysostom reads Paul's presence in his letters and expresses this felt presence in his homilies. Not only that, but this Pauline presence also communicates his virtues for the purpose of imitation. Not only, to Chrysostom, was one of Paul's purposes in writing his letters the communication of his presence for the purpose of imitation, but Chrysostom's intent in his own time was also to communicate Paul's presence to his congregation. This idea of an author-centered hermeneutics will be something to keep in mind in our analysis of Chrysostom's homilies.

Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy*

Another recent work that deals with Chrysostom's theology and that I will be drawing from is David Rylaarsdam's *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of His Theology and Preaching*. Rylaarsdam argues that God's adaptability, his *synkatabasis*, which refers to God condescending and making himself known to people in ways that they can comprehend is central to Chrysostom's theology. The purpose of adaptable communication, whether by God or by a human teacher, is not simply to convey information but to educate and conform the hearers to a

[46] cf. *hom. in Rom.* 32 and *hom. in 1 Cor.* 13
[47] Mitchell, *Heavenly Trumpet*, p. 103.

certain way of life, as "ancient philosophical discourse was not principally intended to transmit information, but to produce a certain effect on the listener's soul. Its purpose was intellectually guided practice which would 'form more than inform.' Teachers sought to reorient their students so that their vision of the world and their personalities were transformed."[48] About this, Rylaardsdam says, "In other words, adaptability is an ingredient in the classical project of *paideia*, the process of educating humans into their ideal form. Appropriating and modifying the classical concept of adaptability are part of Chrysostom's attempt to Christianize classical *paideia*, to develop a Christian process of formation. He gives his transformed *paideia* a theological foundation by seamlessly integrating traditional pedagogical methods into his reading of the entire biblical narrative of God's redemptive actions throughout history."[49] He also says that "God's adaptable pedagogy is an intrinsic center of coherence in the bishop's theology and ministry"[50] and that this "theme influences many areas of his thought: God's chief attributes, revelation, history, hermeneutics, the person of Christ, salvation, ethics, ecclesiastical leadership, methods of discipleship, the function of the sacraments, and his homiletic theory."[51] I will not be concerning myself with such large-scale or far-reaching claims about what is the center of Chrysostom's theology. Nevertheless, Rylaarsdam shows that Chrysostom's conception of God has certain similarities with an ancient teacher of rhetoric who adapts his speech to his listeners in order to bring about changes in their ways of life, and this also has effects on the way in which Chrysostom interprets scripture, the main medium of God's communication with humanity.

According to Rylaarsdam, in regard to Chrysostom's conception of God, "God's incomprehensibility and transcendence is a basic theological presupposition which must never be

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[48] David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of His Theology and Preaching*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 32.
[49] Ibid., p. 5.
[50] p. 4
[51] p. 4

compromised."[52] Adaptability comes in when "God, out of philanthropy, has revealed himself in a manner which humanity can understand. The extent to which God is knowable to humans is a result of divine adaptation or accommodation. God does not reveal himself in his incomprehensible essence, but he is represented in a way that is knowable to those with whom he is communicating."[53] Rylaarsdam points out "Before Chrysostom, Christian writers have a somewhat elastic vocabulary for divine adaptability: they use a variety of terms, none of which is used to refer exclusively to adaptation.[54] By contrast, Chrysostom almost always uses συγκατάβασις / συγκαταβαίνω and the predominant meaning is 'adaptation.'"[55] Chrysostom turns his preferred term into a Christian words with an almost systematic definition, for, as Rylaarsdam says, "Chrysostom opts for a term used more exclusively in Christian contexts, a term which he uses more systematically and in a wider variety of theological contexts than anyone else in the preceding Christian tradition."[56]

Chrysostom's favorite image of God is that of a teacher who teaches his students the true philosophy. Rylaarsdam says, "God is a teacher of philosophy whose message calls humans to change their view of the world and their behavior. The heart of God's message, for Chrysostom, is that human lives characterized by faith and love can make the earth a heaven. God persuades people that this way of life is possible already now, to some extent, because he has adaptively responded to humanity's fall."[57] In using this image of God as teacher, "Chrysostom is also appropriating and transforming the classical tradition of *paideia*. Like other fourth-century leaders who are promoting a Christian version of the philosophical life, Chrysostom retains the

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[52] p. 16
[53] p. 17
[54] The examples he gives are: οἰκονομία, τάξις, διάθεσις, συγκατάβασις, συμπεριφορά, τροποφορέω, ἐπίνοια, τὸ πρέπον and ἁρμόζω (p. 23).
[55] p. 23
[56] p. 29
[57] p. 50

ancient argument that true φιλοσοφία transforms a student's entire way of life: it forms not only one's behavior but also one's vision of the world and affections."[58] The apologetic implication of this is that "Greeks could not achieve their ideal of instilling virtue or excellence because their literature and teachers worked without the true philosophy found in Scripture, the oracles of God."[59]

In terms of how God guides humanity as a teacher, the "primary pedagogical methods which Chrysostom relates to God's adaptation of his philosophy to humanity include the use of corporeal images, variation, and progression."[60] About the use of corporeal images, Rylaarsdam says, "For Chrysostom, the art of divine pedagogy has been redirecting human vision throughout redemptive history. As he did in the beginning, God leads people to perceive him by analogy from things which are seen, but the things which are seen—such as theophanies, the words of Scripture, and Christ—are clearer than creation."[61] By appearing to humanity in visions, theophanies, scripture, and in the form of Christ, God is able to communicate through physical means immaterial truths about himself and "lead humanity to greater knowledge and virtue."[62] Another way "in which God teaches humanity through corporeal symbols is by supplying human models worthy of imitation. These models serve as a kind of sign, leading people from a concrete example to a greater understanding of morality and to a more virtuous way of life."[63] God not only raises up people to serve as models of imitation but presents himself, in his actions in the Old Testament and in the person of Christ in the New, as a model of virtue. In other words, "Divine pedagogy not only uses others as ethical models but God himself also adapts to people

[58] p. 34
[59] p. 35
[60] p. 56
[61] p. 58
[62] p. 73
[63] p. 73

by demonstrating virtue in his actions."[64] About Christ specifically, Rylaarsdam says, "The actions performed by Christ in a human way (τὰ ἀνθρωπίνως οἰκονομούμενα) were done not simply to confirm the Incarnation, but also to instruct people to live virtuously."[65]

The other two divine pedagogical methods that Rylaarsdam identifies, variation and progression, are related, and they refer to the way in which God adapts his message to different circumstances, depending on who he is talking to and at what time. Variation means that "God adapts his revelation not simply by putting it in human terms, but also by making it proportionate to a humanity with diverse limitations. Meeting individuals at their level, God varies his teaching according to the type and degree of people's weakness… The four most prominent ways in which God's teaching varies include the following: its form and content are very diverse, its tone oscillates between gentleness and harshness, its lofty doctrines are mixed with lowly ones, and its ethical standards range from lenient to severe."[66] If variation describes how God varies his message, progression describes why he might do so. By progression, Rylaarsdam means that "God's pedagogy has excellent timing; he not only adapts his teaching in appropriate ways—using corporeal images and variation—but also at the appropriate moments in an individual's life or in the history of humanity."[67] Progression presupposes the possibility of moral progress both in an individual's life and at the level of history. If somebody is weak and immature, God will speak to them as such, and if somebody is mature and advanced in virtue, God will speak to them appropriately. Likewise, throughout history God has made concession, such as allowing divorce, polygamy, and animal sacrifice, based on the degree of strength or lack thereof of his people. By doing this, "God guides his students from ignorance to truth, from

[64] p. 74
[65] p. 74
[66] p. 75
[67] p. 87

preliminary to advanced exercises, with the goal that people would practice an increasingly mature or heavenly way of life on earth. Chrysostom believes that progression is essential to any divine or human pedagogy, just as it is a natural part of life."[68]

If God presents himself as a model of virtue to imitate, then it would make sense for those in teaching positions to adopt God's adaptable teaching style, humbling themselves so that others may understand and form a relationship with them. This is also an act of virtue because it treats the welfare of others as a priority. This is what Rylaarsdam argues, saying,

> The goal of God's adaptive pedagogy is to restore communion with human beings and to form them according to the image and likeness of God. Human beings are called to respond fully and freely to divine adaptation. They are expected to participate in their formation through faith and a virtuous way of life. This way of life includes imitation of God's adaptive pedagogy. Chrysostom appears to conceive συγκατάβασις itself as a virtue or at least as a collection of virtues—especially love and humility—which bring a Christian to perfection.[69]

Therefore, Chrysostom expects those with teaching authority to imitate divine adaptability, and Rylaarsdam argues that Chrysostom sees the role of priests and the role of his favorite apostle, Paul, in terms of adaptability.

About Paul, Rylaarsdam says, "For Chrysostom, all of the apostles imitate divine adaptability, but he considers Paul… as the most accomplished imitator. Paul's adaptability was one of his characteristics most admired by Chrysostom. No one seeks the profit of others as much as Paul, because no one is willing to adapt to others to the degree which the apostle does… Paul followed the highest rule of Christianity more precisely or accurately than anyone, because he was willing, humbly and lovingly, to adapt to the weak in order to lead them to salvation."[70]

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[68] p. 87
[69] p. 157
[70] p. 157-8

Rylaarsdam also notes as important the fact that "Chrysostom's most frequent epithet for Paul is "the teacher of the world (ὁ διδάσκαλος τῆς οἰκουμένης)."[71] Just as Chrysostom depicts God as a teacher, so too he does with Paul. Rylaarsdam continues, "Chrysostom depicts Paul as a philosopher–rhetor, who imitates and participates in God's persuasive teaching of the true philosophy. His teaching is able to persuade people all around the world to follow the way of life laid out by Christ."[72] At the same time, because Paul was more successful than the Hellenistic philosophers in persuading people to virtue, both in terms of the number of people persuaded and in terms of the extent of their virtue, his success in utilizing the methods of Greek *paideia* meant the "undoing of the entire enterprise. Though unskilled, Paul was challenging the most powerful tradition in ancient society, the Hellenic *paideia*."[73]

In terms of Paul's pedagogical methods, "Paul's methods of adapting his teaching imitate the Divine Teacher and include corporeal images, variation of content and tone, and progression."[74] In terms of corporeal images, Paul presents himself as a model of virtue. Indeed, "Paul is a concrete model, a corporeal image, by which people can rise to virtue. He is a model which can be imitated more easily than Christ, who was enfleshed deity, a union in which divinity dominates humanity. Given the high Christology of Chrysostom, imitation of Christ seems beyond the reach of ordinary human beings. Paul is more thoroughly similar to the rest of humanity." However, even though Paul is easier to imitate than Christ, when one imitates Paul, it leads the student in the same direction. Rylaarsdam says, "When one imitates Paul, claims Chrysostom, one is imitating Christ… Paul had Christ within him; he bore the very image of the King. Through his words and actions, recorded in his epistles, Paul taught what a human being

[71] p. 159
[72] p. 159
[73] p. 160
[74] p. 166

who has Christ in him or her looks like… Through Paul, therefore, a person is able to imitate Christ indirectly but exactly."[75]

Paul also makes use of variation and progression. In terms of variation, Paul varies his language according to the weakness of those he is speaking to, and he adapts his behavior according to the ethnic customs of those who he is relating to. He "imitated the actions or customs of his listeners… He observes days and months and seasons and years (Acts 20:15–16), even though he wished to abolish such observances."[76] He also mixes low and high teachings and mixes harsh and gentle rhetoric according to his needs.[77] Rylaarsdam says, "Variation is one of Paul's most prominent pedagogical techniques. Chrysostom depicts the apostle as a multiform man who is able to adapt to every human need and circumstance. Paul imitates the kinds of variation exhibited in divine adaptation. He varies his ethical standards, making some concessions, such as divorce and second marriages, to weak people. His discourse about Christ mixes lowly and lofty things."[78]

In terms of progression, Paul adapts his teaching according to the advancement in virtue or lack thereof of his churches, making some concession. However, because they are at a certain point in God's redemptive history, the concession can only go so far. Rylaarsdam says, "Paul's technique of progression imitates divine pedagogy, but Chrysostom's emphasis when he sees this method in the epistles is that adaptation should not be as necessary for God's people after Christ and the Spirit as it was before their advent. The apostles teach at a point in redemptive history long after the ancient prophets. God's revelation had advanced considerably. Thus, the apostles should adapt their teaching less than Moses did."[79] Nevertheless, even though he does not adapt

[75] p. 173
[76] p. 169
[77] p. 193
[78] p. 174
[79] p. 188

because of salvation-historical reasons, at an individual level, Paul does make some concessions. According to Rylaarsdam, "Chrysostom portrays Paul as frustrated that some of his charges are not as far along as they should be and scolding them more than once for their childishness. Despite Paul's complaints, however, he is willing to adapt to the remedial needs of his students."[80] However, because Paul sees himself as operating at a certain point in history, "Paul's technique of progression and his impatience with immaturity reflect God's attitude that adaptation to the weak should not continue forever."[81]

About the priesthood and its pedagogy, Rylaarsdam says, "Chrysostom's description of the quintessential priest adapts old forms, showing continuity with Greco-Roman philosophers, Christian monks, and models in Scripture."[82] The continuity with philosophy comes in because for priests, as Rylaarsdam says, "The object of their teaching is not to impart abstract knowledge but to transform their students' vision of the world and to pass on spiritual truth and practices that lead to a wise way of life."[83] In regard to monasticism and biblical models for imitation, Rylaarsdam says, "Chrysostom's vision of the priesthood also has continuity and discontinuity with monasticism, for he argues that the priest must practice philosophy rigorously, but unlike a monk, he must exercise his virtue in the midst of and for the sake of the world. Among the biblical models of the priesthood, Paul was the ideal, for he was a worldly ascetic who combined monastic virtues with the wisdom and adaptable pedagogy of a true philosopher–rhetor."[84]

As far as the priestly methodology goes in teaching the congregation, a "priest plays a key role in this teaching–learning process, but as in the case of Paul, it is one of *mimēsis*. He is imitating and participating in God's adaptable communication of the true philosophy. In addition

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[80] p. 189
[81] p. 193
[82] p. 194
[83] p. 198
[84] p. 195

to teaching Christian philosophy through an authoritative text in the school of the church, a priest teaches through the power and example of his own character. The ideal priest or bishop rigorously practices philosophy, including the classical virtues traditionally associated with *paideia*."[85] Not only are priests supposed to imitate, like Paul, the adaptable pedagogy of God, but priests can also take Paul himself as a model of the ideal priest. In other words, "Priests are also his [God's] agents, called to participate in the process of leading people to union with Christ by imitating divine pedagogy,"[86] and "Paul's adaptability is also a model for priests."[87] Rylaarsdam continues, "Just as God in Christ descended to those bound in worldliness, the Apostle Paul was willing to dwell on earth even though he had already ascended to the heavens. Adapting his philosophy to those lost in shadows and dreams, Paul redirected people's gaze and reformed their way of life. The ideal priest imitates divine and Pauline adaptation in order to lead others up to salvation."[88]

Expectedly, Chrysostom also applies this standard for priests to himself, and, because he is imitating the divine adaptation which Paul also imitates, "the methods of his homiletical guidance employ the same strategies as divine adaptation, including the use of images, variation, and progression."[89] In regard to images, Rylaarsdam says, "One other prominent way in which Chrysostom adapts to his listeners through images is by painting word portraits of saints. He makes dead biblical figures such as the Apostle Paul come to life by parading various images and scenes before the eyes of his audience. He brings his audience into living conversations with biblical characters and God."[90] Rylaarsdam also recognizes some of Chrysostom's rhetoric techniques as deliberate variation in his speech according to the needs of his audience, saying,

[85] p. 201
[86] p. 226
[87] p. 208
[88] p. 218
[89] p. 228
[90] p. 230

"His variation includes three strategies: mixing appropriate amounts of rigorous theology with elementary teaching, varying his ethical standards as the situation requires, and modulating the tone of his rhetoric."[91] Chrysostom varies his rhetoric because he is adapting to his audience and trying to bring about ethical and spiritual progress. At times, "Chrysostom is frustrated that he must be repetitive and boring, but he is concerned to adapt his teaching to the slow progress of his childish charges."[92] At the same time, however, this adaptation sometimes requires rebuke instead of gentleness and patience, for the "school of the philosopher is surgery, Chrysostom assumes, and the unhealthy should not depart from it in pleasure but in pain. If people enjoy an advantageous point in redemptive history and years of instruction, but make no effort to improve, they should expect harsh rhetoric."[93]

Methodology: Chrysostom's Psychagogical Hermeneutics

For my methodology, I will be expanding on the work of both Mitchell and Rylaarsdam. Because, according to Rylaarsdam, "Chrysostom depicts Paul as a philosopher–rhetor, who imitates and participates in God's persuasive teaching of the true philosophy,"[94] and because Chrysostom reads psychagogical methods into the biblical narrative, Chrysostom should also find that Paul is practicing a psychagogical form of pedagogy in his letters. In other words, Chrysostom should interpret Paul in terms of a hermeneutics of psychagogy, interpreting Paul as writing his letters in order to bring about a desired result in the recipients' moral behavior.

Both Mitchell and Rylaarsdam make claims about Chrysostom's hermeneutics. Mitchell claims that Chrysostom has an author-centered hermeneutics in his interpretation of the Pauline

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[91] p. 230-1
[92] p. 231
[93] p. 231
[94] Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom and Divine Pedagogy*, p. 159.

corpus. Chrysostom brings Paul to life through his rhetoric and creates an image of Paul to inspire and guide the audience into imitation of Paul. Mitchell's claims are only about Chrysostom's interpretation of Paul. Rylaarsdam, on the other hand, makes a more wide-reaching claim. He says, "Chrysostom's most prominent hermeneutical principle is divine adaptation."[95] When Chrysostom reads scripture, according to Rylaarsdam's argument, he sees God adapting to the weak understandings of those he is speaking to through corporeal images, variation, and progression. Furthermore, those in teaching positions, in the church this means the priesthood, are supposed to adopt these methods of adaptation when speaking to those under their care. Paul, for Chrysostom, is the ideal priestly model, and he too used these methods of adaptation in his lifetime, and this is reflected in his letters. Therefore, according to Rylaarsdam, when Chrysostom reads Paul, he not only sees God's divine adaptation at work, but he also sees Paul imitating this divine adaptation in his words and actions. Not only that, but because Chrysostom is imitating the adaptive pedagogy of Paul, who is imitating God, Chrysostom's own homilies can also be interpreted in terms of adaptability. Rylaarsdam says, "Taking Chrysostom's goals and context into account, his hermeneutical method can be applied to his own work. Just as he urged his listeners to read God's book by looking beyond the surface of God's adaptation—not to remain at the level of types or Christ's humanity—so too the reader of Chrysostom can look beyond the mundane appearance of his statements to the purposes and traditions which inform them."[96]

There is some overlap between Mitchell and Rylaarsdam on the topic of hermeneutics, namely in terms of images. Both Mitchell and Rylaarsdam discuss Chrysostom's construction of rhetorical images that are meant to be used by his listeners for the purpose of imitation. Of

[95] Ibid., p. 111.
[96] p. 283

course, Rylaarsdam is influenced by and expanding upon Mitchell's work. Mitchell is concerned primarily with Chrysosotm's interpretation of Paul and not his interpretation of other scriptural works, as an author-centered hermeneutics would not work for most of the books in the Bible, in which the authors serve a minimal obvious role. Rylaarsdam, expanding on this and making more far-reaching claims, integrates Chrysostom's use of images into a theological system. For Rylaarsdam, the use of images, corporeal, rhetoric, or otherwise, is one of God's adaptable pedagogical methods. For Rylaarsdam, not only is Chrysostom presenting Paul in his homilies as an example of virtue to imitate, but God presents to humanity various examples of virtue throughout history in the prophets, in the apostles, and in the person of God himself in his actions and in the Incarnation. Paul is one of these archetypes of virtue that God raised up for humanity's instruction. Therefore, to Rylaarsdam, Chrysostom interprets all of scripture in terms of divine adaptability. Rylaarsdam explains that the "basic principle [of adaptation] is the foundation for Chrysostom's key theological assumptions about Scripture, such as its divine and human character, its relation to other forms of revelation such as the Incarnation, its inspiration, and its precision."[97]

Furthermore, both Mitchell and Rylaarsdam are concerned with Chrysostom's pedagogical methods. For Mitchell, Chrysostom's portraits of Paul serve a clear pedagogical purpose, as they are models of ethical behavior. For Rylaarsdam, the whole project of divine adaptability is pedagogical, as God adapts to humanity so that they are instructed in virtue. Pedagogical here refers to the practice of *paideia*, the raising of individuals to their ideal form. This can also be referred to as psychagogy and God's methods as psychagogical. For our purpose, I will make no distinction.

[97] p. 111

Therefore, instead of focusing on an author-centered hermeneutics or a hermeneutics centered around adaptability, for the sake of simplicity, I will discuss what I will call Chrysostom's psychagogical hermeneutics. This means that I will analyze the way in which Chrysostom interprets and uses scripture in leading his congregation on to progress in virtue. Specifically, following Mitchell and Rylaarsdam, I will analyze Chrysostom's creation and use of rhetorical images that he extracts from scripture. I will not focus so much on Rylaarsdam's other two categories of adaptation, variation and progress, because, for one, variation would be too frequent and obvious to point out, as when, for example, Chrysostom simplifies his speech or theological concepts. Furthermore, analyzing Chrysostom's homilies in terms of variation and progression requires knowledge of the audience that is simply not available, or at least would require great speculation.[98] Anyway, Chrysostom's epideictic rhetoric adds to the quality of his homilies, so it would be much more interesting, as well as fruitful, to focus on his rhetorical portraiture.

As already stated, my task will be to analyze the way Chrysostom uses examples of virtue from Philippians to instruct his congregation as to what virtue looks like and to inspire them to imitate these virtuous figures. This will show that even in an occasional letter with little biographic or narrative details, Chrysostom is still looking for virtuous actions and characteristics to expand upon. I will also show that these images are not only of Paul but of

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[98] Mayer says that an investigation into the Chrysostom's audience "demonstrate[s] both the paucity of our present knowledge and the immensity and complexity of the task that lies before us. At present we are far from understanding preaching at Antioch and Constantinople in the time of John Chrysostom" (Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom: Extraordinary Preacher, Ordinary Audience," *Preacher and audience: studies in early Christian and Byzantine homiletics*, ed. Mary Cunningham and Pauline Allen, Leiden: Brill, 1998, p. 135).

In terms of the social makeup of Chrysostom's audience, one of the few things that Maxwell is willing to claim is that "out of the different types of people who listened to Chrysostom's sermons, the country people are the only ones who did not make frequent appearances in church… While it is difficult to demonstrate without question that the congregation included members of every social and economic level in the city, it is enough, perhaps, to establish that the audience went well beyond the confines of the educated upper classes" (Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity*, p. 86).

others mentioned in the letter, such as Timothy, Epaphroditus, and even the Philippians themselves.[99]

Note on the Interpretation and Use of Scripture

A divorce between the interpretation of scripture as a purely intellectual activity and the use of scripture in community is unknown to Chrysostom. The favorite genre of Western exegetes is the commentary, but, while the commentary was not unheard of in early Christianity, Chrysostom performed homilies. Even his series on Galatians, which has traditionally been called a commentary, is clearly a set of homilies with their final exhortations and doxologies cut off. In Chrysostom's homilies he is interpreting scripture in front of and for the benefit of his audience, so here the gap between interpretation and use is small. Naidu points out that a "cursory reading of Chrysostom's exegetical oeuvre betrays that fact that pastoral concerns govern his preaching, and that his doctrinal thought is inseparably bound to the life of faith and the church's worship."[100]

However, it is not that there is no distinction between interpretation of scripture and its use. It is true that in the fourth century, it was assumed that "the Bible's principal function … was the generation of a way of life, grounded in the truth about the way things are, as revealed by God's Word."[101] This means that when Chrysostom interprets scripture he is going to have a

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[99] Cousar is one modern commentator who connects the motif of exemplary-model imitation not only to Christ and Paul but also to Timothy and Epaphroditus. He says, "One form of exhortation that appears often in Philippians is the use of models, both positive and negative, to advocate a particular style of life. Ancient rhetoric employed models frequently… Of course, Christ is the primary model to be followed, particularly in light of his death and exaltation, something we examine in detail in connection with 2:6– 11. The reader of Philippians finds the imitation motif also in connection with Timothy (2:19– 23), Epaphroditus (2:25– 30), and Paul himself (3:17)" (Charles Cousar, *Philippians and Philemon: A Commentary*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013, p. 13-14).
[100] Ashish Naidu, *Transformed in Christ: Christology and the Christian Life in John Chrysostom*, Eugene: Pickwick, 2012, p. xiv.
[101] Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 241.

keen sensibility as to the psychagogical application of the text. However, as I will show, Chrysostom certainly differentiates between the message that Paul intends for the recipients of his letter and the moral exhortation that the letter presents to later readers, that is: to Chrysostom's listeners. Mitchell says that Chrysostom's "exegetical task is to understand what Paul said in the past, and is saying *at this very moment* to the attentive ears of the faithful. While Chrysostom can vary his focus from the particular historical moment each epistle was designed to address to the universal readership now hearing Paul's voice in its reading and explication, he never disregards the former."[102] The use and interpretation of scripture, then, are very much connected for Chrysostom. Mitchell explains that "one should not expect… that he would devote isolated attention to the rhetorical genre or arrangement of a text *for its own sake*. Rather, his goal was the explication of the sacred text at hand so that its meaning might be understood, and, especially, appropriated ethically by his congregations."[103] Young explains that while Chrysostom's ethical interests play a role in his interpretation of scripture, Chrysostom still recognizes and respects the narrative found within the text. She says that "what Chrysostom is doing gives both textual context and exegetical context its own integrity and validity, yet the one resonates with the other."[104] She explains,

> Chrysostom's exegesis, even at the philological level, even as he explores *to historikon*, is coloured principally by his ethical interest, long before he launches on the specifically hortatory development when emerges from it. This is effected by the implicit conflation of two situations; by the exegete's empathy, we might say, with the rhetorical intent of the text. Yet Chrysostom is not unaware that the text belongs to another 'narrative' from that to which he and his

[102] Margaret Mitchell, "Reading Rhetoric with Patristic Exegetes: John Chrysostom on Galatians," *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on his 70th Birthday*, ed. A. Yarbro Collins and M. Mitchell. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001, p. 339. Emphasis hers.
[103] Ibid., p. 342. Emphasis hers.
[104] Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, p. 254.

> congregation belong. The narrative implied by the text is to be respected… Paul is not John the Goldenmouth. But the two narratives, while each having its own autonomy, somehow interpenetrate. They relate to one another as 'inter-illumination.' They have a mimetic quality.[105]

This means that Chrysostom recognizes the narrative that Paul's letters present while also applying the text to his own situation, seeing his situation in light of the text and imitating Paul's role as a pastor.

[105] Ibid., p. 253.

Chapter 2

Introduction to Chrysostom's Homilies on Philippians

On the Provenance of John Chrysostom's Homilies on Philippians

A homily is an oral performance, and the fact that some of Chrysostom's homilies have come down to us in written form means that either the words were written down by scribes who copied Chrysostom's speeches as he delivered them[106] or that Chrysostom prepared some of his homilies in text form and allowed for them to be published.[107] Baur argues that one can differentiate between the homilies that were prepared beforehand and the homilies that were written down by scribes, for when the scribes recorded Chrysostom's speeches, they also recorded the off-the-cuff comments he made to his congregation, usually about the daily life in the city and in the church.[108] This means that when a homily lacks these elements, the published form was prepared as a written work by Chrysostom. This would include his more famous exegetical homilies, including his series on Philippians. Baur says that "one must give up the opinion… that the great series of Homilies on the individual books of the Old Testament, on the two Gospels and on the Epistles of St. Paul are to be considered spoken sermons pure and simple."[109] Others, such as Maxwell, would rather maintain that the "exact relationship between the surviving texts and the original sermons… is impossible to know for certain."[110] Mayer and Allen claim that there are

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[106] Maxwell describes the widespread uses of scribes in late antiquity: "verbatim records of public orations were widely used in antiquity… Churches used the same methods." Maxwell, *Christianity and Communication*, p. 6.
[107] Maxwell claims that some of Chrysostom's sermons were were written down beforehand and published by him while others were taken down by scribes: "The church historian Socrates appears to have access to Chrysostom's sermons, some of which had been published by the preacher, while others had been taken down in shorthand in church during their delivery." Ibid.
[108] Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol. I, trans. M. Gonzaga, Westminster: Newman Press, 1959, p. 222: "The actual spoken sermons reveal their identity chiefly through this, that in them we discover a multitude of interesting details from daily life; for instance, whether the sermon was well or poorly attended… whether on the sermon-day it was hot, rainy or muddy, whether the congregation jostled in the church… or if pickpockets were going about, [or] whether the people expressed applause."
[109] Ibid.
[110] Maxwell, *Christianity and Communication*, p. 6.

great difficulties when it comes to knowing "how he composed them [his sermons], how they were published, [and] what control he had over the process."[111]

Furthermore, at some point in time, someone decided to collect Chrysostom's homilies and compile them into various series, arranged according to the book of the Bible that he was preaching on. Whether this was done before or after his death or with or without his knowledge and consent is not clear, though the presence of introductions at the beginning of these series attests to the former in both cases. One thing that is also unknown and lacking any external evidence is where any one homily was preached, with the exception of a few in which the internal evidence overwhelmingly attests to one city or special procession. It has been a habit in Chrysostom scholarship throughout the 19th and 20th centuries to infer the city in which Chrysostom preached the various sets of homilies. When it comes to his homilies on Philippians, the majority opinion is that they were preached at Constantinople. Allen and Mayer, however, challenge both this consensus and the traditional methodology that was used to reach a conclusion about the provenance of these homilies. They say,

> [A]s we proceeded with our reading of Chrysostom's text, this consensus began to appear more and more ill-founded. With very few exceptions, scholars have assumed that where internal evidence in one or two homilies in an exegetical series points indubitably to an Antiochene or Constantinopolitan provenance, then all the other homilies in the series as it comes down to us were delivered in the same place as well. When perspicacious researchers have discovered internal evidence in one homily of a series which goes against the tide of received scholarly opinion qua provenance and have bravely dissented, they have still argued in favour of reversing

[111] Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom*, New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 30.

> the provenance of the whole series, instead of treating its component parts on a case by case basis.[112]

They go on to argue not only that it is not good enough to take internal evidence for provenance in one homily as evidence for provenance of the series as a whole, as the homogeneity of the series is not self-evident, but also that the internal evidence for provenance in any one homily is weak and not enough to conclude the city of origin.

They argue that the evidence traditionally presented for Constantinopolitan origin is at best inconclusive. The claim that Chrysostom uses an "episcopal tone" in a small section of homily 10 is questionable and is a weak argument that Chrysostom was a bishop at the time. Moreover, the reference to the imperial family's woes in homily 16 uses language that is too general to refer to a specific emperor and therefore date the homily to a certain emperor's reign.[113] Furthermore, Allen and Mayer suggests that it is possible that the references to the ascetics in the wilderness in homilies 2 and 10 might be evidence for Antiochene origin of these homilies, as ascetics in Constantinople would have lived in a more urban environment, but they also call for more "research into Chrysostom's references to ascetic, eremitic and monastic life"[114] in order to draw more sure conclusions.

Allen and Mayer also argue that any internal evidence for provenance found in a homily can also be taken as evidence for provenance of that specific homily and not of the whole series because the homogeneity of the series is not apparent. According to them, the fact that the introductory argumentum (homily 1 in my numbering) is clearly a homily, because of the presence of a paraenetic section and concluding doxology, indicates that the series might not

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[112] Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, "Chrysostom and the Preaching of Homilies in Series: A Re-Examination of the Fifteen Homilies in Epistulam ad Philippenses (CPG 4432)," *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 49, no. 3 (Aug., 1995), p. 270.
[113] Ibid., p. 274-5. Baur actually says that the language about the emperor's woes in the final homily "seems actually to speak much more for Theodosius and for Antioch." Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol. I, p. 300.
[114] Allen and Mayer, "Chrysostom and the Preaching of Homilies in Series," p. 284.

have been prepared as a series but might rather be a collection of diverse homilies that happen to be on Philippians and called a series after the fact.[115] They also cite as evidence the fact that, apart from homilies 7 and 8, as homily 8 makes explicit reference to homily 7, there is no internal evidence that would suggest that the homilies belong together in a series, as the homilies do not mention each other. They also cite the fact that, while the verses covered flow smoothly from one homily to the next, there is some overlap in verses covered. In all, they argue,

> The homogeneity of the series is called into question at the outset if one considers the so-called argumentum, which is almost certainly itself a homily. Again, in the exegesis of the Philippians text there are lacunae and overlaps between homilies and, apart from the subject matter, there is very little indeed within the homilies themselves to suggest that they are a homogeneous series. On the basis of internal evidence, homilies 6 and 7 [7 and 8 on my numbering] are the only ones that can be said with any certainty to have been delivered before the same audience and on successive occasions.[116]

The issue of provenance, for our purposes of analyzing Chrysostom's textual interpretation, is not too important. When Chrysostom addresses his audience, the question of whether he is speaking to congregations in Antioch or Constantinople makes very little difference to the point he is trying to make from the text, as the language he uses to address his audience is general in the sense that he does not address specific events or situations that would require a good deal of background knowledge. Therefore, following Allen and Mayer, we can leave open the question of where a certain homily was preached.

The issue of homogeneity, however, bears some relevance to our purposes. Chrysostom does proceed verse by verse in his homilies, so our main focus will be how he interprets certain verses or groups of verses. If the homilies in the series are completely unrelated, it would be

[115] Ibid., p. 277-8
[116] p. 284

difficult to say that the way in which Chrysostom interprets one verse in one homily has some bearing on the way he interprets another verse in another homily; in other words, it would be impossible to claim that an issue he raises in one homily might be deliberately picked up in another. The best we would be able to do is say that Chrysostom interprets the two verses similarly on a thematic level but that he did not have a certain homily in mind while composing another one. I believe, however, that Allen and Mayer go too far in doubting the homogeneity of the series, for the fact that the verses covered in each homily align smoothly, with little overlap and no gap between homilies is great evidence for homogeneity. This sequential alignment of verses would be far from expected if these were individual and unrelated homilies given on vastly different occasions. Allen and Mayer cite two verses of overlap between homilies 3 and 4, two between 4 and 5, and one between 11 and 12, and they use this to say that "the exegesis does not flow on uniformly from one homily to the next."[117] However, the exact opposite is true - the exegesis for the most part does flow sequentially, with only slight overlap, against which there is no rule anyway, and there is only one verse not explicitly interpreted - Phil. 2:4. The overwhelming sequentiality of the series should place the benefit of the doubt on homogeneity. For example, it would be difficult to believe that Homily 14, which covers 3:18-4:3, bears no relation to Homily 13, which ends with Phil. 3:17, or Homily 1, which starts again at Phil. 4:4. The flow of verses covered from homily to homily is for the most part quite smooth like this. Allen and Mayer also take issue with the fact that the homilies rarely make reference to previous homilies in the series, but this is generally true of Chrysostom's exegetical series, so it is not unexpected.[118] As Hartney says that "it is possible to detect signs of serial preaching in some

[117] p. 278

[118] For the frequency of Chrysostom's preaching, Mayer and Allen testify that "synaxes were regularly held on Saturdays and Sundays during ordinary times of the year, while liturgical festivals and saints' days sporadically increased the number of opportunities available… In sum, the most likely scenario is that the frequency with which John preached varied from week to week at each location." (Mayer and Allen, *John Chrysostom*, p. 31-32.)

[sic] of Chrysostom's sermons… which he alludes to the previous day's stopping point and carries on from there, or even warns that certain themes will be covered on the next occasion they meet to discuss the same Scriptural text."[119] However, given that so little can be definitely said about the context and frequency of Chrysotom's preaching or about the relationship between the published texts and the spoken sermons, not only do I question Allen and Mayer's contention that such signs of serial preaching should be expected, but I would also challenge the assumption that the lack of such signs can be used as an argument for anything, for there is no standard to determine when they should occur. Therefore, I will assume that the homilies are meant by Chrysostom to be part of the same series in my analysis on his interpretation of Philippians.

Note on Manuscripts and Translations

The most commonly referenced volumes for the homilies of John Chrysostom in the original Greek are J.-P. Migne's *Patrologia graeca* volumes 47-64,[120] with Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians being found in PG 62:177-298. Not all of Chrysostom's works have been translated into English, but John A. Broadus's translations of most of the works can be found in Philip Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* series,[121] with the homilies on Philippians in particular in volume 13. However, a common critique of these translations are that they are dated and rigid, obscuring the spoken and homiletical nature of the texts.

Modern translations of Chrysostom are sometimes few and far between. Fortunately, however, there is a recent translation of his homilies of Philippians by Pauline Allen,[122] and this

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[119] Aideen Hartney, *John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City*, London: Duckworth, 2004, p. 42.
[120] John Chrysostom. *Patrologia graeca*. Ed. J.-P. Migne. Vol. 47-64. Paris, 1858-62
[121] John Chrysostom. *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. First Series. Vols. 9-14. Ed. Philip Schaff. Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1889.
[122] John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Philippians*. Trans. Pauline Allen. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

is the one that I will use for English quotations.[123] For important passages and for passages for which I believe the Greek wording should be given so as not to obscure the meaning through translation, I will give both the Greek text and English translation. Otherwise, when I believe the English translation captures the meaning, I will simply give the English.

Allen does not use the Migne text but instead uses Frederick Field's publication of Chrysostom's homilies on the Pauline epistles in Greek.[124] Field's compilation and Migne's were published within a few years of each other, but they have some differences. Migne based his work on the publication of Bernard de Montfaucon (1655-1741), in which he compiled all of Chrysostom's works.[125] On the other hand, "Field's text itself is based on an edition published in 1529 in Verona, which he was satisfied was the correct text."[126] At the bottom line, the Field and the Migne text are based on different manuscripts. Field's is based on five manuscripts while Montfaucon's, upon which Migne based his publication, is based on three, and there is no overlap between them. Allen says, "The text of Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians established by Bernard de Montfaucon in his monumental edition of all Chrysostom's works rested on three manuscripts, one of them partial,"[127] while also mentioning that "[a]part from the Verona edition, Field consulted four manuscripts for his text of Phillipians, all different from those used by Montfaucon."[128] All this is to say that there is no critical edition of our text of interest that makes use of all available manuscripts and can weigh textual variants against each other. Apart from the

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[123] Allen's translation, I find, sometimes goes too far in trying to capture the spoken nature of the homily, freely using contractions, interjections, and casual phrasing. For example, she often has Chrysostom start off sentences with phrases such as "You see" and "I mean" as a translation for γάρ or μέν or when the Greek has no equivalent word. Some excerpts from her translation will be slightly edited, mostly in punctualization and capitalization, to adjust for these exaggerations.

[124] John Chrysostom. *Ioannis Chrysostomi interpretatio omnium epistularum Paulinarum*. vol. 1-7. Ed. Frederick Field. Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1854-62. The Homilies on Philippians are in volume 5 columns 1-171. Allen also places Field's text side by side her translation in her work.

[125] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians*, trans. Pauline Allen, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013, p. xxxi.

[126] Ibid., p. xxxi.

[127] p. xxxi.

[128] p. xxxi.

five manuscripts used by Field and the three used by Montfaucon, Allen records that there are "no fewer than forty manuscripts containing our text, in various states of completeness."[129] She also identifies six manuscripts, all from the tenth or eleventh century, that, according to her, would absolutely need to be taken into consideration in an updated edition of Chrysoston's homilies on Philippians.[130]

Seeing as there are two versions of our primary source and no critical edition, the only realistic course of action is to pick one and stick to it while noting the differences between editions for important passages if need be. Following Allen, I will be referencing the Field text, so quotations in Greek will be coming from there unless stated otherwise. I will also note some discrepancies between the Field and the Migne text for important passages if the two texts give significantly different readings. Furthermore, Allen suggests the possibility that the two texts are different not simply due to scribal variation over time but also because there are supposed to be different versions of the homilies. She says, "There is considerable discrepancy between the text of Montfaucon and that of Field, the edition of the latter being in general better but terser, sometimes to the point of incomprehensibility."[131] This needs to be kept in mind when comparing between the Field and the Migne texts.

Note on Numbering

In Migne's *PG* text, the first of the sixteen homilies is listed as a ΥΠΟΘΕΣΙΣ,[132] and the remaining homilies are numbered one through fifteen. The *NPNF* translation follows this standard, calling the first homily, an introductory discourse.[133] Of course, as Allen points out,

[129] p. xxxii
[130] p. xxxii-xxxiii
[131] p. xxxiii
[132] *PG* 62.177
[133] John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Philippians," *NPNF*, vol. 13, trans. John Broadus, ed. Philip Schaff, Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1889, accessed through https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2302.htm.

there are a number of possible meanings to the broad term *hypothesis*. She says that on top of the traditional translation of 'account', 'record', or 'argument', it can also mean 'subject matter', 'summary of contents', 'plot summary', 'purpose', or 'occasion'.[134] Furthermore, this *hypothesis* is no doubt a homily itself. In it, Chrysostom summarizes what he sees as the occasion for and some key points of the letter. It is a homily because it contains homiletical elements, the most obvious one being the paraenetic discourse on a specific moral topic or virtue that appears at the end of all of Chrysostom's homilies. Because of this, Field's text counts this homily as the first in the series, and the remaining homilies are counted as two through sixteen. Allen says, "John's fifteen homilies on Paul's Letter to the Philippians are preceded by a piece entitled "account"/"record" or "argument" that could itself be considered a short homily and is described by Fredrick Field as the first homily."[135] Allen, in her translation, follows Field's numbering. Following Field and Allen, I will also use this numbering. This means that my numbering for each homily will be one above the numbering in the *PG* text.

[134] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians*, trans. Pauline Allen, p. xv note 25.
[135] Ibid., p. xv.

Chapter 3

Chrysostom's Interpretation of Philppians in his Homilies

In order to give a sense of how Chrysostom interprets Philippians and to show what are, for him, the important themes, the historical context, and the message to the Philippians, while also demonstrating how he draws out moral lessons from this text for his audience, this chapter will summarize and analyze his homilies on Philippians and attempt to capture the flow of his arguments. I will also summarize some of his discourse around the concepts that are important for our purposes, specifically, his comments concerning virtue, mimesis, salvation, and κοινωνία.

Chrysostom's Introduction to Philippians

Homily 1

This homily is often listed as an introductory work to Chrysostom's series of homilies on Philippians. It is indeed Chrysostom's introduction to the letter, as in it he describes Paul's occasion and purpose for writing; he also gives an overview of the letter's content. Because of this, this homily differs from the preceding homilies in the series, as those ones instead deal exegetically with a specified range of verses. It is also without a doubt a homily in itself, as it contains numerous homiletical elements, the most obvious one being the long exhortation at the end on a certain topic. As mentioned in the previous chapter, while some texts and translation, and even some manuscripts,[136] title this homily as the ΥΠΟΘΕΣΙΣ or as one of the several possible translations thereof, Field calls it the ΥΠΟΜΝΗΜΑ (account) and lists it as Homily 1 (ΛΟΓΟΣ Α).[137]

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[136] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians*, trans. Pauline Allen, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013, p. 3, note 1.

[137] John Chrysostom, *Ioannis Chrysostomi interpretatio omnium epistularum Paulinarum*, vol. 5, ed. Frederick Field, Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1854-62, p. 1.

In Homily 1, we begin to see how important the historical context of the letter is to Chrysostom. The historical context of the letter is important to Chrysostom because he is well tuned in to Paul's role as a pastor, and Chrysostom assumes that Paul is responding in his capacity as a pastor to certain historical situations within the Philippian church. To Chrysostom, Paul is writing to the Philippians for two reasons. The first is to comfort the Philippians about Epaphroditus' illness and Paul's chains. The news about Epaphroditus is a comfort because he has recovered, and the news about Paul, viewed the correct way, is a cause to rejoice. The second reason for Paul's letter is exhortation and encouragement, especially concerning unity, humility, and caution towards heretics.

In this introduction, we also begin to see how Chrysostom uses scripture as a psychagogical tool for his audience. He sets up the Philippians as models for imitation, in this case when it comes to the virtue of ἐλεμοσύνη. The Philippians are worthy of imitation because of their favorable disposition towards and financial contributions to Paul. This is why it is necessary for Chrysostom to point out that the letter is one of exhortation and encouragement, rather than criticism and rebuke, as the latter would call into question the Philippians' value as models of virtue.

Chrysostom begins his homily by taking note of what he believes are the historical details surrounding the composition of the letter. He relates the events that happened in Philippi in the book of Acts, and he notes that Paul was imprisoned [δεδέσθαι] in Rome at the time of composing the letter. Chrysostom seems to think that this was a long-term imprisonment, as opposed to a short-term pre-trial detention, which is the more popular position in modern scholarhsip. Wansink points out that in the Roman empire prisons did indeed serve "as 'holding tanks' for those awaiting trial"; however, prisoners could also be held for long periods of time,

and even though there were laws that outlawed long-term imprisonment as a punishment, it was not unusual.[138]

Chrysostom also mentions within the first few sentences how much praise Paul had for the Philippians, and the reason for this praise is their previous suffering. He says, "Paul himself provides numerous significant testimonies to these people, calling them his crown and saying that they had suffered greatly" (στέφανον αὐτοῦ καλῶν αὐτοὺς, καὶ πολλὰ πεπονθέναι λέγων) (3/1).[139] It is significant that Chrysostom established the good character of the Philippians here, because, as we will see later, he wants to hold them up as moral exemplars.

Chrysostom also makes a big deal of Epaphroditus, believing that events related to him are the occasion for Paul sending the letter. He says, "The Philippians had sent Epaphroditus to Paul to take him money and to find out what his circumstances were. You see, they were exceedingly well disposed toward Paul" (διέκειντο γὰρ σφόδρα περὶ αὐτὸν) (4/2). Paul then composes the letter to let them know his situation, and he tells them he will send Timothy to learn about and be cheered by news from them. In identifying the gift sent through Epaphroditus as the occasion for the letter, Chrysostom is in agreement with many modern scholars. As Black points out, "There is general agreement that the immediate occasion of the letter is the receipt of a pecuniary gift that had been delivered by Epaphroditus to Paul in captivity."[140] Chrysostom does not stop there, however, but he also identifies another purpose of the letter. Because, as Chrysostom reasons, the Philippians would have been distressed when they had learned about

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[138] Craig Wansink, *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonments*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996, p. 30.

[139] I will use internal citations for Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians. The first number is the page number in Allen's translation (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians*, trans. Pauline Allen, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), while the second number is the column number in Field's publication of the Greek text (John Chrysostom, *Ioannis Chrysostomi interpretatio omnium epistularum Paulinarum*, vol. 5, ed. Frederick Field, Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1854-62).

[140] D.A. Black, "The Discourse Structure of Philippians: A Study in Textlinguistics," *Novum Testamentum*, vol. 31, no. 1 (1995), p. 19.

Paul's chains and Epaphroditus' illness, Paul "adduces a substantial consolation about the fact that he's in chains, showing that it is a situation not only not to be troubled about but even to rejoice in" (δεικνὺς ὅτι οὐ μόνον οὐ χρὴ θορυβεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ χαίρειν) (7/3).

Chrysostom then summarizes what, according to him, is the main content of the letter. He mentions specifically that Paul "gives them advice about unity [ὁμονοία] and humility [ταπεινοφροσύνη], teaching them that this is their greatest safeguard and the way in which they'll easily be able to overcome their enemies" (7/3). Chrysostom also figures that the general purpose of the letter is exhortation and encouragement, again pointing out the favor that Paul had towards to Philippians, saying, "Paul appears to be writing to them with exceedingly great courtesy, and there is no rebuke anywhere, which was an indication of their great character [τεκμήριον τῆς ἀρετῆς αὐτῶν], that they did not give any occasion to the teacher, not even by way of criticism, but sent a message to them throughout by way of encouragement" (9/3).

This is what Chrysostom summarizes to be the message of Paul to the Philippians. Of course, he expands on Paul's words to the Philippians in the next fifteen sermons, taking the letter verse by verse. In the rest of Homily 1, Chrysostom expands on the message that Philippians, as a letter that is part of scripture, says to his listeners in his congregation. In this homily, the theme that he picks up on is ἐλεμοσύνη - charity, almsgiving, acts of mercy, or, as Allen often has it, pity. Furthermore, the application of the letter that Chrysostom gives to his congregation is mimetic in nature. He cites the Philippians, in their love and charity for Paul, as an example to follow. He says, "So if we know this, let's present ourselves as worthy of such models and be ready to suffer for Christ's sake [ἑαυτοὺς παρέχωμεν ἀξίους τῶν τοιούτων ὑποδειγμάτων, περὶ τὸ πάσχειν ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ ἕτοιμοι γινόμενοι]. However, now is not a time of persecution. Nevertheless, if we do nothing else, let us imitate their good deeds with passion

[μιμώμεθα αὐτῶν τὴν εὐποιΐαν τὴν μετὰ σφοδρότητος], lest when we give once or twice we consider ourselves to have fulfilled the whole command, for we must do this throughout our lives" (11/4). He also says that if Christians perform acts of mercy, the unbelievers will know that they are imitating their divine teacher: "But the unbelievers don't believe? Surely they will believe through our actions, if we work at it. If they see that we have compassion with everyone and count God as our teacher, they will understand that we act in imitation of him" (ἐὰν ἴδωσιν, ὅτι πάντας ἐλεοῦμεν, καὶ ἐκεῖνον [antecedent is 'the one who has pity'] ἐπιγραφόμεθα διδάσκαλον, εἴσονται ὅτι αὐτὸν μιμούμενοι τοῦτο πράττομεν) (11/5).

Moreover, Chrysostom, continuing with his exhortation on almsgiving, connects the virtue with salvation. Almsgiving is a habit that teaches its practitioners not to greed improperly and this improves character. Almsgiving makes the soul beautiful, or, as he says, "Pity on a grand scale is something beautiful and valuable; it's a great gift. I should say it is a great goodness. If we learn to despise money, we'll learn other lessons too… The person who gives alms, as they should do, learns to despise money; the person who learns to despise money has cut out the root of evil" (13/5-6). Chrysostom then connects it to salvation when he says, "And those whom the bridegroom knows have honored it [pity], he'll bring in with great freedom… if pity brought God into the world and prevailed on him to become a human being, much more will it be able to bring a human being up to heaven" (15/6). Such is the importance of almsgiving, and it is learned through the examples that God gives, both of himself and of those he raised up for the task, in this case the Philippians.

Ritter says that in Chrysostom's ethics "the chief issue is no longer 'individual progress to perfection' (προκοπὴ) but rather communal 'edification' (οἰκοδομή) - and it is this precisely because the person who has been set on a new foundation by the οἰκτιρμοί of God, and is no

longer burdened by care for himself in his action."[141] However, what is apparent in this homily, as well as, as we will see, the other homilies in the series, is that individual progress in the virtues is a major, if not the main, focus that Chrysostom has for his congregation. Moreover, concerning the use of money in particular, this homily makes Clark's view that "Chrysostom's practical solutions to poverty remain within the province of individual charity"[142] seem more plausible.

Chrysostom's Interpretation of Phil. 1

Phil. 1-7 - Homily 2

Homily 2 marks the beginning of Chrysostom's homilies that are more exegetical in nature. In it and in all the remaining homilies in the series, Chrysostom takes a passage of the text and analyzes for the most part verse by verse. He then concludes each homily with a lengthy paraenetic discourse.

In Homily 2, we see again Chrysostom's emphasis on the good character of the Philippians. We also see that one of the main reasons for Paul's high regard for the Philippians is their financial contributions and service done to him through Epaphroditus. From this, Chrysostom discusses how this aid is an expression of κοινωνία between Paul and the Philippians. The Philippians share in the sufferings and glory of Paul through their support of him.

To begin his analysis of the letter, Chrysostom starts with Paul's greeting to the Philippians. Even in Paul's seemingly formulaic introduction to his letter Chrysostom can glean

[141] Adolf Martin Ritter, "John Chrysostom as an Interpreter of Pauline Social Ethics," *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, ed. William Babcock, Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990, p. 187.
[142] Elizabeth Clark, "Comment: John Chrysostom as an Interpreter of Pauline Social Ethics," *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, ed. William Babcock, Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990, p. 195.

what is to him important information, specifically about the good character of the Philippians and Paul's favorable attitude towards them.[143] From the fact that Paul introduces himself to the Philippians as a "servant of Jesus Christ" in verse 1 and not as his usual "apostle of Christ", Chrysostom deduces that Paul considers himself as equal to, and not above, the Philippians in some important way. He says, "Here, inasmuch as he is writing to people of equal honor, he puts his rank not as teacher but as another important one… He calls himself a servant, not an apostle" (17/7). This rank (ἀξίωμα) of servant also speaks to Paul's virtue, as Chrysostom says, "This too is a really important rank and the sum total of good things: to be a servant of Christ and not simply to be called one. That person who is the servant of Christ is really free from sin." (17/7). Hall notes about this that "for Chrysostom, even a brief title, such as 'Paul the apostle,' demands that readers prayerfully and imaginatively shape their minds around it, so that the reality of the title sinks into the memory and motivates holy action."[144]

Still dealing with verse 1, after a brief historical interlude that explains that the titles of bishop and deacon were used interchangeably in Paul's time,[145] Chrysostom says that Paul makes special mention of the bishops and deacons in his greeting on top of greeting all the saints in the

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[143] Modern scholarship often describes Paul's warm language in the letter as friendship language and Philippians itself as a letter of friendship. For a thorough presentation of the topic, cf. L. Micheal White, "Morality Between Two Worlds: A Paradigm of Friendship in Philippians," *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. David Balch et al., Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990, pp. 201-15; cf. also Raymond Brown, "Letter to the Philippians," *An Introduction to the New Testament: abridged edition*, ed. Marion Soards, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016, p. 176: "A strong bond of friendship colors this letter that expresses Paul's gratitude and keeps the Philippians informed; indeed the human attraction of Paul the man is revealed in their loyalty."

[144] Christopher Hall, "Chrysostom," *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. Stephen Westerholm, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 332. Pomeroy says that, for Chrysostom, "Biblical language does not present matters as they are in themselves but in constant relation to man's power to apprehend the divine accommodation. Sometimes, the divine pedagogue discerned that obscure, difficult, or subtle language was needed to inspire the hearer to dig deeper into the meaning at hand" (Samuel Pomeroy, *Chrysostom as exegete: scholarly traditions and rhetorical aims in the Homilies on Genesis*, Leiden: Brill, 2022, p. 38), so he will often contemplate on the meaning of words and their subtleties.

[145] "'To fellow bishops and deacons' [Phil. 1:1]. What does this mean? Were there many bishops in one city? No, not at all, but he calls the presbyters by this name. You see, in the past up to this point they used names interchangeably, and the bishop was said to be a deacon" (18-19/8). Chrysostom goes on to explain that even though the titles were interchangeable, there were still individuals in the NT who nevertheless had the role of bishop. There was still an office, one for each city, that performed the laying on of hands.

city, which he does in no other letter, because "they were the ones who sent donations to him and bore fruit, and it was they who sent Epaphroditus to him"[146] (19/8). This act of charity through Epaphroditus will soon become an important point in the homily.

Next, Chrysostom sees in verses 3 and 4 more evidence of Paul's high regard for the Philippians. He says that Paul joyfully makes remembrance of the Philippians in his prayers because they have been "instructed in virtue" (ἐπιδεδώκατε εἰς ἀρετὴν)[147] (19/9). It is when Chrysostom reaches verse 5 that he gives the reason for Paul's high regard for the Philippians, and it goes back to the act of charity done through Epaphroditus. Chrysostom says that when Paul mentions the Philippians' partnership with him in the gospel from the beginning of their acquaintance up until the present, "he gives them a great testimony - both exceedingly great, and one that somebody would have given to apostles and evangelists" (21/9). To Chrysostom, because to Philippians provided support for Paul and his mission, they became "partners in preaching" (συγκοινωνοῦντές μου τῷ κυρύγματι)[148] (21/9). Chrysostom goes even further in describing the significance of this partnership, saying, "But the Philippians, even when they weren't with him, shared in his troubles, both sending men to him and supporting him as much as they could, neglecting absolutely nothing… Indeed, this is sharing in the gospel [κοινωνία ἐστὶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο]. You see, while he's preaching, you're looking after the preacher; you're partners in his crowns [κοινωνεῖς αὐτῷ τῶν στεφάνων]" (21/9-10).

After this, Chrysostom says that verse 6, about God completing the good work that he began in the Philippians, is a verse that is meant to humble the Philippians. He says, "See how he

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[146] Hooker suggests the same explanation: "It is possible that Paul mentions these leaders here because they had particular responsibility for sending the gift which the Philippian community had sent to Paul in his imprisonment" (Morna Hooker, "Philippians," *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 109).

[147] The verb is in the second person plural because Chrysostom is adopting the voice of Paul, paraphrasing what Paul is saying directly to the Philippians.

[148] The first person possessive is there because, again, Chrysostom is paraphrasing in the voice of Paul.

teaches them to be measured as well. Because he gave witness to them of a great event, so that they didn't feel some human reaction he immediately teaches them to refer both past and future events to Christ" (25/11). However, even though Chrysostom says that "their progress was not only theirs but principally from God" (25/11), he preserves free will by saying that God works in the Philippians because they won over God in some way at the beginning of their faith. He says, "[I]f God was simply working in them he wouldn't at all have prevented both the Hellenes and all people from working in them, if he moved us like timber and stone and didn't seek our cooperation. So when he [Paul] said, 'God will complete it,' this too is again praise for them because they won over God's grace to work with them in transcending human nature [τῶν ἐπισπασαμένων τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν χάριν συμπράττειν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ ὑπερβῆναι τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν]" (25/12). About God's grace in Chrysostom, Hall says, "God's grace does not monergistically coerce human beings into the kingdom of God. We must willingly cooperate with God's grace, a cooperation that itself is a sign of God's grace operative – but not coercive – in bringing humans to salvation."[149] At the same time, this verse is an encouragement because the completion of the aforementioned work that God began in them will be easy with the help of God.

Chrysostom takes the final verse analyzed in this homily, Phil. 1:7, as evidence of greatness for first the Philippians and then for Paul himself. The fact that Paul held the Philippians in his heart[150] is great testimony for them because "to be loved by Paul so warmly is a sign that someone was great and wonderful" (25/12). The Philippians are so great and

[149] Christopher Hall, "Chrysostom," *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, p. 333. About the goal of Christian life and its relation to free will, Hall says, "The goal, then, of Christians (from the perspective of Chrysostom – and of Paul, as Chrysostom understood him) is to exercise, train, and cultivate the gifts God has given them (i.e., their soul, mind, body, and will – all aspects of their creation in the image of God) so that the good, true, and grace - empowered free choice can be made in the midst of the perplexities and turmoil of this present life" (p. 333).
[150] Chrysostom understands "τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς" as Paul holding the Philippians in his heart. This is the opposite of some translations, such as the NRSV which translates the phrase as "because you hold me in your heart."

wonderful because they are partners with Paul in grace (Phil. 1:7). This same grace led to Paul's imprisonment because, as Chrysostom says, "Was it the grace of an apostle to be in chains, persecuted, suffer a myriad of terrible things? Yes" (27/13). This testifies to Paul's greatness because his suffering served the gospel. Chrysostom explains how Paul being in chains is a confirmation [βεβαίωσις] and a defense [ἀπολογία] of the gospel, saying, "Indeed, his chains were a confirmation of the gospel, indeed they were a defense. And remarkably so. How? Because if he'd begged off his chains, he would've appeared to be a cheat, but the one who puts up with everything, both his chains and his anguish, shows that he suffered these things not for the sake of some human cause but on account of the God who rewards" (27/12-13).

Drawing off the theme of partnership though charity, Chrysostom goes into his concluding exhortation. He says, "Since, then, it's possible in different ways to be a partner in grace as well as in troubles and anguish, please let us too be partners [κοινωνῶμεν… καὶ ἡμεῖς]" (29/13-14). Even though there is no one alive like Paul to support, his audience can still be like the Philippians if they support someone who preaches the gospel. Chrysostom says, "There's nobody like Paul. No, there's nobody who even comes close to that blessed man. But the preaching of the gospel is the same as it was then" (29/14). He goes on to explain that he is exhorting his listeners to join in partnership with those who preach the gospel by supporting their physical needs, saying "I want both to urge you on and to exhort you to be an ally and supporter of God's saints" (31/14), but this is not so much in order to benefit the receiver but the giver. He says, "Accordingly, if you know that you, not they, are going to gain, you know that your gain is greater. Indeed, their body is nourished, but your soul enjoys esteem. None of their sins is remitted when they receive, but many of your offenses are cut off" (31/15). It is giving and becoming partners in the suffering that comes from preaching, and doing so joyfully, that

benefits, even more than being on the receiving end of such charity. This is part of what Mitchell describes as "the paradoxical work of redefinition of the Christian social economy that Chrysostom undertakes in order to get his congregant to adjust their behavior in the light of a newly envisioned, and not yet actually manifested, social order. The possessions that most people seek after… are not even 'goods.'"[151] At the same time, "Chrysostom's treatments of possessions are strikingly individualistic, since he is engaged in homiletical exhortation to his congregation, which he hopes will affect their behavior and choice."[152] Furthermore, as always, there is a connection between the virtue that Chrysostom is giving on exhortation on, in this case ἐλεμοσυύνη, and eternal life. Chrysostom says that if we give freely, "[w]e shall become like God in this respect [Τούτῳ γὰρ ὅμοιοι ἐσόμεθα τῷ θεῷ]… such that we shall reach immortal benefits as well [τῶν ἀθανάτων ἐπιτευξόμεθα ἀγαθῶν]" (35/17).

Phil. 1:8-19 - Homily 3

In Homily 3, we see Chrysostom engage with what are to him Paul's pastoral concerns in writing the letter. To Chrysostom, Paul in these verses is comforting the Philippians as to the fact that he is in chains, and he is warning them against following heretics. Chrysostom also emphasizes that despite his chains, Paul rejoices at the advance of the gospel and at the newfound boldness of his coworkers. This shows that Paul is a man with a great φιλοσοφία. At the end of the homily, we also see some of the ethic, the φιλοσοφία, that Chrysostom wants his own congregation to have.

Continuing on from the fact that Paul had just called the Philippians partners with him in grace, Chrysostom wants to clarify that Paul was not simply calling them this in order to flatter

[151] Margaret Mitchell, "Silver Chamber Pots and Other Goods Which Are Not Good: John Chrysostom's Discourse against Wealth and Possessions," *Having: Property and Possession in Religious and Social Life*, ed. William Schweiker & Charles Mathewes, Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2004, p. 98.
[152] Ibid., p. 99.

them, only showing them love because of this partnership and the benefits he was receiving from it. When Paul calls on God as his witness in how much he yearns for the Philippians in the affection of Jesus Christ (ἐν σπλάγχνοις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) (Phil. 1:8), according to Chrysostom, "he does this out of great affection, both to win them over completely and to encourage them. When he said that they had become partners with him [ὅτι ἐκοινώνησαν αὐτῷ], so that they wouldn't consider that he desired them for that reason, and not simply for their own sakes, he added 'in the affection of Christ'"[153] (37/17). For Chrysostom, the phrase 'in the affection of Christ' expresses Paul's true spiritual love for the Philippians. He says, "It stands for: 'according to Christ, because you are believers, because you love Christ, on account of your love according to Christ'… 'I love you not with physical affection but with warmer affection, that of Christ'" (37/17-18). About Paul's love for his letter recipients in Chrysostom, de Wet says, "Paul's love… is curative - it serves the purpose of spiritual healing, correction, normalisation and sometimes even punishes."[154] This would mean that Paul is not just telling the Philippians he loves them, but also that there is a pastoral purpose in Paul expressing his love for the Philippians.

In Phil. 1:9, we see that when Paul says his prayer is that the Philippians abound in love more and more, Chrysostom interprets this as them abounding in love more and more for Paul. Chrysostom says, "Being loved in this way, he wanted to be loved still more, for the one who loves the beloved doesn't want to be stopped from love in any way, for there is no possible measure of this noble thing" (37/18). When Paul adds that this love should abound "with knowledge and all discernment" (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει) (Phil. 1:9) so that the Philippians might approve of what is excellent (Phil. 1:10), to Chrysostom, this is a warning

[153] This is an important 'friendship' passage for modern scholars. Stowers points out that Paul expressing his desire to be with the Philippians is an ancient friendship motif: Stanley Stowers, "Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians," *Pauline Theology*, Vol. 1: *Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, ed. Jouette Bassler, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991, p. 109.
[154] Chris de Wet, "Identity-Formation and Alterity in John Chrysostom's *In Epistulam ad Galatas commentarius*," *Acts Theologica*, vol. 34, no. 19 (2014), p. 20.

against directing love towards heretics. Chrysostom says, "What's the meaning of 'with knowledge'? It means with judgment, with reasoning, with perception. I mean, there are some people who love studiply, simply… 'With knowledge,' he says, 'and with all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent' (he means what's fitting) 'I'm making these statements not for my own sake,' he says, 'but for your own.' I mean, there's reason to fear that somebody might become corrupted by the love of heretics [δέος γὰρ μή τις παραφθαρῇ ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν αἱρετικῶν ἀγάπης]"[155] (39/18). This is how the Philippians can be found upright (εἰλικρινεῖς) (Phil. 1:10) - that they "do not accept any illegitimate teaching under the pretext of love" (39/18). If the Philippians follow right teaching, they might be filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:11) on the day of Christ (Phil. 1:10). Chrysostom says, "'Filled with fruits of righteousness, which comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God' [Phil. 1:11] means 'in combination with right teaching leading an upright life as well' [μετὰ τῶν δογμάτων καὶ βίον ὀρθὸν ἔχοντες]" (39/19).

Chrysostom then moves on to verses 12 and 13, about how Paul's chains have served for the advance of the gospel, and he interprets these verses as Paul comforting and encouraging the Philippians. He says, "It was natural that when they heard that he was chained up they would grieve and consider that the preaching of the gospel had been stopped… Immediately he removed this suspicion. This too is the act of someone who loves, to make plain his affairs to

[155] About Chrysostom's attitude towards heretics: "Closely aligned with how John related to non-Christians is his interaction with heterodox Christians and schismatics… What is noteworthy in regard to the way John treats the heterodox and schismatic in his preaching is that they are to be managed in the same way as Jews and pagans, namely as having sick souls that require healing" (Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, "John Chrysostom," *The Early Christian World*, 2nd edition, ed. Philip Francis Esler, New York: Routledge, 2017, p. 1064-5). About his practical dealings with the heretics, Liebeschuetz gives the anecdote that "Chrysostom refused to allow a church to be used by Goths for Arian services. But he did feel responsible for the souls of the Goths in Constantinople, and he did assign one church… to the Goths for orthodox services. He appointed Gothic-speaking priests, deacons, and readers to preach to them. We have a sermon which Chrysostom himself preached at that church, after there had been readings and a sermon in Gothic by a Gothic priest" (J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and bishops: army, church, and state in the age of Arcadius and Chrysostom*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 169).

them because they're worried. What do you mean? You're chained up, you're impeded, and how does this advance the gospel? 'So that my chains,' he says, 'have become known in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard'" (41/19-20). This encourages the Philippians to be more bold in their faith because, as Chrysostom reasons, "If while in chains he suffered miserably and kept silent, it was natural that they would suffer the same, but if while in chains he was more outspoken, he gave them greater confidence than if he were not in chains" (41/20).

On top of Christ becoming known throughout the praetorian guard, Chrysostom lists two more ways in which the proclamation of the gospel has advanced during Paul's detention. The first is that Paul's associates have been emboldened to preach the gospel because of Paul's chains (Phil. 1:14). Chrysostom says, "[Paul] shows that while they had no fear before and discoursed in an outspoken manner, at the present time it was much more the case" (41/20). The second reason is that some people were preaching Christ out of envy and rivalry (Phil. 1:15). Chrysostom explains their motives, saying, "Because Paul was restrained, many unbelievers themselves were preaching Christ, wanting to exacerbate the violent war that originated with the emperor, so that the emperor's rage might increase at the dissemination of the gospel, and his full fury come down in Paul's head" (43/21). These people were not only unbelievers, but they were also trying to afflict Paul while he was in chains (Phil. 1:17), as Chrysostom says, speaking in the voice of Paul, they were "[r]eckoning that in this way I will fall into greater danger, they add anguish to anguish" (43/21). When Paul says that he rejoices because of this, as Christ is being proclaimed, even though it sometimes in pretense and not in truth (Phil. 1:18), Chrysostom uses it as an opportunity to praise his character and hint at what kind of reward Paul is winning from this. He says, "But look at the man's philosophy [φιλόσοφον]: he doesn't make violent accusations against them but says what's happened" (45/22). Chrysostom then talks about how the envious

preachers will be punished while Paul will receive a reward because people are believing and being instructed in the faith because of him. Chrysostom says, speaking for Paul, "They are cooperating with me, though unwillingly, and whereas they are effecting a punishment for themselves, I, who contribute nothing, will gain a reward" (47/23). At the same time, Chrysostom is careful to point out that the envious preachers were not preaching heresy, for Paul would not rejoice at the preaching of heresies. Chrysostom says, "Even if he permitted them to preach in the way they did, he still didn't introduce heresies in so doing… It was very necessary for them to preach in this way… [b]ecause if they had preached differently from Paul… they wouldn't have caused the emperor's rage to increase" (45/22).

Continuing on from this, Chrysostom discusses how it is the work of the devil to make people do good and even onerous works but still be liable to punishment because of their evil intentions. He says, "Nothing is more foul than the devil: in this way he surrounds his own on every side with unprofitable works and scatters them. And it's not only that he won't let them obtain the prizes but even that he makes them liable to punishment" (47/23). The work of the envious preachers is futile because, as Paul says, it will ultimately turn out for his salvation (Phil. 1:19); nevertheless, the devil makes them do it. Chrysostom continues, likely having the heretics of his own day in mind, "He [the devil] knows how to enjoin on them not only preaching but also fasting and virginity of this kind, which will not only deprive them of rewards but also produce great evil for those who participate in it [τοῖς αὐτὴν μετιοῦσι][156]" (47/23).

Moving onto the exhortation of his own audience, Chrysostom contrasts the onerous burden of the devil with the light yoke of God. He says, "On this account, please, let's give thanks to God for everything, because he has both lightened our burdens and increased our

[156] It might be notable that Chrysostom does not use a κοινωνία term here, but opts for another term in describing participation in evil.

rewards" (47/23). Concerning the requirements of the Christian, Chrysostom says, "What's burdensome, what's troublesome about Christ's commandments? You can't live as a virgin? You can get married. You can't deprive yourself of all your possessions? You can help others with what you own… These ideas seem to be burdensome. Which ones? I mean despising money and overcoming bodily desire… Tell me: what kind of constraint is it not to speak evil, simply not to slander? Or what kind of constraint is it not to be seized with ambition [ποία βία τὸ μὴ δόξῃ ἁλῶναι;]?" (48-49/24). Christians are not required to follow a harsh ascetic lifestyle, but at the very least they must follow these easy constraints. This passage might challenge Leibeschuetz contention that "In most of his sermons he [Chrysostom] seems principally concerned to persuade his congregation that many features of the way of life pioneered by Christian ascetic could be, and indeed must be, adopted by laypeople, because this was how they could realize the morality of the New Testament in its totality."[157]

Chrysostom then moves on to discuss at length the topic of wealth, with the point being that one should not envy the rich but be content in relative poverty. He reframes the discussion on wealth and poverty to center around desire of riches or lack thereof. True richness is not about having possessions but about not needing more. Chrysostom tells his listeners, "Throw out your desire for riches, and you have become rich [ἔκβαλε τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τοῦ πλούτου, καὶ ἐπλούτησας]! This person is the rich one, the one who doesn't want to be rich; the one who doesn't want to be poor - that person is the poor person" (55/27). Brown explains that even the poor were meant to take part in Chrysostom's regimen of *paideia*, saying that "the poor stood for the width of the bishop's range of concern. On the social map of the city, they marked the outermost boundary of the 'universal way' associated with the Christian church, just as the bookless wisdom of the monks indicated a cultural desert that stretched far beyond the narrow

[157] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom*, p. 189.

confines of Greek *paideia*."[158] Chrysostom concludes by exhorting his listeners to shape their dispositions correctly, along the lines of φιλοσοφία, saying, "Do you see that it's not poverty or wealth either that's good but our disposition [προαίρεσις]? Let's train [ῥυθμίζωμεν] it; let's teach it to do philosophy [φιλοσοφεῖν]. If it's properly disposed, wealth won't be able to exclude us from the kingdom, nor will poverty cause us to have less" (57/28).

Phil. 1:18-24 - Homily 4

A great part of Homily 4 can be read as an encomium to Paul and a praise for his philosophy. As we have learned from Mitchell (see chapter 1), encomium is an important didactic tool for Chrysostom. In the previous homily, Chrysostom gave the context of verses 18 and 19 and explained why Paul was rejoicing, namely, he was rejoicing because the gospel was advancing despite his imprisonment and despite the envious false preachers, or, more accurately, because of these things. In the current homily, Chrysostom begins with these verses and uses them as a starting point to praise Paul. Chrysostom begins the homily stylistically, saying, "None of the distressing events in the present life can get its teeth into the great soul that loves wisdom [φιλόσοφον]; no, not feuds, nor accusations, nor calumnities, nor dangers, nor intrigues. It flees, as it were, to some large mountain ridge, secure against everything that attacks it from down here on earth. Such was Paul's soul when it seized the place of spiritual philosophy, loftier than any mountain ridge - the true philosophy [τῆς ὄντως φιλοσοφίας]" (59/29). Even in the face of slander from his enemies and the danger presented by the emperor, Paul rejoices, and not only does this rejoicing testify to Paul's steadfastness, but, when he says that he will be delivered through the Philippians' prayers and the help of the Spirit (Phil. 1:19), one is also meant to

[158] Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992, p. 94.

"[o]bserve the humility [ταπεινοφροσύνην] of that blessed man" (59/29), as Paul admits that he does not contribute anything to his deliverance except for hope. This hope, however, is nothing to scoff at because through it Paul lives courageously and honors Christ is his body (Phil. 1:20). Chrysostom says, "Do you see how much hope in God is worth? 'No matter what happens,' he says, 'I shall not be put to shame.' That means 'they won't get the better of me. Rather, with full courage, as always, Christ will be honored in my body'" (61/30). This honoring will happen whether Paul lives or dies because, as Chrysostom says for Paul, "In the former case, because he [Christ] has released me from dangerous situations; in the latter, because he hasn't permitted me to fear the tyranny of death. In this way he'll be honored during my life and death" (63/31). Chrysostom also says that enduring both life and death nobly (γενναίως) "is the characteristic of a Christian soul" (τοῦτο Χριστιανῆς ψυχῦς) (63/31).

Chrysostom moves on to explain verse 21. He says, "'For to me,' he says, 'to live is Christ, to die is gain. And even in dying,' he says, 'I shall not have died, because I shall have life in myself [τὴν ζωὴν ἔχων ἐν ἐμαυτῷ]. They would've got rid of me then, if they'd had the power to remove belief from my soul through fear [εἰ ἴσχυσαν διὰ τοῦ φόβου τὴν πίστιν ἐκβαλεῖν τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς]. But as long as Christ is with me, even if death catches up with me, I'll live'" (65/32). Chrysostom describes what it looks like when someone lives in Christ, saying, "They don't even live the natural life [φυσικὴν ζωὴν]. The person who takes no thought for anything in the present life doesn't live. We do live this present life because we do everything for it. But Paul didn't live it. He didn't get mixed up in any way with earthly things" (67/33). Chrysostom also says, "That's the sort of person the Christian ought to be. 'I don't live the common life [κοινὴν ζωὴν],' he [Paul] says" (65/32), and the common, natural, and physical life is the life spent

concerning oneself with earthly things such as food, clothing, and wealth. Paul does not worry about these things but places full trust in Christ.

Interestingly, Chrysostom then says that when Paul says he is hard pressed between the choice of life and death (Phil. 1:22-23), "[i]n this passage he revealed a great mystery, namely, that he was in charge of his departure from life. I mean that when there's a choice, we're in charge [ὅταν γὰρ αἵρεσις ᾖ, κύριοί ἐσμεν]. 'And what I shall choose,' he says, 'I can't tell.' Is it up to you? 'Yes,' he replies, 'if I'd like to ask this grace from God. I am hard pressed between the two'" (69/35). Whatever it means to be in charge of one's life or death (κύριος ἦν τοῦ ἀπεκθεῖν), the point is that, by being hard pressed between the two choices, Paul reveals that there are advantages to both. Chrysostom also says that Paul's discourse on his death is meant to prepare the Philippians for it: "'To be released and to be with Christ,' he says, 'is much better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account [Phil. 1:23-24].' These words were to prepare them in advance for his coming death so that they would bear it nobly" (69/36).

After this, Chrysostom lets his audience know at length about what the proper attitude towards the deaths of others should be. He says, "Let's not simply mourn those who have died, or simply rejoice over those who are alive. Let's mourn the sinners, not only the dead, but also the living. Let's rejoice over the just, not only the living, but also the dead. I mean that the former, although alive, have died, while the latter, although dead, are alive" (71/36). This mourning for sinners will also in turn be beneficial to those who mourn, as Chrysostom says, "if you mourn them in this way, so much more will you yourself strive never to fall into the same sins - sin will terrify you from then on" (73/37).

Phil. 1:23-30 - Homily 5

Homily 5 continues the praise of Paul. Chrysostom expounds upon the fact that Paul is noble because he has chosen to remain in this life for the sake of others, namely the Philippians, rather than depart and be with Christ and thereby claim a great reward. Here, Chrysostom notes the pastoral nature of Paul's mission. Paul stays on earth to make the Philippians firm in faith and live lives worthy of the gospel. He also exhorts the Philippians to suffer for the sake of Christ. Here, we also see, in Chrysostom's interpretation of Phil. 1:30, Paul gives himself as an example for the Philippians of what it looks like to endure contests and struggles.

There is some overlap in verses covered between homilies 4 and 5, namely, in both Chrysostom comments on verses 23 and 24. Having given the context and interpretation of these verses in Homily 4, in Homily 5 Chrysostom uses these verses to launch into an encomium of Paul. He begins the homily saying, "Nothing is more blessed than Paul's soul for the reason that nothing is nobler" (79/39), and Paul is noble here because he has chosen to remain in this life for the sake of the Philippians rather than depart and be with Christ. Instead, he acts selflessly by remaining on earth, which is even more praiseworthy given the harsh circumstances of his life. Chrysostom says, "How can that be? "Haven't you been leading a very painful life? In sleepless nights, shipwrecks, hunger and thirst, and having no clothes, in worries and concerns?" (79/39). He then turns his praise of Paul up a notch, comparing him to the sun. He says, "All the angels praised you [God] with one voice when you made the stars, surely too when you made the sun, but it was not in the same way as when you showed Paul to the whole world. For this reason the earth has become more splendid than heaven; Paul is more brilliant than the light of the sun… And the sun concedes to the night, whereas Paul is superior to the devil. Nothing has seized him; nothing has prevailed over him… as soon as he opened his mouth, he filled the angels with great joy" (83/41).

After this, Chrysostom continues on with his analysis of the remaining verses in Phil. 1. He says, "For this is the meaning of 'I shall remain and continue, [Phil. 1:25], that is, 'I shall see you.' What's the reason for that? 'For your progress and joy in the faith' [Phil. 1:25]… 'Since my presence here contributes to both your faith and your joy, I've chosen to remain on that account'" (85/42). He continues, "What's the meaning of 'so that you may have ample cause to glory [τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν περισσεύῃ]' [Phil. 1:25]? The cause to glory was this: the making firm in the faith (that's glory to Christ), living properly" (Ὅπερ καὶ τὸ καύχημα ἦν, τὸ ἐστηρίχθαι ἐν τῇ πίστει. τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστι καύχημα ἐν Χριστῷ. τὸ ὀρθῶς βιοῦν) (85/42). The Philippians can boast in Paul because he is the one who comes to them to make them firm in the faith.

When Paul says that their lives should be worthy of the gospel (Phil. 1:27), Chrysostom says, "Do you see that in this sentence his entire message is to urge them to devote themselves to virtue [ἵνα εἰς τοῦτο αὐτούς προτρέψῃ, ἐπιδοῦναι πρὸς ἀρετήν;]?" (85/43). When Paul says that he will rejoice if he hears that the Philippians stand firm in one spirit and soul (Phil. 1:27), Chrysostom emphasizes the unity that Paul is prescribing, saying, "It's this that most unites the faithful and keeps love together, so that they may be one" (ἵνα ὦσιν ἕν) (87/43).

Chrysostom says that when Paul tells the Philippians not to be frightened (Phil. 1:28), "He did well to use the word 'frightened.' That's the nature of the things that come from the enemy - they only frighten… this is the characteristic of those who stand straight [τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστι τῶν ὀρθῶς ἑστώτων]. The enemy can do nothing, no - only frighten" (87/44). The enemy can do no real damage to those who stand straight. Standing straight in the face of fear is a clear sign of their enemies' defeat because "if you [the Philippians] are so disposed, from that point you'll immediately make clear both their destruction and your salvation. When they see that myriad

things are devised and they're not even capable of frightening you, they'll accept the signs of their own destruction" (87/44).

When Paul says that God has granted it to the Philippians that they suffer for the sake of Christ (Phil. 1:29), Chrysostom says, "Again he teaches them to moderate their thought, ascribing everything to God and maintaining that suffering for the sake of Christ is a grace and a gift and a present" (καὶ χάριν εἶναι λέγων καὶ χάρισμα καὶ δωρεὰν τὸ πάσχειν ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ) (89/44).The moderation of thought is important for Chrysostom because, as Leyerle points out, "He aimed to heal and correct the mindset (or gnōmē) of his listeners. Because he believed, like many philosophically inclined thinkers of his time, that uncontrolled emotion led to vice and unhappiness, emotional regulation was very much part of his psychagogic project. He consistently sought to diminish some feelings and to strengthen or redirect others."[159]

When Paul says that the Philippians are engaged in the same conflict that they saw in him (Phil. 1:30), Chrysostom interprets this as Paul giving himself as a great example for the Philippians to follow. He says, "That is to say: 'You also have the example' [καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα ἔχετε]. Again he flatters them in this passage, showing that they are engaged in the same conflict as he is on all sides, engaged in the same struggles… enduring temptations with him" (89/44-45). Wansink argues that "Paul's deliberations on his own life and death serve a mimetic purpose. By pointing both to his own desires and to his subsequent decisions, Paul presents a pattern of behavior which he expects the Philippian community to follow."[160] Seeing as Chrysostom uses these deliberations, his choice between life and death, to launch into an encomium of Paul and to say that Paul is giving himself as an example, it would seem that he and Wansink are in agreement. Furthermore, Chrysostom says that Paul's suffering served as a witness to the

[159] Blake Leyerle, *The Narrative Shape of Emotion in the Preaching of John Chrysostom*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2020, p. 3.
[160] Wansink, *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonments*, p. 97

Philippians of what it means to live a Christian life. He says, "And in the same way he bears the same witness to them all: contests and struggles [ἄθλους καὶ ἀγῶνας]" (89/45).

Chrysostom ends this homily by expanding on the value and importance of pity (ἐλέος) and of having pity (ἐλεῖν), though it is a little awkward discursively how he reaches this point. First, he laments that for his generation, saying, "we have grown cold in our love for Christ"[161] (89/45), especially when compared to the fervor of Paul's generation. Then, he says that God has sowed in human nature certain affections that are meant to keep human beings on the path of virtue, and he gives pity as an example. He says, "[W]e have many natural advantages for achieving virtue [πολλὰ φυσικὰ ἔχομεν ἀγαθὰ πρὸς τὴν ἀρετήν]. For example, all of us human beings are moved by nature to have pity, and there's nothing so good in our nature" (91/46). He continues on with his praise of pity, even though it is not clearly related to the passage in Philippians that he was interpreting. He says, "Do you see how powerful God's pity is? It has created everything; it has produced the world; it has created the angels… We reach the kingdom through pity" (95-97/49). Therefore, his listeners should "[c]onsider that the world was created through pity, and imitate the Master [μίμησαι τὸν δεσπότην]" (93/47).

Chrysostom's Interpretation of Phil. 2

Phil. 2:1-3 - Homily 6

[161] Cook notes about Chrysostom's criticism of his congregation that "when we place Chrysostom's activity as preacher within its full context, and recognize the scholastic, therapeutic, prophetic, and liturgical nature of his preaching, then we can no longer take his rebukes as straightforward objective representations of the reality of popular Christianity. Teachers in all contexts used strict means to encourage their disciples to do better. Their teaching was not supposed to be pleasant or enjoyable, but was to inflict a pain which would cure the soul of its ills. Even more so for Chrysostom, who, in the context of the liturgy and his theology, saw it as his primary purpose as preacher to inculcate in the members of his congregation a deep sorrow for their sin and a right reverence for God" (James Daniel Cook, *Preaching and Popular Christianity: Reading the Sermons of John Chrysostom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 199).

As we saw in Homily 1, one of Paul's main purposes for Chrysostom in writing to the Philippians was to exhort them to unity and humility. For Chrysostom, the first part of Phil. 2 is one place in which Paul calls the Philippians to unity (ὁμονοία), or, more accurately, to unity through humility. For Chrysostom, in Phil. 2:1-2 Paul is calling the Philippians to unity, and in Phil. 2:3 Chrysostom reads Paul's call for humility as the way to reach this unity. This provides the context for Phil. 2:5-11, in which Christ serves as a model of humility.

Chrysostom begins Homily 6 by pointing out that Paul begins Phil. 2 by making a plea for unity on the part of the Philippians. He says, "Please observe the kind of plea that blessed man is making to the Philippians about their own affairs. For what does he say when exhorting them about harmony, which is the cause of all good things?" (99/50). He then moves into his exegesis of the verses. Chrysostom interprets Phil. 2:1 as Paul asking the Philippians to encourage him through their actions, to show him love, affection, and sympathy. Holloway says that Chrysostom adds the μοί to the seemingly impersonal "εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ…" because he recognizes the ongoing "conceit that Paul is not just urging the Philippians to follow his advice but to do so *in order to console him* [sic]."[162] Chrysostom says that this is the "kind of argument we use when we are asking for something that we prefer above all else" (99/50). Paraphrasing the passage, he says, "'If it's possible,' he [Paul] says, 'to find encouragement from you, if it's possible to obtain any consolation from your love, if it's possible for you to participate in the Spirit [εἰ ἔστι κοινωνῆσαι ὑμῖν ἐν πνεύματι], if it's possible for you to participate in the Lord [εἰ ἔστι κοινωνῆσαι ὑμῖν ἐν κυρίῳ], if it's possible to be pitied and commiserated by you, show the recompense for all that in love. I have found all of this, if you love one another. Complete my joy'" (101/51). The rest of verse 2 is Paul expressing how the Philippians can complete his joy. Chrysostom, starting in the voice of the Philippians, says, "'Tell me what you

[162] Paul Holloway, *Philippians: A Commentary*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017, p. 76.

want. For us to release you from dangers? To provide you with something?' 'None of that,' he [Paul] says, 'no - that you may be of the same mind, having the same love, in which you began, of full accord, of one mind [Phil. 2:2]'" (101/51). Hall notes that, according to Chrysostom, Paul says to complete his joy rather than give him joy because "Paul wants to avoid the appearance of scolding them for failing 'in their duty,' thus showing a pastoral sensitivity Chrysostom often applauds in Paul."[163] Chrysostom then elaborates on what it means to be in full accord and of one mind, "That means housing in everybody's body a single soul, not in essence - that's impossible - but by means of choice and determination [τῇ προαιρέσει καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ]; let everything happen as from one soul" (101/52).

For Chrysostom, verse 3 then explains how the Philippians are supposed to achieve the harmony that Paul sought for them. He says, "'Do nothing from selfishness or conceit' [Phil. 2:3]. About this I say always that it is the cause of all evils. From there come battles and quarrels, from there come jealousies and instances of envy, from there comes the chilling of love, when we fall in love with human glory" (101/52). It is necessary for the Philippians not to seek glory but act in humility. About this, Chrysostom says, "'But in humility' he says, 'count others better than yourselves' [Phil. 2:3]. Wonderful! How did he expound a teaching full of philosophy, a device for our total salvation?" (Βαβαὶ, πῶς δόγμα φιλοσοφίας γέμον, καὶ πάσης ἡμῶν τῆς σωτηρίας συγκρότημα ἐξέθετο) (101/52).

Chrysostom then elaborates on two benefits of humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη). The first is that it allows man to treat his fellow man out of love, even when the fellow man acts out of cruelty. He says, "So think of them as not simply better than you are but superior… and you won't be puzzled when you see them honored, nor will you be irritated; even if they insult you,

[163] Christopher Hall, "Chrysostom," *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, p. 331. Hall also gives Chrysostom's interpretation of Phil. 2:2 as an example in which "Chrysostom delights in plumbing the pastoral implications of Paul's rhetorical strategies" (p. 331).

you'll bear it nobly, for you have thought them better than you are" (103/52). The second benefit of humility is that it allows man to relate to God with gratitude. Without humility, man is not only ungrateful to God but puffed up (ἐπαιρόμενος). He says, "Why are you thinking grand thoughts against your fellow human beings? Don't you share the same nature… Haven't you been equally honored by God? No, you're smart [σοφός], are you? You should give thanks, not get puffed up… For the one who is puffed up is puffed up as if they themselves have succeeded, whereas the one who reckons that they have succeeded is ungrateful to the one who has given them the honor. Is there anything good in you? Give thanks to your donor" (103-105/53-54). Both these benefits of humility, presumably, also help with unity.

For some unknown reason, Chrysostom does not actually give his interpretation of verse 4. Perhaps he forgot or maybe he considered it unnecessary for the purpose of the homily. Instead, he skips over the verse and moves into the paraenetic section of the homily. In his exhortation, Chrysostom gives examples of humility from scripture. He gives the examples of Joseph, Daniel, Paul, and the rest of the apostles in Acts as those who attribute their wisdom and accomplishments to God. About the apostles specifically, Chrysostom says, "But if in that manner they shook off the honor paid them, men who effected greater things than Christ through the humility of Christ and through his power… how aren't we miserable and wretched who can't even brush away gnats, let alone demons? Who can't even save one human, let alone the whole world, and give ourselves more airs than even the devil himself does?" (107/55). The examples are, of course, meant to inspire his congregation to humility, or at least gnaw away at their pridefulness. He then moves on to the virtues of free speech (παρρησία) and courage (ἀνδρεία). He gives the examples of John the Baptist, Elijah, and, again, Paul as those who speak freely and bravely to the political authorities, "daring in the face of danger and death and disregard[ing]

both friendships and enmities for the sake of what pleases God" (111/57). In emphasizing the dangers that biblical characters faced within their stories, Stenger says, "Chrysostom shaped the engagement with Scripture as a dramatic scene, a face-to-face encounter with Christ, the angels, the prophets and the apostles, to the extent that the parishioners could fancy themselves as part of the narrative. Evidently, the re-presentation of the biblical stories was intended to increase their appeal to the late-antique Christian."[164] In regard to the aforementioned examples of virtue, Chrysostom says, "If we know about these deeds, we are blessed if we perform them [μακάριοί ἐσμεν, ἐὰν ποιῶμεν αὐτά]. I mean that knowing isn't enough… I should say that knowledge itself condemns when it occurs without action and virtuous deeds. So in order to avoid judgment, let us seek out action in order to attain the good things that have been promised" (111/57).

Phil. 2:5-8 - Homily 7

As we saw in Homily 6, Chrysostom interprets Phil. 2:3 as Paul calling the Philippians to humility. Chrysostom then follows this in his paraenesis by using examples from scripture to exhort his own congregation to humility. Likewise, for Chrysostom, the 'Christ-hymn' in Phil. 2:5-11, which follows closely after Phil. 2:3, serves the same purpose within Paul's own letter. It provides an example of humility for the Philippians in order to inspire them to this virtue and teach them how to live it out. While it is true that Chrysostom is no exception to the trend of reading into this passage the christological debates of his time, he interprets these verses primarily as Paul using Christ as an example of humility,[165] and his main christological points are

[164] Jan R. Stenger, "Text Worlds and Imagination in Chrysostom's Pedagogy," *Revisioning John Chrysostom: New Approaches, New Perspectives*, ed. Chris De Wet & Wendy Mayer, Boston: Brill, 2019. p. 241.

[165] Many modern scholars recognize the paraenetic and mimetic intention of the 'Christ-hymn,' emphasizing in various degrees Christ's humility, obedience, and *kenosis* as things to be imitated. For example, Osiek says, "While the passage is frequently mined for its christological treasure, that is probably not why Paul chose to put it in the letter. Its entire context is parenetic, not doctrinal. It is part of the long central section of the letter from 1:27 to 2:18 in which Paul exhorts the Philippians to unity through humility and submission" (Carolyn Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000, p. 55). See also Witherington, who says that the "Christ-hymn serves

based on the way that Paul uses this passage rhetorically - as an example of humility for the Philippians to follow.

Chrysostom starts Homily 7 by pointing out that just as in the gospels, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, while exhorting his disciples to great deeds makes an example [ὑπόδειγμα] of himself" (113/57-58). He then says, "Blessed Paul did this too - by exhorting them to humility, he brought Christ to the fore"[166] (Τοῦτο καὶ ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος ἐποίησε· προτρέπων αὐτοὺς εἰς ταπεινοφροσύνην, τὸν Χριστὸν εἰς μέσον παρήγαγε) (113/58). Christ is also the greatest, most effective example to use because of his divinity, for human beings can become conformed to his divinity by performing the same works as Christ did. Chrysostom says, "You see, nothing so rouses the great soul [ψυχή] that loves wisdom to performing good works as understanding that through doing this it becomes like God [τῷ θεῷ… ὁμοιοῦται]. What is equal to this by way of exhortation? Nothing" (113/58).

It is only after this that Chrysostom wades into the christological debates around which these verses have centered. He shifts from talking about Christ's example of humility for a

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the ethical function of providing the audience with the best possible example of humble, self-sacrificial service and having a mindset like that of Christ (Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011, p. 243). Also, "Just as Paul is not asking the Philippians to give up their Roman citizenship and the identity which comes with that in order to truly be a citizen of the heavenly commonwealth, so he is not suggesting that Christ gave up his heavenly status in order to self-sacrificially serve others and even die for them. The Philippians are also to take on the mindset of Christ and so not view their social status and privileges as they have in the past, which should lead to different and more self-sacrificial behavior (p. 143). Eastman sees Christ as imitable because he recapitulates Adam as a stand-in for humanity. replacing disobedience with obedience (Susan Grove Eastman, "Imitating Christ Imitating Us: Paul's Educational Project in Philippians," *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hayes*, ed. J. Ross Wagner et al., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, p. 429-30). See also, Gerald Hawthorne, "The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians," *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Richard Longnecker, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, p. 168-9; Larry Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example in Phil 2:5–11," *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare*, ed. Peter Richardson and John Hurd, Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1984, p. 126.

[166] It is worth mentioning that, unlike in modern scholarship (see, for example, Morna Hooker, "Philippians," *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 111), it never occurs to Chrysostom that this passage might not be Paul's own poetic creation but a preexisting hymn or creed, perhaps used in liturgical settings.

moment to discuss a number of heresies and heretics that he names by name.[167] He says that these verses disprove all of these heresies, saying, "through these words the Spirit has slain the followers of… in a word, all heresies" (115/58). He makes a brief argument for a proto-Chalcedonian christology based on the meaning of the word μορφή (form), saying, "Now tell me, what's the meaning of 'he took the form of a servant' [Phil. 2:7]? It means that he became a human being [ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο]. Therefore, being in the form of God [Phil. 2:6], he was God [θεὸς ἦν]… The form of a servant means a human being by nature [φύσει]; therefore the form of God means God by nature [φύσει]" (119/60).

As for the equality between the Father and Son, Chrysostom makes an argument peculiar to him. It is this christological argument that he spends more time on, and he also repeats it in the following homily, so it appears to have some importance for him. To Chrysostom, Paul is using Christ as an example of humility to exhort the Philippians to count others as superior to them (τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν) (Phil. 2:3); therefore, if Christ humbled himself (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν) (Phil. 2:8), he must have condescended from a higher position in taking on human nature. Therefore, when Paul says that Christ did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped (οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ) (Phil. 2:6), to Chrysostom, Paul is saying that Christ condescended from a position of equality with God.[168]

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[167] His list contains the names of Arius, Paul of Samosata, Marcellus, Sabellius, Marcion, Valentinus, Mani, Apollinaris, Photinus, Sophronius (Allen, p. 115). About the factions that Chrysostom would have been competing with during his lifetime, Mayer and Allen note, "As a young man he grew up in Antioch in a church that was divided between at least three factions, including homoian Christians and two schismatic Nicene communities. For a brief period around 375, the city also boasted a fourth bishop, an Apollinarian. John himself was appointed lector in one of the two schismatic factions – the one that was led by bishop Meletius – at a time when homoian, rather than Nicene Christianity was in favour... [In Constantinople] the homoians, who had dominated the city until the accession of Theodosius, still exerted a degree of influence over the populace. Similarly, some of the early monastic communities there had heterodox leanings. In a sermon attacking the Anomoeans, the most radical of the homoian parties, John himself indicates that the Nicene Christians of Constantinople are in the minority" (Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, "John Chrysostom," *The Early Christian World*, 2nd edition, ed. Philip Francis Esler, New York: Routledge, 2017, p. 1064-5).

[168] Modern scholars would go so far as to say that this passage argues for Christ's divinity; however, Hoover does argue that ἁρπαγμὸς, when used with ἡγήσατο, makes an "idiomatic expression [which] refers to something already present and at one's disposal" (R. W. Hoover, "The Harpagmos Enigma: A Philological Solution," *Harvard*

Chrysostom says, "[L]et me ask this: what does Paul wish to achieve by this example? To urge the Philippians completely to humility. So tell me, why did he bring this to the fore?" (τί βούλεται κατασκευάσαι ὁ Παῦλος διὰ τούτου τοῦ ὑποδείγματος; Εἰς ταπεινοφροσύνην πάντως ἐναγαγεῖν τοὺς Φιλιππησίους. Τί οὖν, εἰπέ μοι, τοῦτο παρήνεγκεν εἰς μέσον;) (121/61). The heretics, both those that deny Christ's divinity and those that deny his humanity, cannot properly answer this question because they cannot say that Christ is acting humbly here. If Christ was not divine, he would not have been humble by not grasping equality with God because it would never have been an option for him, for he would have already necessarily been lower according to his nature. If Christ did not become a human, he would not have condescended in any way. Chrysostom asserts against them, "What's humility [ταπεινοφροσύνη], then? Thinking humble thoughts. It's not the person who is humble out of necessity who thinks humble thoughts but the person who humbles himself" (ταπεινὰ δὲ φρονεῖ, οὐχ ὁ ἀπὸ ἀνάγκης ὢν ταπεινὸς, ἀλλ' ὁ ἑαυτὸν ταπεινῶν) (121/62).

Chrysostom then elaborates on how the example of Christ's humility applies to the Christian life among the Philippians. He says, "[S]ee what Paul says after the example: 'in humility count [ἡγούμενοι] others better than yourselves' [Phil. 2:3]. 'Count,' he says. Since you are one in substance as well as in honor in God's sight [κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἕν ἐστε, καὶ κατὰ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ], from now on there must be the question of estimation. He wouldn't have said this, 'counting,' about greater and inferior people… There subordination [ἡ ὑποταγή] is the result of the nature of the case [τῆς φύσεως τοῦ πράγματός]; here it ought to result from our judgement [ἐνταῦθα τῆς κρίσεως δεῖ γενέσθαι τῆς ἡμετέρας]" (125/63-64). This means that humility must be the result of counting or considering oneself as inferior to others. If the

Theological Review, vol. 64, no. 1 (1971), p. 118). This means that Christ already had some privilege or status that was equal in some way to God's and that he was not trying to grasp something that was not already his.

inferiority is by nature, it is not humility. Even though the Philippians are equal in regard to their nature and in the sight of God, to be humble they must then count others as greater than themselves, not counting equality as something to be grasped. This ties in well with Leyerle's contention that, likewise, counting oneself as greater than others, or at least seeking to be counted as such, is one of the greatest sins to Chrysostom. Leyerle writes, "Clearly against common opinion, Chrysostom insists that being enslaved to reputation made one no less guilty before God than indulging in illicit sexual behaviors. Of all the passions, vainglory was the hardest to eradicate, as it tended to attach itself to virtuous behavior. Any concern for the good opinion of others or a brief flash of self-satisfaction could rob even the most spiritually advanced of all reward for fasting, prayer, and almsgiving."[169]

One might expect Chrysotom' exhortation to his audience to be on humility, but that is the topic of the next homily's exhortation. Instead, likely drawing his audience's minds back to his discussion on heresies, Chrysostom warms against falling into heresy and being snatched away by the devil.

Phil. 2:5-11 - Homily 8

Chrysotom continues his analysis of the 'Christ-hymn' in Homily 8. There is considerable overlap between homilies 7 and 8, both in verses covered and in content. Homily 7 covers verses 5 through 8, and so does Homily 8, while also giving comment on verses 9 through 11. He begins this homily by making reference to the previous one, saying, "I have stated the heretics' views to you. Note that now it's fitting to state our views [τὰ ἡμέτερα] as well" (141/72).

[169] Blake Leyerle, *Theatrical shows and ascetic lives: John Chrysostom's attack on spiritual marriage*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, p. 48-9.

Chrysostom then recapitulates his argument that verse 5 testifies to the equality of the Father and Son because that is the only way to make sense of Paul using Christ as an example of humility. He says, "Paul said that Christ emptied himself [ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (Phil. 2:7)], because if Christ had been subordinate [ὑπετάγη], it wasn't a question of humility [ταπεινοφροσύνης… τὸ πρᾶγμα] if he hadn't chosen this of his own accord [εἰ μὴ οἴκοθεν τοῦτο εἵλετο], if it didn't come from himself" (145/74). Chrysostom then expands on what it means for Christ to not grasp equality with God, to humble himself, and to take on the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6-8). He explains that Christ was not afraid to humble himself because of who he was by nature. He says,

> So what is Paul saying? That the Son of God didn't fear to step down from his rank [ἀξίωμα], for he didn't count the Godhead a thing to be grasped [οὐ γὰρ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὴν θεότητα]; he wasn't afraid that someone would take his nature [φύσιν] or his rank away from him. That's why he relinquished his rank, confident that he would regain it, and he hid it, reckoning that he became in no way inferior as a result… He ruled not because he'd seized power but because it was natural rule, not conferred on him, but safe and stable. That's why he didn't refuse to assume the form [σχῆμα] of an inferior (143/73).

This means that when Christ took on humanity, he did not become inferior in nature, maintaining his divinity, but he relinquished his ἀξίωμα and took on an inferior σχῆμα. Allen translates both σχῆμα and μορφή as "form", but to Chrysostom there is an important distinction between these terms. Christ is both divine and human in μορφή, but he abandoned a superior σχῆμα for an inferior one.

Chrysostom moves one to discuss certain heretical positions, sometimes repeating but sometimes elaborating on things said in Homily 7. He repeats his arguments for the divinity and humanity of Christ based on the term μορφή. He says, "So what do they [the heretics] claim? Let's repeat the arguments again: 'to be a human in form is not to be a human by nature, and both

to be like a human and in the likeness of a human are not to be a human' [τὸ σχήματι, οὐκ ἔστι φύσει, καὶ τὸ ὡς ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, καὶ τὸ ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπου εἶναι, οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτο ἄνθρωπον εἶναι]. Accordingly, to take the form of a servant is not taking the form of a servant. Surely there's a contradiction here" (145/74). He also addresses other textual arguments that heretics have made. For example, he addresses the Arian argument that Christ took on the form of a servant when he washed his disciples feet. In response, Chrysostom differentiates between the task of a servant [ἔργον δούλου] and the form of a servant [μορφή δούλου] (147/75), between activity and nature. He also says, against the Arian claim, "For someone who is God to become a human is a huge act of humility, unutterable, indescribable, but what sort of humility is it for someone who is human to perform human acts?" (147/76).

After this, we see more of Chrysostom's christological reflection on this passage. He goes on to explain how Christ remained divine while also taking on human flesh, saying,

> Whereas we are soul and body, he was God and soul and body. That's why he says, 'in the likeness' [ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος (Phil. 2:7)]. Lest on hearing 'he emptied himself' you think of some transformation and change and destruction [μεταβολὴν… καὶ μετάπτωσιν καὶ ἀφανισμόν τινα], Paul says that, remaining what he was, Christ took on what he wasn't and, when he became flesh, remained God the Word [μένων… ὃ ἦν, ἔλαβεν ὃ οὐκ ἦν, καὶ σὰρξ γενόμενος ἔμενε θεὸς λόγος ὤν]. To show that in this respect he was like a human, Paul for this reason says also, 'and in the form' [καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος (Phil. 2:8)]. It isn't that the nature was transferred, or that some mingling occurred - no, he was born in [human] form [ἀλλὰ σχήματι ἐγένετο] (149/76-77).

Though, he also says, perhaps not in line with what would become orthodoxy, "Paul put it well, 'as a human' [ὡς ἄνθρωπος], for he wasn't one of many but was *like* one of many [οὐ γὰρ ἦν εἷς τῶν πολλῶν, ἀλλ' ὡς εἷς τῶν πολλῶν]. God the Word didn't change into a human, nor was his

essence transformed, but he appeared as a human, not deluding us by his appearance but teaching us humility [Οὐ γὰρ εἰς ἄνθρωπον μετέπεσεν ὁ θεὸς λόγος, οὐδὲ οὐσία μετεβλήθη, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐφάνη, οὐ φαντασιοκοπῶν ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ παιδεύων εἰς ταπεινοφροσύνην]. Therefore, when Paul says, 'as a human,' this is what he means, since also in other passages he calls Christ a human"[170] (149/77). Here, Chrysotom seems to suggest that Christ was not simply a human, at least not in his ὁμοιώματα and σχήματα. He was not one out of the many, but a special being who appeared *like* a human in his likeness, form, or shape. It is possible that he does this in order to save the Word of God from the charge of mutability. Lawrenz says that, when it comes to condescension, "God uses the trappings of history and of the material world to reveal himself and his intentions, but behind it all is a divine nature oblivious to passion and mutability."[171] At the same time, both in this homily and the previous one, Chrysostom is insistent that we can say that Christ had a human nature. Perhaps Chrysostom sees no difficulty in holding to both statements - that Christ has a human nature but that he was only *like* a human in appearance, not being in the same class as every other human because he also contained within himself the divine nature. Clearly, as Young and Teal note about Chrysostom's christological language, "Chrysostom is already, though perhaps rather naïvely, wrestling at a practical and exegetical level with the theological difficulties which became central in the ensuing controversies. He is also struggling with the terminology."[172] Whatever Chrysostom's intended christological meaning, Christ's purpose as a teacher of humility is significant to emphasize here because to Chrysostom, as Naidu says, "Central to the Scripture is the account of God's economic plan of

[170] Emphasis mine.
[171] Melvin Lawrenz, *The Christology of John Chrysostom*, Lewiston: Mellon University Press, 1996, p. 138.
[172] Frances Young and Andrew Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: a guide to the literature and its background*, 2nd edition, London: SCM Press, 2010, p. 214.

redemption in Christ. Divine condescension in the incarnation was viewed as a paradigm for divine pedagogy. God conformed to human limitations in order to communicate his message."[173]

Continuing on about humility, Chrysostom interprets the rest of Phil. 2:8, about Jesus being obedient to the point of death on a cross, as the extent to which Christ goes in his humility. Chrysostom says, "The sublimity that he possessed was counterbalanced by the humility he underwent. Just as he is greater than everyone and nobody is his equal, so too did he surpass everybody by honoring the Father [Ὥσπερ πάντων ἐστὶ μείζων, καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ ἴσος, οὕτω καὶ τῇ περὶ τὸν πατέρα τιμῇ πάντας ἐνίκησεν], not because he was compelled to or was unwilling - no, this too was a mark of his virtue [καὶ τοῦτο τῆς ἀρετῆς αὐτοῦ]… Wonderful! It's great and exceedingly ineffable to become a servant, but to undergo death is much more so again" (151/78). He explains that, in suffering death, Christ "honored his Father, not so that you should dishonor him, but so that you should honor him more, so that you should learn from this too that he is the legitimate Son, because he honored the Father more than all" (151/79). This means that his manner of death - crucifixion - which was supposed to be the greatest dishonor, actually served to greatly honor the Father, and this is why his death was so virtuous.

For Chrysostom, Christ's exaltation (Phil. 2:9-11) means that one can speak freely about Christ's humility because, as opposed to dishonoring Christ by mentioning his lowliness and humiliation, it instead speaks to his glory, as none of the insults or abuses were able to take it away. He says, "Since he [Paul] has said that Christ became a human, he subsequently makes comments about humility fearlessly, feeling secure that speaking about humility will cause the Godhead no harm, because Christ's flesh had accepted these" (153/79). Chrysostom also interprets Phil. 2:9-11 as an argument against the heretics, as the exaltation described can only refer to the Word made flesh, for if it applied to the Son in his preexistent glory, it would mean

[173] Ashish Naidu, *Transformed in Christ: Christology and the Christian Life in John Chrysostom*, p. 70.

that the Son in this state was imperfect, lacking what the Father only gave him after the resurrection. He says, "Let's say against the heretics that if these statements were made about a person who was not made flesh, if they were made about God the Word, how did God exalt him? Was it as if he gave him something extra? Then Christ would have been imperfect in that respect and would have become perfect for our sake. For if he hadn't shown kindness to us, he wouldn't have received honor" (153-155/79).

To conclude his homily, Chrysostom exhorts his audience to humble themselves and to therefore glorify God, just as Christ did. He says, "Christ obeyed to the very last [ὑπήκουσε τὴν ἐσχάτην ὑπακοὴν]; on this account he brought honor to heaven [ἔλαβε τὴν ἄνω τιμήν]. He became a servant; on this account he is the master of all, of both angels and all other creatures. The result is that we too shouldn't think we're stepping down from our rank when we humble ourselves. For then rather we are exalted, and with reason" (157/81). This is an important point for Chrysotom, as Lawrenz explains, because when it comes to Chrysostom and humility, "The way of salvation is not relegated merely to the realm of moral accomplishment here, but there is a clear link. Salvation is fully accomplished when the necessary condescension of the incarnation produces in the Christian an analogous personal condescension - humility in moral terms."[174] He continues, "Of all the virtues, humility is the one Chrysostom most frequently highlights. The core of the moral problem of the human race is pride, and the overwhelming humility of Christ continually demonstrates the meaning of righteousness."[175] If this is correct, then all of Chrysostom's exhortations to humility and the way in which he uses Christ as a model to encourage humility and to teach his congregation what this virtue looks like are not simply done out of ethical concerns, but they also have soteriological connotations.

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[174] Lawrenz, *The Christology of John Chrysostom*, p. 149.
[175] Ibid.

Phil. 2:12-18 - Homily 9

In this homily, Chrysostom focuses on Paul's admonishments and exhortations for the Philippians, specifically about living with the fear of God and not grumbling. However, there is still some mimetic application in his scriptural interpretation. He first says that Paul is telling the Philippians to imitate their past obedience. He also later on presents Job to his congregation as an example of someone who suffers virtuously without grumbling.

Chrysostom starts off by noting Paul's praise for the Philippians. He says, "Admonitions [τας παραινέσεις] should be tempered with praise. In this way admonitions are easily received… 'Therefore, my dearly beloved' [Phil. 2:12], he says. He [Paul] didn't say simply 'obey' but praised them first with the words 'as you have always obeyed' [Phil. 2:12]. That means 'please imitate [μιμεῖσθαι] not others but yourselves'" (169/86-87). Chrysostom then moves on to talk about the fear of God, the kind of fear that Paul had within himself, and how it is a prerequisite for virtuous conduct. He says, "What do you want, Paul? Tell me. 'Not for you to listen to me but with fear and trembling to work out your salvation [Phil. 2:12]. It's not possible for the person who lives without fear to display something authentic and wonderful.' And he said not simply 'fear' but 'and trembling,' which is an intense manifestation of fear. That's the fear that Paul had" (169/87). He continues, "If we imagine that God is present everywhere, hears everything, sees everything, not only what's being done and said, but also everything in our hearts and in the depths of our minds… we'll do nothing wrong, say nothing wrong, imagine nothing wrong" (171/87).

When Paul tells the Philippians that God works in them as they work out their salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13), Chrysostom reads it as an encouragement as well as an

exhortation to be bold and resolute. To him, these verses mean, "For your part, be bold, 'for it's God who is at work in you' [Phil. 2:13]. Therefore, if he's at work, we have continually to proffer a disciplined resolve, tight, indissoluble" (171/88). Chrysostom also says, "If you are willing, at that moment he'll be at work for you to will. Don't be afraid, and don't strain over anything; he'll give us both readiness and practice. You see, when we are willing, from that point he'll increase our will [Ὅταν γὰρ θελήσωμεν, αὔξει τὸ θέλειν ἡμῶν λοιπόν]"[176] (173/89). Chrysostom is careful to preserve free will because, according to Hall, it has soteriological relevance, for he says that "in Chrysostom's comments on other Pauline Epistles, it is the προαίρεσις rather than οὐσία (human nature itself) that determines our ultimate destiny… To be free to choose is to be fully human. If so, Chrysostom's insistence that human judgment and the underlying disposition that influences judgment must be trained to view and respond to life in a healthy and life-promoting manner… takes on greater coherence."[177]

Chrysostom moves on to what he sees as Paul's admonition against grumbling. He interprets Phil. 2:14-15 primarily in terms of grumbling. On the severity of grumbling, he says, "Grumbling [ὁ γογγυσμός] is a terrible, terrible thing - it's close to blasphemy… It's a question of ingratitude [ἀχαριστία]. The grumbler is ungrateful to God; the person who's ungrateful to God is then a blasphemer" (177/91). If the Philippians do not grumble, they become blameless

[176] Witherington, in his commentary on the letter, says that Chrysostom is right to emphatically preserve free will here. He says, "Chrysostom is absolutely right that God's willing does not replace or supplant our voluntary willing but enables and increases our willing, power, and freedom to do what God requires" (Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011, p. 161). In his analysis, "The grammar here in v. 13 indicates that the exhortation to work out their salvation is not mere idealism but rather viable '*because* [sic] God is working in their midst to will and to do.' Were God and his grace not constantly working in the believing community in a powerful way, believers would not be able to obey this command of Paul's. 'God' is in the emphatic position in this clause to emphasize who it is that is enabling compliance with this imperative" (p. 161).

[177] Christopher Hall, "John Chrysostom," *Reading Romans Through the Centuries: From the Early Church to Karl Barth*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larsen, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005, p. 50.

and innocent (Phil. 2:15), "that is, irreproachable, sincere, for grumbling brings on a defilement that's not insignificant" (175/90).

Chrysostom also notes how friendly Paul is treating the Philippians. Paul is not rebuking them because they sinned, but "in this passage, he's giving an admonishment to prevent it from happening" (ἐνταῦθα δὲ, ὥστε μὴ γενέσθαι, παραινεῖ) (175/90). He also says, "You see, in the matter of good things the prudent and noble person is urged on by the example of those who live correctly [Ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ὁ μὲν εὐγνώμων καὶ εὐγενὴς ἀπὸ τῶν κατορθούντων ἐνάγεται], the imprudent person by the example of those who don't live correctly: the one by the example of honor, the other by the example of punishment" (175/90). The Philippians, here, do not need to be urged on by fear of punishment, but they will be motivated to honor both Paul and God in their actions.

Chrysostom exhorts his audience not to grumble with the example of Job. He says, after discussing the events that happened to Job, "Do you see how each of us goes numb on hearing these events?… But nonetheless the just man suffered them, not for two or three days but for a long time, and he didn't sin, not even with his lips" (179/92). Making more explicit the power of this example, Chrysostom also says, "If we turned these words over in our minds constantly, if we counted upon them, nothing in the present would hurt us, if we look at that athlete, at that steely soul, at the unbreakable mind of bronze. I mean, just like a body clad in bronze or stone, he bore everything nobly and patiently" (181/94).

Normally, Chrysostom would conclude the homily after this paraenesis. Here, however, he returns to his analysis of the text. Concerning verse 16, Chrysostom says, "What's the meaning of 'holding fast to the word of life' [Phil. 2:16]? It means that they're going to live because they are among the saved [Τουτέστι, μέλλοντες ζήσεσθαι, τῶν σωζομένων ὄντες]… You

have the seed of life, you have a guarantee of life, you hold fast to life itself [αὐτὴν κατέχοντες τὴν ζωὴν]" (183/94). If the Philippians hold fast in this way, Paul can share in the benefit of their conduct and be proud, even if he were to die as a sacrifice for them (Phil. 2:16-17). Chrysostom says, "'So I may be proud,' he [Paul] says. 'I too share,' he says, 'in your benefits. Your virtue is so great that it doesn't only save you, but it also makes me illustrious [Τοσαύτη ὑμῶν ἡ ἀρετὴ, ὡς μὴ ὑμᾶς σώζειν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμὲ λαμπρὸν ποιεῖν]'" (183/94). It is for this reason that the Philippians should be glad and rejoice with Paul (Phil. 2:17-18), even if he were to die for them, as his virtuous sacrificial death would be a great benefit to him. Chrysostom says, paraphrasing Paul, "'I'm glad because I'm going to become a libation; I rejoice with you because I'm offering a sacrifice. Likewise you should be glad and rejoice with me [Phil. 2:18] because I'm being sacrificed. Rejoice with me as I rejoice on my own account'" (185/95).

From this passage, Chrysostom gives a short exhortation to his audience to not lament for just men when they die for "the just person departs receiving a reward for their labors" (185/96).

Phil. 2:19-30 - Homily 10

In Homily 10, we see that Chrysostom takes great interest in the historical and logistical details of Paul's ministry, and he draws out lessons from these verses. Paul, in sending Timothy, wants to be cheered at the news that the Philippians are rejoicing with Paul in his suffering. Chrysostom also interprets Paul's praise for Timothy as Paul holding Timothy up as an example of someone who is prepared for every labor and seeks after the interests not of himself but of Christ. Moreover, to Chrysostom, Paul's praise for Epaphroditus, in calling him a fellow soldier, is meant to show the danger Epaphroditus risked in giving service to Paul while he was imprisoned. Paul wants the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus back with honor, and in doing

so, the Philippians would be participating (having κοινωνία) in the service that Epaphroditus courageously rendered to Paul.

Chrysostom reasons that Paul is sending Timothy to the Philippians (Phil. 2:19) to find out and report back news of them to Paul. What is this news that is supposed to make Paul be in good spirits (Phil. 2:19)? To Chrysostom, it is the fact that the Philippians are comforted by the news of Paul's suffering for them. Previously in the letter, Paul had consoled the Philippians about his chains and tried to have them see his detainment as a good thing. Now, it would please Paul if they saw these things the way he did, so that they would follow him in his suffering. Chrysostom says, "'Just as I revived you,' he [Paul] says, 'when you heard what you'd prayed for about me, namely that the gospel has advanced, that [the heretics] have been put to shame, that what they reckoned to harm me with became a source of joy. So I wish to learn your news too, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.' In this passage he shows that they had to be glad about his chains and to follow in them"[178] (Δεικνύει ἐνταῦθα ὅτι ἐκείνους χαίρειν ἔδει ἐπὶ τοῖς δεσμοῖς, καὶ τούτοις κατακολουθεῖν) (187/97).

Of course, Chrysostom is sure to take note of Paul's praise for Timothy (Phil. 2:20-22), and, to Chrysostom, Timothy is praiseworthy because of his similarity to Paul. Chrysostom says, "'Nobody like him' [Phil. 2:20] means 'nobody who is concerned and anxious about you in the same way as I am… The one who loves you as I do is Timothy'… Surely this is the sign of being like him - loving those who had become disciples in the same way as Paul loved them [Ἆρα τοῦτο ἰσοψύχου ἐστὶ, τὸ τοὺς μαθητευομένους αὐτῷ ὁμοίως φιλεῖν]… that is, like a father" (189/98). About the others who look after only their own interests (Phil. 2:21), Chrysostom says, "But why on earth does [Paul] make these bitter laments? To teach us, his hearers, not to fall into the same ways, to teach his hearers not to seek respite. You see, the one who seeks respite seeks

[178] Allen has 'imitate them,' but I'd rather keep the term 'imitate' as a translation of only the verb μιμεῖσθαι.

not Christ's business but his own. You see, it's necessary to be prepared for every labor, for every suffering" (Δεῖ γὰρ παρεσκευάσθαι πρὸς πάντα πόνον, πρὸς πᾶσαν ταλαιπωρίαν) (189/98), just as Timothy is.

Concerning Epaphroditus, Chrysostom interprets the titles that Paul gives him (Phil. 2:25) as titles that deserve praise and honor, especially the term "fellow soldier." Chrysostom says,

> Saying that he was a 'brother' and a 'fellow worker,' and not just leaving it at that, but also a 'fellow soldier,' is a sign that Paul is showing that Epaphroditus participated to a large extent in his dangers and that Paul is testifying to the same qualities in Epaphroditus that he himself possessed. The expression 'fellow soldier' carries more weight than the expression 'fellow worker.' For it may have been that Epaphroditus had worked with Paul in purely business matters, but not yet in conflict and times of danger. By saying 'fellow soldier' he makes this point clear (191/99).

About Epaphroditus' illness (Phil. 2:26-27), Chrysostom says that Paul is making it clear that Epaphroditus still loves the Philippians and that his delayed return is not due to lack of care but because of grave illness. Chrysostom says, "Do you see how much trouble Paul took to eradicate suspicion that he [Epaphroditus] failed to go out of contempt for them?" (193/99-100).

When Paul says to the Philippians to receive and honor Epaphroditus with all joy (Phil. 2:29), Chrysostom says that the Philippians are to "receive him in a way fitting for the saints" (195/101). This is especially true for Epaphroditus because he risked his life to perform a service to Paul (Phil. 2:30). Chysostom says that Epaphroditus risked his life by serving Paul in prison and bringing money to him, which, to Chrysostom, is a task that incurred much danger. He says, "Therefore, it is likely that when Epaphroditus arrived in the city of Rome he found Paul in acute and serious danger… But Epaphroditus was a noble man, despising all danger, so that he went to

Paul and rendered service and did everything that was necessary" (195-197/102). Epaphroditus should be honored by the Philippians because of his bravery and because he represented them in his service to Paul. Chrysostom says, "Paul posits two reasons for making Epaphroditus venerable: firstly, 'the fact that he was in mortal danger,' he says, 'on my account'; secondly, the fact that he endured these sufferings while representing the city, which on that occasion of danger was counted a benefit by those who sent him, as if the city had sent an ambassador. The result is that the devoted reception he received, and the approval because of the events, is more a participation in what he dared to do [μᾶλλόν ἐστι κοινωνῆσαι τοῖς τετολμημένοις]" (197/102).

In his exhortation, Chrysostom exhorts his listeners to render service to the saints, just as Epaphroditus, and the Philippians through him, rendered service to Paul. He says, "Indeed, we owe it to the saints, and we are bestowing nothing on them. Just as those who are stationed in a camp and are fighting are owed supplies by those who live in peace and aren't fighting (for the latter are stationed there for the sake of the former), so too it is in this case" (197/103). Leyerle says that the strenuous position of the clergy in relation to rich donors was a concern to Chrysostom. She writes that Chrysostom was aware that the "clergy's position, however, was most delicate; they were aware of their need for the wealthy. Chrysostom knew of some clerics who, when they had been unable to find adequate patronage, had gone into business and 'made a shipwreck of their faith.' The livelihood of clerics lay in the gifts of their wealthy congregants."[179] However, he also did not want rich donors to regard themselves as patrons of the clergy and control church affairs, such as how the money was spent and who held clerical positions.[180] Chrysostom also dedicates a considerable amount of time defending clergy who do

[179] Blake Leyerle, "John Chrysostom on Almsgiving and the Use of Money," *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 87, no. 1 (1994), p. 45.

[180] About this, Leyerle writes, "The rich also wanted to control how the money they donated to the church was spent - a demand which seemed to them, of course, quite reasonable. Worst of all, according to Chrysostom, they asserted a right to appoint and dismiss clerics. Indeed, they made their claim to patronal status only too plain by expecting

not live in poverty and have some, but not too many, possessions. "You see, those commands [of poverty] were temporary and not permanent"[181] (207/108), Chrysostom says.

Chrysostom's Interpretation of Phil. 3

Phil. 3:1-7 - Homily 11

Chrysostom's interpretation of Phil. 3 is important for our purposes because out of all the homilies on Philippians, these homilies give the most discussions on the soteriological aspects of Chrysostom's thought. First, however, in Homily 11, we see why circumcision and other Judaic rites and customs are not part of his soteriology. Namely, they were a τύπος that looked forward to the coming of truth in fullness in Christ. Because this truth has arrived and people can now worship God in the spirit of God (Phil. 3:3), the customs of the Jews are no longer appropriate to practice. Because, for Chrysostom, the time within salvation history to practice these customs has passed, these customs and those who enjoin them deserve harsh criticism.

To start, Holloway says that Chrysostom "interprets the τὸ λοιπόν ('Lastly') of 3:1 as introducing the last of the letter's consolatory arguments."[182] When Paul says to the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3:1), Chrysostom uses this to review the letter's consolary arguments,[183] saying that the Philippians "have no excuse for further despondency… You have

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their bishop to number among their daily clients. Of this, Chrysostom wanted no part. To the contrary, the rich were to recognize their subordination to the clergy." Ibid.

[181] While often exhorting his congregation to give to clergy, the use of church finances was a major concern of Chrysostom during his time as bishop. Liebeschuetz notes, "Chrysostom had overhauled the finances of the church of Constantinople in a way that was resented. He personally intervened regularly in the way the funds of the church were spent. He checked the extent to which clergy kept the offerings of the faithful… He certainly cut expenditure in the bishop's household, and transferred the money saved to the upkeep of a hospital… He abolished episcopal banquets, which had provided perquisites for the church's stewards. Chrysostom gave very high priority to helping the poor. He refused to use marble which his predecessors had bought for the decoration of St Apostles, and sold it. He also sold many valuable items from the treasury of the church" (J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, "Friends and Enemies of John Chrysostom," *Maistor: classical, Byzantine, and Renaissance studies for Robert Browning*, ed. Robert Browning & Ann Moffatt, Leiden: Brill, 2017, p. 89.

[182] Holloway, *Philippians: A Commentary*, p. 37.

[183] Ibid.

Epaphroditus, for whom you grieved [2:25-30]; you have Timothy [2:19-24]; I'm coming too [1:22-26]; the gospel is increasing [1:12-18]. What else don't you have? Rejoice!" (213/111).

Chrysostom then interprets Paul's warnings against the dogs, evil workers, and the mutilation (Phil. 3:2) as warnings against the Jews, "who in their wish to drag away many of the faithful were preaching both Christianity and Judaism, corrupting the gospel… since they were difficult to distinguish" (213-215/111-112). Paul calls circumcision mutilation (κατατομή) because "they don't do anything else but cut off the skin: when what happens isn't lawful, it's nothing else than a cutting of the flesh and a mutilation. It's either on that account or because they were trying to cut off the church" (217/113). Wilken argues that Chrysostom's criticism of the Jews, while following the harsh rhetorical conventions of *psogos*, are directed primarily at judaizing Christians, who "were a source of embarrassment and concern to Christian leaders."[184] Chrysotom's purpose was to distinguish Christianity from Judaism, which "continued to be a rival to Christianity throughout the fourth century."[185] Here, it seems that Chrysostom is interpreting Paul as dealing with similar issues.[186]

The Philippians are the true circumcision because "'if we have to look for circumcision,' he [Paul] says, 'you will find it among yourselves worshiping in the spirit of God' [Phil. 3:3] - that is, worshiping spiritually" (217/113). Chrysostom also calls fleshly circumcision a type (τύπος) that looked forward to true, spiritual circumcision, saying, "Indeed, as long as truth is coming, circumcision is called the type, but when truth came, it was not longer called that… 'But

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[184] Robert Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, p. xvii.
[185] Ibid., p. xvi-xvii.
[186] In Homily 1, Chrysostom also calls these Jews "Ιουδαίους προσχήματι Χριστιανισμοῦ" (Field, 3). That being said, in his *Adversus Judaeos* homilies, Chrysostom references this same verse in support of a kind of hyper supersessionism. He says, "Do you see how those who at first were children became dogs? Do you wish to find out how we, who at first were dogs, became children?" (John Chrysostom, *Discourses against Judaizing Christians*, Fathers of the Church v. 68, trans. Paul W. Harkins, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, p. 6 (hom. 1, II.2)).

no longer,' he [Paul] says, 'does circumcision take place in the body but in the heart'" (217/113-114).

When Paul says that he himself has reason for confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:4), he shows that he is not denouncing a custom he is unfamiliar with. Chrysostom says, "For if Paul came from the Gentiles and denounced circumcision (no, not circumcision itself but those who took part in it at the wrong time), it would have appeared that he was attacking it as a person who didn't have the noble birthright of Judaism, as someone who didn't know its solemnity, nor had he participated in it [οὐδε μετεσχηκὼς αὐτῶν]… no, he condemned it not through ignorance but through the greatest familiarity with it" (217-219/114). Paul then lists the reasons he would have to boast in the flesh. Chrysostom differentiates between the things Paul received from his birth, which are "the result of necessity, not of choice" (219/114), namely his circumcision and his status as an Israelite, a Benjaminite, and a Hebrew of Hebrews (Phil. 3:5), and the things "pertaining to his free will [τὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ προαιρέσεως]" (221/115). These were his status as a Pharisee in relation to the law, which led him to persecute the church out of zeal, and his blameless and righteous status under the law (Phil. 3:5-6). Chrysostom recognizes the lesser-to-greater style of argument that Paul is making, namely that there was a righteousness under the law, but Paul found a greater righteousness in Christ. This is why he counted all of these things not as gain but as a loss for Christ's sake (Phil. 3:7), that is, in order to gain Christ. Chrysostom says, in the voice of Paul, "If, therefore, on account of good birth and enthusiasm and manner of life I outstripped everyone, what's the reason for my leaving those dignities, apart from the fact that those of Christ are found to be better, and better by far?"[187] (221/116).

[187] I think Chrysostom would agree with Stendahl assessment in his influential article, which made way for the New Perspective (cf. James Dunn, *The new perspective on Paul*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), that Phil. 3 shows no indication that Paul had difficulty fulfilling the righteousness of the law (Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 56, no. 3 (1963), p. 200-1). I also believe that Chrysostom does not think of Paul as having a guilty conscience.

Moving into his exhortation, Chrysostom makes the point that "Paul renounced such a way of life, so careful, beginning from his earliest childhood, such superiority of birth, so many dangers, so many intrigues, labors, enthusiasm, and considered it a loss (although formerly it had been a gain) in order to win Christ [καὶ ζημίαν ἡγήσατο, πρότερον ὄντα κέρδη, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσῃ]" (221/116), so we should do the same and renounce wealth. Chrysostom then launches into an invective against wealth, particularly against showy wealth such as fine clothing and jewelry. He criticizes his congregation, saying, "We, for our part, don't despise even money in order to win Christ; no we choose to miss out on the life to come rather than on affairs of the present, although this is nothing other than loss" (221/116). Wealth is not important, only the state of the will. He says, "Neither wealth procures heaven, nor poverty Gehenna; no, in both cases it's a good or bad will. Therefore, let's correct our will, let's refresh it, let's compose it, and everything will be easy for us" (227/119).

Phil. 3:7-12 - Homily 12

In Homily 12 Chrysostom explains how he reads the concept of righteousness, and he interprets it along the lines of participation in the life of Christ through suffering. By having faith and believing in the power of the resurrection, one is able to perform good works and suffer for the sake of Christ. This, in turn, allows one to have fellowship with Christ through suffering, becoming like him in death and being molded into an image of him. This is also how one attains the resurrection; by sharing in the suffering of Christ and becoming like him, one travels the same road as him, and this road leads to the resurrection. Chrysostom also uses the example of Paul as someone who was participating in the resurrected life of Christ through suffering. On top of the language of κοινωνία, Chrysostom can also express this in the language of imitation, for

when Paul says that he presses on to make the resurrection his own (Phil. 3:12), Chrysostom paraphrases him, saying that Paul will achieve the resurrection if he is able to imitate [μιμήσασθαι] Christ in his suffering. It can be seen, therefore, that Chrysostom understands becoming like Christ and the soteriological dimensions that come along with it in terms of both κοινωνία and mimesis.

Chrysostom starts off this homily by disputing with heretics about the law. Some unnamed heretics say that Paul is calling the law a loss and rubbish; therefore, it is not from God. Chrysostom points out that Paul says he counts everything as a loss (Phil. 3:8), and he says, "It's not yet clear if by 'rubbish' he's speaking about the law: I mean, it's likely that he's talking about things of the world" (237/125). He allows the possibility that Paul is referring to the law; however, even if Paul is referring to the law, the position of the heretics does not hold. Chrysostom says, "But if you want it to be the law too, it won't be reviled in that way either" (237/125). The key for Chrysostom is that Paul *counted* (ἥγημαι) his gain as a loss (Phil. 3:7). He says, "And when he spoke about gain, he didn't say, 'I have counted it,' but, 'it was a gain,' whereas when he spoke about loss he said, 'I have counted' - and rightly so. You see, while the former was naturally so, the latter became so later according to our opinion" (235/123). Chrysostom then puts forward a defense of the law, saying,

> Unless the law existed, grace wouldn't have been bestowed. Why's that? Because it became like a bridge. You see, since it wasn't possible to ascend to the heights from great lowliness, a ladder was made. But the one who's gone up it no longer needs the ladder - not that they spurn it; no, they're grateful for it… It's like that with the law as well: it has led us up to the heights - indeed, that was the gain, but for the future we think of it as a loss. How come? Not because it's a loss, but because the grace is much greater (235/123-124).

Chrysostom explains that the law must be abandoned because Christ is the fulfillment of the law. He says, "Therefore, the law isn't a loss, but attending diligently to the law and deserting Christ is… What's the reason that the law doesn't permit us to come close to Christ? 'Of course,' he [Paul] says, 'it's been given for this reason: Christ is both the fulfillment of the law and the end of the law'" (235/124).

About Paul's previous righteousness that is from the law and his new righteousness through faith (Phil. 3:9), Chrysostom says, "If the one who has righteousness, because it was nothing at all, ran to this [other] righteousness, how isn't it much more fitting for those who don't have it to hurry toward him [Christ]?… So, then, if the one who was successful is saved by grace, how much more will you be. Because it was likely that they would say that that righteousness which comes from work was greater, he demonstrated that it was rubbish compared to the former" (237/125). Chrysostom also says about this righteousness that comes through faith, "The one that comes from faith in God, that is, the one also that is given by God - this is the righteousness of God; this is a complete gift. And God's gifts surpass in great measure the cheapness of the efforts that are made through our striving" (237-239/125). According to Gorday, Chrysostom's whole issue with the Mosaic law is simply that it lacks Christ. He says, "When Chrysostom contrasts faith and works… it is to argue that faith in Christ is the way to salvation as opposed to the Jewish way, which is without christological content. 'Works' are for Chrysostom the outward, usually ritual adherence to the Mosaic Law, while 'faith' presupposes an identifying with Christ in baptism and then a life of strict discipline and obedience in imitation of his."[188] Papageorgiou, on the other hand, gives a pneumatic interpretation of this part of Chrysostom's thought. He says, "Chrysostom reaffirms Paul's teaching that the Mosaic Law… is not needed any more. Not only is it not needed, but it is also of no effect; since it had little or

[188] Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine*, p. 126.

no effect on the Jews before Christ came, what kind of effect can it have not that the Spirit has been poured out through Christ? This new way of life, 'the Law of the Spirit', is a life of constant renewal of oneself where one attains to a clear discernment of the will of God."[189]

Chrysostom then explains how faith brings about righteousness. By believing in the power of the resurrection, one is able to share in the suffering of Christ and become like him in his death (Phil. 3:10). For Chrysostom, this is righteousness. He says, "These matters bring about righteousness. You have to believe this because [Christ] has been able to do it… For it's from faith that fellowship in his sufferings comes [Ἀπο γὰρ πίστεως καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τῶν παθημάτων]. How? If we don't believe, we won't experience it either; if we don't believe that by enduring in common we shall reign in common [2 Tim. 2:12], we won't even have these sufferings" (239/126). Bringing the discussion back to Paul and using him as an example of a faithful righteous man, Chrysostom says, "Do you see that it's not a simple case of faith needing to be present but [a case of] faith through good works? Paul, who recklessly surrendered himself to dangers, who was a participant with Christ in his sufferings, believed especially that Christ had risen; for he was a participant with the one who rose, who was living." (Ὁρᾷς ὅτι οὐχ ἁπλῶς δεῖ τὴν πίστιν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ δι' ἔργων; Οὗτος γὰρ μάλιστα πιστεύει, ὅτι ἀνέστη Χριστὸς, ὁ παραβόλως ἑαυτον τοῖς κινδύνοις ἐκδιδοὺς, ὁ κοινωνῶν αὐτῷ ἐν τοῖς παθήμασι· τῷ γὰρ ἀναστάντι κοινωνεῖ, τῷ ζῶντι) (239/126). Tallon argues that πίστις for Chrysostom is not simply a 'belief' term but also a relationship term, and it can be used to describe human-human relationships, as well as human-divine ones. He says, "[T]he term πίστις evoked a reciprocal (though often unequal) relationship. From the side of the more powerful partner, it implied care, protection, love, trust and trustworthiness, and faithfulness. From the side of the weaker partner, it implied faithfulness

[189] Panayiotis E. Papageorgiou, "A Theological Analysis of Selected Themes in the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," PhD Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1995 (accessed through ProQuest Dissertations Publishing), p. 157.

in body and mind, and so obedience, truest, and trustworthiness. The relationships could be used as pictures of the Christian's relationship with God."[190] It is fair to say, from Chrysosom's discussion on faith here, that faith is certainly not simply a mental term but implies trust and action.

Elaborating on Paul becoming like Christ in his death, Chrysostom says, "'Becoming like him in his death,' he [Paul] says - 'that is, sharing. You see, just as he [Christ] suffered on behalf of human beings, so too do I suffer' [τουτέστι κοινωνῶν. Καθάπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὑπο τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἔπαθεν, οὕτω κἀγὼ]… That is, Paul's persecutions and those sufferings fashioned that likeness of Christ's death [Τουτέστιν, οἱ διωγμοὶ καὶ τὰ παθήματα ταῦτα τὴν εἰκόνα δημιουργοῦσιν ἐκείνην τοῦ θανάτου]. For he sought not his own good but that of many… So it's as if he said: 'we are made an image of him [ἐξεικονιζόμεθα]'" (239/126-127). In this way, we can be like Paul and be joined to Christ in suffering. Chrysostom says, "We believe not only that he rose but also that after the resurrection he had great strength. That's why we're traveling that same road that he traveled; that is, we are his brothers in that respect too. So it's as if he said, 'we are Christs in that respect too.' Wonderful - is the reward of suffering so great? We believe that we are becoming like him in his death through his sufferings [πιστεύομεν ὅτι συμμορφούμεθα τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ διὰ τῶν παθημάτων]" (241/127).

Furthermore, what Paul is doing in becoming like Christ in death is greater than the kind of death undergone at baptism, which was only a death like Christ's and not Christ's death in the body. Chrysostom says, "Just as in baptism we were buried with him in a death like his, so here in his death… We haven't died a complete death, for we have died not in body and flesh but [only] in sin. Therefore, since two deaths are spoken of, Christ's in the body and ours in sin, and

[190] Jonathon R. R. Tallon, "Faith in John Chrysostom's Preaching: Contextual Reading," PhD Dissertation, University of Manchester, 2015 (accessed through ProQuest Dissertations Publishing), p. 212-3.

there the human being he assumed in our body has died, here the human being has died of sin… but in that passage it's no longer a death like his but death itself. You see, Paul no longer died to sin in his persecutions but in his very body, with the result that he underwent the same death" (Παῦλος γὰρ οὐκέτι ἁμαρτίᾳ ἀπέθανεν ἐν τοῖς διωγμοῖς, ἀλλ' αὐτῷ τῷ σώματι· ὥστε τὸν αὐτὸν ὑπέμεινε θάνατον) (241/127). Naidu states that baptism is the actualization of soteriological ideas in Chrysostom's thought, saying, "In Chrysostom's view, the soteriological ideas of the gift of adoption and the conforming of the Christian to the likeness of Christ are one and the same. It is the baptismal context where they are actualized."[191] Here, however, it seems that baptism is a type that anticipates another kind of death in which one becomes conformed to Christ.

Chrysostom then tries to make sense of Paul saying that he has not yet obtained the resurrection of the dead (Phil. 3:11-12). He says,

> But if suffering so much, if being persecuted, if being mortified, he still couldn't pluck up courage concerning that resurrection, what are we to say? What's the meaning of 'to make it my own'? It's what he said earlier: 'if I attain the resurrection of the dead.' He means, 'If I make his resurrection my own. That is, if I'm able to suffer so much, if I'm able to imitate him, if I'm able to become like to him [Τουτέστιν, ἐὰν δυνηθῶ τοσαῦτα παθεῖν, ἂν δυνηθῶ μιμήσασθαι αὐτὸν, ἂν δυνηθῶ σύμμορφος αὐτῷ γενέσθαι]. For example, Christ suffered greatly, he was spat on, thrashed, flogged; later on he suffered what he suffered. That is a stadium: all those winning races have to go through these things before reaching Christ's resurrection in first place… If I can endure all the contests, I shall have been able both to achieve his resurrection and to rise in glory' [Ἂν γὰρ δυνηθῶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας πάντας ἐνεγκεῖν, καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν αὐτοῦ δυνήσομαι σχεῖν, καὶ μετὰ δόξης ἀναστῆναι] (243/128).

[191] Ashish Naidu, *Transformed in Christ: Christology and the Christian Life in John Chrysostom*, p. 94.

If one fears because even Paul is not certain about his destiny concerning the resurrection, Chrysostom says that one should take heart in the fact that Paul also said that Christ made him his own (Phil. 3:12). He says, "If by contrast Paul, who suffered so much, while pressing on still says, 'If I make it my own,' what should we say, who have fallen by the wayside? Then showing that the matter is one of benefit, he says, 'because Jesus Christ has made me his own' [Phil. 3:12]. 'I belonged to the lost,' he says, 'I was choking, I was going to die - God made me his own, and you see he pursued us as we fled him with great speed.' So Paul points out everything. For the words 'I was made Christ's own' demonstrated both the speed of the one who wanted to make us his own, and our major rejection and straying, because we were fleeing from him" (243/129). Chrysostom's discourse around the resurrection here is in line with de Wet's comments that when it comes to Chrysostom's use of the resurrection in his preaching, "the resurrection becomes more than just a doctrine or belief of eschatological reward or punishment, but is in fact in integral part of the schema, a Chrysostomian imaginaire social, that is safe-guarding and promoting asceticism and controlling Christian bodies in the vice-laden city."[192]

Moving on to exhortation, Chrysostom exhorts his audience to return to the merciful God. Just as God had mercy on Paul, he had mercy on us, but we have gone astray again; nevertheless, God still awaits our return. The problem, according to Chrysostom, "is that we are responsible for a huge debt, and nobody is grieving, nobody is weeping, nobody is groaning - all have reverted to their previous state. You see, just as we fled from God before the coming of Christ, so too do we flee now" (243/129). Mercy comes in when we return to God, as Chrysostom says, "We have a Father who has such affection for us, desperately wants our return.

[192] Chris de Wet, "John Chrysostom's Exegesis on the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15," *Neotestamentica*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2011), p. 112.

If we would only return, he would refrain from accusing us even of our previous wrongs" (249/131-132). This would allow us to "return to our former nobility, so that we may attain the good things in the future" (249/132).

Phil. 3:13-17 - Homily 13

In Homily 13, Chrysostom relates the attainment of the resurrection and the upward call of God (Phil. 3:14) to progress in virtue. For Chrysostom, Paul wants the Philippians to press forward in virtue and forget what is behind them. Then, when Paul tells the Philippians to become imitators of him (Phil. 3:17), Chrysostom explains that was the apostle's best way of teaching. Paul preserved the archetype of Christ in the image of himself, an image which he then displays to his disciples in his way of life. He teaches his φιλοσοφία through his virtue (ἀρετή), and his disciples learn through imitation of him.

Because Paul had previously praised the Philippians, according to Chrysostom, verse 13 is meant to temper any arrogance or laziness that the Philippians might be tempted to fall into. When Paul says that he does not consider to have made the resurrection his own (Phil. 3:13), Chrysostom says, "But if Paul hadn't yet made it his own, he could pluck up courage neither concerning the resurrection nor concerning what was to come - much less so, then, could they do so, who hadn't done a fraction of his virtuous actions. What he's saying is, 'I think I haven't yet made virtue completely my own' [οὐδέπω κατειληφέναι τὴν ἀρετὴν ἅπασαν ἡγοῦμαι], as if someone were speaking about a race"[193] (251/132-133). The runner and athlete, representing the Christian life, becomes a recurring image in this homily. Paul forgets what is behind him and

[193] Arnold argues that Paul himself, like other moral philosophers of his day, is purposefully drawing on language and imagery associated with athletic competition here in order to urge the Philippians to make progress in virtue. (Bradley Arnold, *Christ as the* Telos *of Life: Moral Philosophy, Athletic Imagery, and the Aim of Philippians*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014). It seems that Arnold and Chrysostom are in complete agreement.

strains forward (Phil. 3:13) because "the person who considers that they've already been perfected and lack nothing with regard to achieving virtue may even stop running [Ὁ μὲν οὖν ἤδη τετελειῶσθαι νομίζων, καὶ μηδὲν αὐτῷ λείπειν πρὸς ἀρετῆς κατόρθωσιν, κἂν ἐπαύσατο τρέχων]" (251/133). Paul says this because he wants the Philippians to also forget what lay behind them. Back to the runner metaphor, Chrysostom says, though it is not clear if he is speaking directly to his congregation or adopting the voice of Paul, "Do you see how runners live according to a regimen? How they allow nothing to ruin their physique? How they compete every day in the gymnasium subjected to a trainer and a regimen? Imitate them [Μίμησαι τούτους] - I should say, display even more enthusiasm" (253/134). Likewise, concerning forgetting what lay behind and its relation to athletic competition, Chrysostom says, "We must do this too - forget our successes and leave them behind us. After all, even a runner doesn't calculate how many laps he's finished but how many are left. Let us, too, not calculate how many laps of virtue we've finished but how many are left for us [Καὶ ἡμεῖς μὴ ὅσον ἠνύσαμεν τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀναλογιζώμεθα, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἡμῖν λείπει]" (253/133). Chrysostom also notes that Paul exemplifies this principle of forgetting, striving, and advancing in virtue, saying, "Every day Paul died; every day he gained credit [Καθ' ἡμέραν ἀπέθνησκεν ἐκεῖνος, καθ'ἡμέραν εὐδοκίμει]. There wasn't an occasion, there wasn't a time in which his race didn't advance" (253/134).

About the prize that Paul is pressing on towards (Phil. 3:14), Chrysostom says, "What's the prize? It's not a palm branch - no, what is it? The kingdom of heaven, eternal rest, glory with Christ, an inheritance, brotherhood, myriad good things that it's not possible to utter" (255/135). The "in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14) part means that Jesus is the one aiding Paul's advancement, pushing him forward. Chrysostom says, "You see, it's not possible to cover such a great distance without his help. It takes a lot of assistance, a lot of aid. He wanted you to fight on earth; he's

crowning you in heaven [Κάτω μέν σε ἀγωνίζεσθαι ἐβουλήθη, ἄνω δὲ στεφανοῖ]" (255/135). Chrysostom also mentions the Spirit as another agent that aids in the upward call of God (Phil. 3:14), saying, "Look at the extent we have to run; look at the extent of the height. We have to fly there with the wings of the Spirit - otherwise, it's not possible to make our way to this height" (253/134).

When Paul calls upon the mature (ὅσοι τέλειοι) to think this way (τοῦτο φρονῶμεν) (Phil. 3:15), Chrysostom says that Paul is referring to his call to forget the things that are behind. He says, "What kind of thing [must one think]? 'That you should forget what lies behind.' The upshot is that it is characteristic of a mature person not to consider that they're mature" (255/135). If one thinks that they are mature, God will reveal to them that they are not. Paul's words about what God will reveal (Phil. 3:15) "was said not about teachings but about maturity of life and about not thinking ourselves to be mature, because the person who considers that they've made everything their own possesses nothing" (257/136). Even though the Philippians have made some progress in virtue, they are not to consider that they are anywhere near finished; instead, they are to build upon what they have already achieved. When Paul says to walk by the same rule that was already attained (ὅ ἐφθάσαμεν) (Phil. 3:16), Chrysostom says that Paul is exhorting the Philippians to "hold onto what we have achieved… the achievement of love, of unity, of peace; these are our achievements" (257/136).

Paul then says to the Philippians that they are to imitate him (Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε) and to take those walking in the same way as a pattern of conduct (ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς) (Phil. 3:17). About this, Chrysostom says, "He brings them close to those whom they should imitate [προσάγει τούτοις, οὓς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι]. 'If somebody wants to imitate us,' he says, 'if somebody wants to walk along the same road, let him pay attention to them [Εἴ τις ἡμᾶς μιμεῖσθαι

βούλεται, φησὶν, εἴ τις τὴν αὐτὴν βαδίζειν ὁδὸν, ἐκείνοις προσεχέτω]. Even if I'm not present, know my manner of walking, that is, of my behavior and lifestyle.' He taught not only through words but also through deeds, just as in a chorus or an army camp the remainder have to imitate the leader or general and thus walk in an orderly way"[194] (257/136). Chrysostom explains that this was the apostles' way of teaching and praises this didactic method, saying,

> Indeed, the apostles were a type because they preserved the archetype as a kind of image. Imagine how exacting their way of life was, so that it laid down an archetype and example and living laws [Ἆρα τύπος ἦσαν οἱ ἀπόστολοι, ἀρχέτυπόν τινα εἰκόνα διασώζοντες. Ἐννοήσατε πῶς αὐτοῖς ὁ βίος ἀπηκριβωμένος ἦν, ὡς ἀρχέτυπον καὶ παράδειγμα κεῖσθαι, καὶ νόμους ἐμψύχους]. You see, what the writings said, the apostles made clear to all through their deeds. This is the best teaching: in this way it will be able to lead on the pupil. The one who talks and philosophizes but does the opposite in his actions is not yet a teacher. After all, it's easy for the pupil too to philosophize in words, but the pupil needs admonition and guidance through actions. This is what makes the teacher respected and prepares the pupil to be obedient. How? When the pupil sees the teacher philosophizing in words, he will say: 'He's ordered what's impossible.' Whereas, if the pupil sees that virtue has been perfected through deeds [Ἂν δὲ ἴδῃ τῶν ἔργων τὴν ἀρετὴν τετελειωμένην], he won't be able to say that (257-9/136-7).[195]

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[194] Marschal is one scholar who recognizes Paul's calls to imitate him and compatriots as paraenetic and behavior-forming, but he is critical and skeptical of this rhetoric: "Not only does the figure of Paul predominate in the argumentation of Philippians, but Paul works to create for himself a dominant position through these arguments. The rhetorics of the letter present the audience with a series of models, offered on hierarchical terms. Timothy, Epaphroditus, and even Paul's particular version of Christ operate as supporting models to Paul's own preeminent place as authority… In terms of the overall rhetoric of the letter, Paul sits atop the resulting power relations at the apex of a hierarchy of models, which he is hoping the community will be convinced to imitate, even as they remain subordinate to Paul and those most closely allied with him" (Joseph Marchal, *Hierarchy, unity, and imitation: a feminist rhetorical analysis of power dynamics in Paul's letter to the Philippians*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006, p. 204-5).

[195] Osiek, in her commentary on Philippians, also sees Paul as adopting the role and method of a philosopher here. She says, "Paul uses here as elsewhere the imitation theme for formation to Christian life (3:17). He proposes himself and others like him as examples of how to conduct oneself. In doing what seems to modern readers to be a horrendous broach of humility, Paul is simply following the way of the philosophical schools and their pattern of apprenticeship. Nevertheless, it is a vivid reminder that discipleship is learned through observation, imitation, and interaction" (Carolyn Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000, p. 31).

Moving on to paraenesis, Chrysostom first calls upon his listeners to imitate Christ. He says, “You don’t have a virtuous teacher? No, you have the true Teacher, whom alone you should call Teacher. Learn from him. He said, ‘Learn from me, that I am gentle [Matt. 11:290… Take your type from there. You have the best example. Conform yourself to it [Ἐκεῖθεν λάβε τὸν τύπον· ἔχεις εἰκόνα ἀρίστην· πρὸς ἐκείνην ῥύθμισον σαυτόν]” (259/137). Then, Chrysostom mentions that God also gave examples of virtue in scripture, saying, “There are myriad examples in the Scriptures of virtuous lives. Go after whichever you wish, and after the Teacher [find an example] in his disciples” (Μυρίαι εἰσὶν εἰκόνες ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς κείμεναι βίων ἐναρέτων· οἵαν ἂν θέλῃς, ἐλθὲ, καὶ μετὰ τὸν διδάσκαλον ἐν τοῖς μαθηταῖς) (259/137). Chrysostom then gives Paul as an example of virtue. He says, “Did he have to work? He wasn’t ashamed to - no, he worked for two years. Did he have to go hungry? He didn’t go soft, nor did he hesitate. Did he have to die? He didn’t become mean spirited. Throughout everything he demonstrated his noble mind and his art. Therefore, let’s imitate him [διὰ πάντων τὸ φρόνημα τὸ γενναῖον καὶ τὴν τέχνην ἐπεδείξατο. Τοῦτον οὖν ζηλώσωμεν], and we won’t have an excuse for sadness” (263/139). Chrysostom ends the homily by exhorting his audience to teach the soul [ἡ ψηχή] virtue. He says, “If it [the soul] is solid and well schooled in the knowledge of virtue, everything will be easy for it. And here and now it will see rest” (265/141).

Phil. 3:18-4:3 - Homily 14

The enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18-19), which Chrysostom discusses in Homily 14, serve as a foil to the Christian life. To Chrysostom, they are opposed to the cross because they live in relaxation and luxury, which is the opposite of suffering. Chrysostom then calls upon his listeners to imitate Christ and live the crucified life, and even if they are not physically put to

death. Then Chrysostom explains, as he interprets Phil. 3:21, that if the body suffers in the way that Christ's did, then the lowly body will be transformed to an immortal one.

Chrysostom starts off this homily by discussing the enemies of the cross, whom Paul talks about with tears (Phil. 3:18). They are enemies of the cross because their god is the belly and their minds are set on earthly things (Phil. 3:19). He says, "Since there were some who pretended to be Christians but were living a life of relaxation and luxury, which is opposed to the cross, that's why he spoke as he did. You see, the cross is a sign of the soul drawn up for battle, about to die, in no way seeking relaxation [Ὁ γὰρ σταυρὸς ψυχῆς ἐστι παρατεταγμένης, θανατώσης, οὐδὲν ἄνετον ἐπιζητούσης]. They, on the other hand, have the opposite way of life. The result is that if they say they're Christ's, they're enemies of the cross"[196] (267/141-142). Chrysostom then describes what is fitting for the Christian life, for those who love the cross. He says, "Otherwise, if they loved the cross, they would be enthusiastic about living the crucified life. Wasn't your master impaled? Imitate the master in other ways: crucify yourself [Μίμησαι σὺ ἄλλως τὸν δεσπότην· σταύρωσον σαυτὸν], even if nobody crucifies you… If you love your master, die his death. Learn how great the strength of the cross is, how much it has set right, how much it will set right, how it is the assurance of life" (267-9/142).

Chrysostom then compares the enemies of the cross to idolaters, saying, "For some, money was god; for others, the belly. Aren't they idolaters and even worse? And they glory in their shame. [Phil. 3:19]" (269/143). It is because they gloried in their shame that Chrysostom denies that this passage is about circumcision. The gluttonous take pride in their earthly

[196] Chrysostom does not try to identify the enemies of the cross, only discuss their ways of life. Perhaps this is wise given that modern scholarship has trouble identifying this group, with scholars often coming to opposite conclusions. For example, Mearns says these enemies are Jews who demand circumcision and Torah observance (Chris Mearns, "The Identity of Paul's Opponents at Philippi," *New Testament Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2 (1987), pp. 194–204), while Nanos says that this is a reference to pagan cults or Cynic philosophers (Mark Nanos, "Paul's Polemic in Philippians 3 as Jewish-Subgroup Vilification of Local Non-Jewish Cultic and Philosophical Alternatives," *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2013), pp. 47–92).

possessions and status, though it is ultimately to their shame. Chrysostom says, “Some say this is circumcision, but I don’t say that - no, it means this: on the basis of what they should have hidden, they considered themselves a cut above the rest. You see, performing shameful acts is a terrible thing, but if it shames the doer, it’s half as terrible, whereas when someone even takes pride in it, it’s the height of senselessness” [269/143].

Chrysostom admonishes the type of person who would be an enemy of the cross, saying that one should instead imitate the kind of moderation that God established in the natural order. He says, “You acquired a belly to feed, not to distend; to be ruler of it, not to have it as a mistress; for it to serve you to feed the rest of your bodily parts, not for you to serve it, to exceed limits… Put moderation as a limit for it, just as God put sand for the sea. If it’s seething, if it becomes wild, censure it with power that’s in you. See how God has honored you so that you may imitate him [Ὅρα πῶς σε ἐτίμησεν ὁ θεὸς, ἵνα αὐτὸν μιμῇ]” (271/144). Furthermore, the enemies of the cross also suffer under a form of slavery that brings no benefit. As Chrysostom says, “Let’s see how Paul served God; let’s see how the gluttons too serve their belly. Don’t they undergo myriad deaths like Paul’s? Don’t they fear to disobey whatever commands he gave? They didn’t perform impossible services for it? Aren’t they worse than slaves?” (271/144). This is a good example in support of de Wet’s comments about Chrysostom use of slavery as a metaphor that “Chrysostom readily employed the metaphor of slavery to press the argument of the nature of sin and governance. He needed to convince his audience of an important point—the heteronomy of their bodies; if they could not identify themselves as slaves of Christ, then they were slaves to sin. Free moral agency could be found only in being a slave of Christ, and by

being a slave of Christ, one was truly free. People had to master their passions, and not become enslaved to them, as this signified a loss of agency."[197]

Paul and the Philippians, however, do not seek luxury here but in the commonwealth which is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Chrysostom says, "Accordingly, let's not seek relaxation in this life: our commonwealth will be where we shine" (271/144). From there, Christ will come to "change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). To this, Chrysostom says, "Our body is suffering a lot now - it's in chains, it's scourged, it's suffering myriad terrible sufferings, but Christ's body suffered as much too [Πολλὰ πάσχει νῦν τὸ σῶμα… ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοσαῦτα ἔπαθε]. I suppose he's alluding to this when he says, 'to be like his glorious body.' Indeed, the body's the same, but it puts on immortality [τὸ αὐτὸ μὲν ἔστιν, ἐνδύεται δὲ ἀφθαρσίαν]" (273/145). Chrysostom rejoices in the future that holds for the body, saying, "Wonderful! This body of ours becomes like the one who sits at the right hand of the Father [ἐκείνῳ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ πατρὸς, σύμμορφον τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα γίνεται], like the one who's adored by angels, before whom stand the incorporeal powers, the one who is superior to every dominion and principality and power - our body will become like him [τὸ σῶμα… ἐκείνῳ σύμμορφον γίνεται]" (273/145). When Paul says that this is done through the power that enabled Christ to subject everything to himself (Phil. 3:21), Chrysostom says this was said so that the Philippians might believe and stand firm against all other powers. He says, "Tell me, what kind of power is greater - to subject demons and angels and archangels… or to make a body incorruptible and immortal? Much more the latter than the former. He demonstrated the superior workings of his power so that you might be convinced of them too" (273/145-6). When Paul tells

[197] Chris de Wet, *Preaching bondage : John Chrysostom and the discourse of slavery in early Christianity*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2016, p. 272.

his beloved brethren to "stand firm thus in the Lord" (Phil. 4:1), Chrysostom says, "How does he mean 'thus'? Unmoved… in the hope for God" (273-5/146).

Chrysostom then discusses Phil. 4:2-3, though his discussion does not fit well thematically with the rest of the homily, and it is not clear why he included these verses in this homily; nevertheless, he continues. In regard to the potential dispute between Euodia and Syntyche, Chrysostom does not focus on the disagreement, that they do not agree in the Lord (Phil. 4:2), or speculate on the matter; instead, he emphasizes that these women labored with Paul in the gospel and that their names are in the book of life (Phil. 4:3). About this, Chrysostom says, "Do you see the degree of their virtue he testifies to?" (275/146). He also says, "It seems to me that those women were the head [τὸ κεφάλαιον] of the church there" (275/146). The yokefellow is mentioned because he is supposed to aid them in their leadership. Chrysostom confirms that Paul "orders the women to enjoy great authority [πολλῆς προστασίας]" (277/147).

Chrysostom turns the discussion back to Phil. 3:20 and uses it to launch into a description of what Christ's awaited return will look like, comparing the honor that the faithful will receive to the pain that the disobedient will experience when they are not embraced by the king, a pain greater than the experience of hell. Chrysostom says, "If you mentioned a myriad Gehennas, you'd be speaking of nothing like the pain that the soul undergoes when the whole world is driven into confusion, the trumpets sound, the first rank of angels rushes forward… then the rest of the ranks spills onto earth… then the Lord arrives with that unutterable glory… Then Paul and his associates and all those who were highly regarded because of him are crowned, proclaimed, honored by the king in command of every army in heaven… Gehenna is intolerable, I admit - yes, exceedingly intolerable. Yet more intolerable than it is the loss of the kingdom" (277/147-8). This is meant to motivate his listeners to pursue virtue and their salvation. Chrysostom says, "We

must be content to run, stretching ourselves and becoming like him in his death, as Paul said, to be able to attain the goal [Ἀγαπητὸν γὰρ τρέχοντας καὶ ἐπεκτεινομένους καὶ συμμορφουμένους τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, ὡς Παῦλος εἶπε, δυνηθῆναι ἐπιτυχεῖν]" (281/149).

Chrysostom's Interpretation of Phil. 4

Phil. 4:4-9 - Homily 15

In Homily 15, Chrysostom discusses the advice that Paul offers to the Philippians in Phil. 4:4-9. For Chrysostom, rejoicing (Phil. 4:4) allows one to suffer through troubles, and prayer and thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6) is a consolation that counteracts anxiety. Then, when Chrysostom reaches Phil. 4:7, he interprets the peace of God that is meant to guard their hearts and minds as a phrase that refers to the reconciliation with undeserving humanity that God has brought about through his Son. This connects with Chrysostom's interpretation of Phil. 4:9, in which Paul offers himself as a model of conduct for the Philippians. For Chrysostom, if they practice these things that Paul does, the God of peace will be with them because peace comes through virtue. God made peace with humanity, as described in Phil. 4:7, and in Phil. 4:9 Paul explains how to live in this peace, and, to Chrysostom, this means living in virtue and involves imitating the virtue of Paul.

Paul tells the Philippians to rejoice always in the Lord (Phil. 4:4), and Chrysostom interprets this to mean that the Philippians should live in such a way that allows them to rejoice. He says, "'Rejoice in the Lord.' This means nothing but 'if you demonstrate the kind of life that causes you to rejoice.' Or else: 'when what pertains to God has no obstacles for you, rejoice'" (283/151). Rejoicing is especially important to Chrysostom because according to him it allows one to suffer through anything. He says, "This is a sign of one who has plucked up courage: for

example, the one who is in God always rejoices. Such a person always rejoices, whether they're troubled or suffering anything at all" (283/151).

When Paul talks about the Philippians letting their forbearance (τὸ ἐπιεικές) be known to all people (Phil. 4:5), Chrysostom refers back to the enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18), and he interprets this verse as a warning against being too friendly with them and adopting their ways. He says, "Accordingly, he warns the Philippians to have nothing in common with them but to consort with them with great forbearance… as enemies and opponents" (285/151). When Paul reminds the Philippians that the Lord is near and tells them not to worry (Phil. 4:5-6), Chrysostom again refers to those enemies. He says, "Do they rise in opposition? And if you see them living in luxury, why are you beside yourselves? Judgment is already imminent; shortly they'll give an account of their acts" (285/151-2). Paul tells them to pray with thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6) because this kind of prayer acts as a consolation. Chrysostom explains, "Look, there is another consolation too, a medicine that heals pain and critical conditions and all grievous situations. What kind of medicine is that? Praying, giving thanks in all things. That's why Paul wants our prayer to be not only a request but also a thanksgiving for what we have" (285/152).

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:7) is, to Chrysostom, the peace that God has effected for human beings through his Son. He says, "So, now, that's what peace is: namely, reconciliation, the love of God [ἡ καταλλαγή, ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ]" (287/153). This peace surpasses human understanding because God unexpectedly chose to make peace with an undeserving humanity. Chrysostom says, "Who would have expected, who would have hoped that the benefits would be of such magnitude? It exceeds all human intellectual capacity, not just speech: on behalf of enemies, on behalf of those who hate him, on behalf of those who have rejected him, on behalf of those who didn't refuse to surrender his only begotten Son, so that he

could make peace with us" (285-7/152-3). This peace will keep the Philippians in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7) in the sense that, as Chrysostom says, "He'll keep you with him so that you stay and don't lapse from faith in him" (287/153).

Paul then wants the Philippians to think about the things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, commendable, virtuous, and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8) because "he wants to banish every wicked thought from our souls. After all, wicked deeds are generated from thoughts [ἀπὸ γὰρ ἐννοιῶν αἱ πράξεις αἱ πονηραὶ ἐγένοντο]" (287-9/154). Then, when Paul says to the Philippians to practice what they learned, received, heard, and seen in him (Phil. 4:9), Chrysostom emphasizes Paul's mimetic teaching methods, saying, "That's how he teaches - offering himself as a model in all his exhortations" (Τοῦτο διδασκαλία, ἐν πάσαις ταῖς παραινέσεσιν ἑαυτὸν παρέχειν τύπον) (289/154).. He continues explaining the verse, saying, "'What you have learned and received,' meaning 'what you have been taught, and what you have heard and seen in me as a result of my words and actions and conduct.' Do you see that these commands extend to every matter?"[198] (289/154). Following the example of Paul will allow the God of peace to be with them (Phil. 4:9) because, as Chrysostom says, "After all, when we make our peace with him, we make our peace through virtue; he will be with us much more [Ὅταν γὰρ ἡμεῖς εἰρηνεύωμεν πρὸς αὐτὸν, εἰρηνεύομεν δὲ δὶα τῆς ἀρετῆς, πολλῶ μᾶλλον αὐτὸς μεθ' ἡμῶν ἔσται]. You see, when the one who has loved us even though we were unwilling to come near him sees us running toward him, won't he demonstrate his affection much more?" (289/154).

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[198] Ramsaran, like Chrysostom, recognizes the ethical and mimetic intent of these verses. He says, "The *imitatio* formula in 4:9 shows a marked expansion compared to other Pauline *imitatio* texts… It invites contemplation, reflection, possibly even discussion among community members… Paul has shown himself to be one who advances the gospel, one who thinks of the interest of others, one who lays aside status markers for God's call, and one who lives life joyfully. The refrain (4:7 and 4:9) of inner tranquility provided by God marks 4:4-9 as a section, but more importantly it encourages the inner person to endure hardship and resist anxiety" (Rollin Ramsaran, "In the Steps of the Moralist: Paul's Rhetorical Argumentation in Philippians 4," *Rhetoric, Ethic, and Moral Persuasion in Biblical Discourse: Essays from the 2002 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Thomas H. Olbricht and Anders Eriksson, New York: T&T Clark International, 2005, p. 297).

Chrysostom concludes the homily by exhorting his audience to pursue peace among themselves by imitating Christ. Chrysostom says that those that seek peace imitate Christ and bring themselves close to God: "Be peaceful toward everyone… 'Blessed are the peacemakers, because they will be called sons of God' [Matt. 5:9]. Such people continually imitate the Son of God - you too must imitate him. Make your peace [Διαπαντὸς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μιμοῦνται οἱ τοιοῦτοι, καὶ μίμησαι καὶ σὺ αὐτόν· εἰρήνευσον]" (291/156). Chrysostom then explains why this peacemaking is significant, calling it a virtue, saying, "This is virtue; this is superior to human reason; this makes us close to God [Τοῦτο ἀρετὴ, τοῦτο μεῖζον ἀνθρωπίνου λογισμοῦ, τοῦτο θεοῦ ἐγγὺς εἶναι ποιεῖ]. Nothing gladdens God as much as the absence of malice. This releases you from your sins; this wipes out the charges against you" (291/156).

Phil. 4:10-23 - Homily 16

In Homily 16, Chrysostom praises the ἐλεημοσύνη of the Philippians, both when Paul mentions that they have revived their concern for him (Phil. 4:10) and when he mentions that they were the first to enter into partnership with him (Phil. 4:15). Chrysostom also praises Paul because he is able to be content whether he has want or abundance. He says that this is characteristic of virtue, as Paul did not allow hunger to lead him into evil, nor did he become lazy in his abundance but used, Chrysostom assumes, his funds to aid others. After this, we see the benefits that Chrysostom associates with the Philippians' ἐλεημοσύνη towards Paul, namely that they become partners in his troubles. Paul says that this partnership involves giving and receiving (Phil. 4:15), and Chrysostom interprets this as the Philippians giving Paul material needs and receiving spiritual benefits. The spiritual benefits come from the act of giving itself. By giving the Philippians practice virtue, the virtue of ἐλεημοσύνη, and learn in their free will (ἡ προαίρεσις)

to will good actions. This free will that exercises virtue is the fruit (Phil. 4:17) that Paul is seeking for them.

Paul rejoices in the Lord greatly (Phil. 4:10) because, as Chrysostom sees it, "After a long interval the Philippians sent somebody to him, giving him the same charge as Epaphroditus. See how, when Paul accordingly is on the point of sending him to carry the letter, he both praises the Philippians and demonstrates that the situation has come about not through the necessity to receive but to give" (297/158). This is how the Philippians revived their concern for Paul (Phil. 4:10), and they did this not because Paul was in need but because it was a benefit to the Philippians to give. This is why Paul rejoices in the Lord. Chrysostom speaks for Paul, saying, "'I rejoiced not in a worldly way,' he says, 'nor on the way of this life, but in the Lord… because you had made progress [ὁτι ὑμεῖς προεκόψατε]" (297/158). For Chrysostom, Paul here demonstrates that "almsgiving [ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη] was introduced not on account of those who receive it but of those who give it, for the latter are the ones who gain the most [οἱ τὰ μέγιστα κερδαίνοντες]" (297/157-8).

When Paul says that he is not speaking from a place of want (Phil. 4:11), it shows that he is "not seeking [his] own advantage, not blaming [them] because [he] was in need" (299/159). Rather, Paul has learned to be content in lowliness, want, and hunger just as in abundance and fullness (Phil. 4:11-12). This demonstrates Paul's virtue in dealing with abundance as well as his steadfastness in facing poverty. Chrysostom says, "'But,' someone says, 'the former [facing abundance] isn't a mark of knowledge or virtue.' It most certainly is a mark of virtue,[199] no less than the latter [facing want]. How's that? Because just as being in short supply prepares one to do much evil, so too does a surfeit. Often, because they have been in an affluent state, many

[199] The Greek simply has the genitive ἀρετὴς, not the whole phrase 'mark of virtue,' through it makes sense to supply some word like 'mark' in translation.

people have become lazy and haven't known how to cope with prosperity… But not Paul. Indeed, what he received, he spent on others and emptied out on others" (301/160). Chrysostom then adds, in order to save Paul from seeming boastful, "But since the affair was worth boasting about, see how he follows up immediately: 'I have the strength to do everything in Christ who empowers me,' [Phil. 4:13] he says. 'The success belongs not to me but to the one who gave me strength'" (301/160-1).

After this, in order to not discourage the Philippians from giving or to not make them bitter by saying he was never in need, Paul tells them that they have done something greater and benefitted themselves by sharing in Paul's afflictions. Chrysostom says, "[I]n the following passage he makes their enthusiasm burn by saying, 'Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble [συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει]' [Phil. 4:14]… Note that he didn't say, 'to give,' but 'to share,' showing that they were gaining too, if they became participants in his contests [εἴγε τῶν ἄθλων ἐγένοντο κοινωνοί]. He didn't say, 'you have lightened my troubles,' but, 'to share my trouble,' which was more serious" (301-3/161).

When Paul says that the Philippians were the only church to enter into partnership with him in the beginning of the gospel (Phil. 4:15), it is to their praise. Chrysostom says, "They demonstrated an enthusiasm for the holy man to such an extent that although they didn't even have an example, they were the first to begin bearing fruit" (303/162). Chrysostom then explains how this partnership works out for the benefit of the Philippians: "How did they enter into partnership [Πῶς ἐκοινώνησαν]? By the reason of giving material things and receiving spiritual things… There's nothing more profitable than this buying and selling… No don't despair - the heavenly things can't be bought with money, money can't buy them, but it's the intention [ἡ προαίρεσις] of the one who pays the money, their philosophy [ἡ φιλοσοφία]; no, it's being above

the things of life, their love of humanity, their almsgiving" (305/162-3). The benefits that the Philippians accrue by molding their wills to make good choices are the fruit that Paul is seeking (Phil. 4:17). About this, Chrysostom says, "Do you see that the fruit is engendered in them [Ὁρᾷς ὅτι ὁ καρπὸς ἐκείνοις τίκτεται]? 'It's on your account that I'm saying this,' he [Paul] says, 'not on my own account - for your salvation [εἰς τὴν ὑμετέραν σωτηρίαν]. After all, I'm not taking any gain; it's the grace of those who give… to those who give, the exchange is preserved in the next life" (307/163-4).

Nevertheless, or perhaps because Paul expected the Philippians to bear fruit, when he says that he has received full payment (Phil. 4:18), Chrysostom says, "That is, 'through this act of giving you have made up for your omissions'" (307/164). These omissions were accrued because the Philippians had not sent aid to Paul for a length of time, and Paul still expected them to give. That being said, Paul still praises the gifts that they did send, calling them an acceptable and pleasing sacrifice to God (Phil. 4:18). To this, Chrysostom says, "Wonderful! What has he raised their gift to? 'I didn't receive it,' he says, 'but God did through me. The upshot is that, if I'm not in want, don't let it be a concern to you, since not even God was in want, and yet he was receptive in the way that Holy Scripture didn't refrain from saying, 'God smelled an odor of sweetness' [Gen. 8:21], which was of joy" (307-9/164). When Paul says that God will supply their every need (Phil. 4:19), Chrysostom says that this was not about their comfort but so that they would use their riches to glorify Christ. He says that this verse means "you will have everything in abundance, so that you will have them for his glory… as if he said that you should use your abundance for his glory" (311/166). In his final greetings, when Paul says that the saints of Caesar's household greet the Philippians (Phil. 4:21), Chrysostom says, "He pulled them up and strengthened them, demonstrating that his preaching pertained also to the royal household.

You see, if those in the palace despised all earthly things because of the king of heaven, they had to do it much more" (311-3/166-7).[200]

For his paraenesis, Chrysostom says that earthly life, especially the life of the emperor is full of trouble, but he encourages his listeners to embrace suffering because it is that path that leads to eternal life. He says, "Incessant trouble is a kind of chain, a thing that increases love, a basis of compunction and piety [Δεσμὸς γάρ τις ἐστὶν ἡ θλῖψις ἀρραγὴς, ἀγάπης αὔξησις, κατανύξεως καὶ εὐλαβείας ὑπόθεσις]" (313/167). Comparing the misery of kingly life with the peace of the kingdom of heaven, he says, "As for the emperor currently in power, since the moment he put on the diadem hasn't he been in toil, danger, woes, despondency, disasters, plots? But the kingdom of heaven isn't like that - no, after seizing it there's peace, life, joy, good cheer" (315/169). He says this so that his listeners learn not to seek earthly riches but heavenly glory. He wants his listeners to embrace suffering, exhorting by refering to Paul and Peter, saying, "You aren't better than Paul, or than Peter either, or those who never attain respite, those who live in hunger and thirst and nakedness. If you want to attain the same things as Paul and Peter… if you want to reach that city that they have been deemed worthy of, walk along that road that leads there. The road of respite doesn't lead there, but the road of trouble does [Οὐ φέρει ἡ τῆς ἀνέσεως ὁδὸς ἐκεῖ, ἀλλ' ἡ τῆς θλίψεως]… Let's walk along it, so that we may attain eternal life, in Christ Jesus our Lord" (319/171).

[200] Chrysostom clearly thinks that Paul is writing not just from imprisonment in Rome but also from imprisonment in the royal palace. Cousar points out, however, that "the references to 'the whole praetorian guard' (Phil 1:13) and to Caesar's household ('the emperor's household,' 4:22)" could also be applicable to other Roman-controlled towns (Charles Cousar, *Philippians and Philemon: A Commentary*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013, p. 9). He also says that modern opinion on the origins of the letter is split between Rome, Ephesus, and Caesarea, with the first two being more popular.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Chrysostom's Psychagogy and How It Relates to his Soteriology

Chrysostom's Psychagogical Hermeneutics

Chrysostom's Models of Virtue for his Congregation

It is Mitchell's contention that Chrysostom reads from scripture examples of virtuous persons, namely Paul, as models of conduct for his congregation. My investigation into Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians confirms this, but it goes farther. From these homilies one can confirm Mitchell's interpretative theory that, even in a book of the Bible that lacks narrative structure, Chrysostom is very much interested in reconstructing the historical details surrounding the letter in order to place Paul within a narrative context and therefore be able to read out of the text and emphasize the virtues that Paul exhibits within his story so that his listeners are inspired to imitate him. As Mitchell says, "For Chrysostom, portrait production goes hand in hand with reading Paul's letters, which themselves sketch the image of his soul. Yet the portraits of Paul also must be redrawn through preaching and exegesis so that the hearers can have the model displayed before their eyes for imitation."[201] Based on our analysis of Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians, it is possible to says that even though Chrysostom's rhetoric on Philippians might not always amount to full scale verbal portraits of the kind that Mitchell discusses in her work, but Chrysostom dedicates considerable time expounding on Paul's virtues and calls upon his audience to imitate him. Moreover, adding to Mitchell's work, it is also clear that Chrysostom does not just put forward Paul as a model of conduct, but he also reads from the text and emphasizes the virtues of several figures and exhorts his audience to imitate them, either

[201] Margaret Mitchell, "The Archetypal Image: John Chrysostom's Portraits of Paul," The Journal of Religion, vol. 75, no. 1 (1995), p. 43.

explicitly or implicitly. Most notably, in addition to Paul, he praises the virtue of Timothy, Epaphroditus, and the Philippians themselves.

In regards to Chrysostom's use of Paul as an example of virtue, Homilies 4 and 5 both contain extended encomia to Paul. For Mitchell (see chapter 1), encomia are a form of verbal portraiture that Chrysostom paints so that his audience has a model of virtue before their eyes. In Homily 4, Paul's philosophy is praiseworthy as it allows him to face danger fearlessly and nobly, and his soul bears the characteristics of a Christian soul. In Homily 5, Paul's soul is again praiseworthy because he chooses to continue on in this harsh life of suffering for the sake of the Philippians instead of departing to be with Christ. Chrysostom even goes so far as to compare him to the light of the sun and describe how much the angels are overjoyed at his words (83/41).

Mitchell's view of encomium as verbal portraiture, which she somewhat idiosyncratic calls *ekphrasis*, is not exactly how ancient rhetoricians defined it. For example, Aelius Theon says that encomium is simply "language revealing the greatness of virtuous actions and other good qualities belonging to a particular person."[202] They do not see this form of rhetoric as necessarily paraenetic. Hermogenes and Aphthonius the Sophist also differentiate between encomium, which is long and artistic, and simple *epainos*, which is a shorter type of praise.[203] That being said, even though Chrysostom only engages in lengthy artistic encomia in Homilies 4 and 5, he often engages in *epainos* of Paul and others. These shorter praises nevertheless have mimetic value in Chrysostom's rhetoric because of the close proximity between this type of praise and his calls for imitation of the person being praised. This shows that Mitchell's view of

[202] George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek textbooks of prose composition and rhetoric*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, p. 50. He also says that encomium "is specifically applied to praise of living persons" (p. 50), which raises the interesting question of how dead Chrysostom thought Paul really was.
[203] Ibid., pp. 81 and 108 respectively.

encomium as mimetic and paraenetic in Chrysostom still has values, and it goes beyond it in showing that Chrysotom's mimetic exhortations also apply to shorter praises.

Staying with Paul as a paradigm for Christian living, in the paraenetic section of Homily 6, Chrysostom gives a number of examples from scripture of men who accomplished great things through humility, and Paul features prominently. Chrysostom also gives a number of examples of men who display free speech and courage, and, again, Paul features prominently because of his actions taken in the face of danger from the political authorities.

In the paraenetic section of Homily 13, Chrysostom puts forth Paul as an example of unconquerable virtue that stems from a noble soul. He says, "Did he have to work? He wasn't ashamed to - no, he worked for two years. Did he have to go hungry? He didn't go soft, nor did he hesitate. Did he have to die? He didn't become mean spirited. Throughout everything he demonstrated his noble mind and his art. Therefore, let us be zealous for him[204] [διὰ πάντων τὸ φρόνημα τὸ γενναῖον καὶ τὴν τέχνην ἐπεδείξατο. Τοῦτον οὖν ζηλώσωμεν], and we won't have an excuse for sadness" (263/139).

As for Chrysostom's use of other figures in the letter as examples to imitate, in Homily 1, Chrysostom calls upon his listeners to imitate the Philippians in their care for Paul's well-being through their almsgiving. He says that even though there is not as much opportunity to suffer for Christ's sake in his own day as there was in Paul's, one can imitate the generosity of the Philippians through giving. In his own words: "Nevertheless, if we do nothing else, let us imitate their good deeds with passion [μιμώμεθα αὐτῶν τὴν εὐποιΐαν τὴν μετὰ σφοδρότητος], lest when we give once or twice we consider ourselves to have fulfilled the whole command, for we must do this throughout our lives" (11/4).

[204] Allen translates this as "let's imitate him."

In Homily 10, Timothy is an example of someone willing to always labor and suffer for Christ's sake. Chrysostom also says that Paul is lamenting other workers who only look after their own interests (Phil. 2:21) "[t]o teach us, his hearers, [Παιδεύων ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀκούοντας] not to fall into the same ways, to teach his hearers not to seek respite. You see, the one who seeks respite seeks not Christ's business but his own" (189/98). It is interesting that Chrysostom says that Paul here is teaching "us, his hearers" because it groups the Philippians, the recipients of the letter, with all the other readers of the text throughout history. This means that to Chrysostom, Paul's pedagogic message can be the same for both groups.

Also in Homily 10, in the paraenetic section, Chrysostom exhorts his audience to render service to the saints. Epaphroditus is the example here, and the Philippians are also involved since Epaphroditus is enacting service to Paul on their behalf.

There are also instances in which Chrysostom calls upon his audience to imitate Christ himself. In the paraenetic section of Homily 13, Chrysostom calls upon his audience to take Christ as a teacher and imitate him. He says, "You don't have a virtuous teacher? No, you have the true Teacher, whom alone you should call Teacher. Learn from him. He said, 'Learn from me, that I am gentle [Matt. 11:29]. Now don't pay attention to your teacher, but to this one and his teachings. Take your type from there. You have the best example. Conform yourself to it [Ἐκεῖθεν λάβε τὸν τύπον· ἔχεις εἰκόνα ἀρίστην· πρὸς ἐκείνην ῥύθμισον σαυτόν]" (259/137). About the direct imitation of Christ, Mitchell says, "Paul as mimetic intermediary becomes increasingly important in the fourth century as Christology soars higher and higher, and the imitation of Christ seems beyond the ken of ordinary human beings, whereas imitation of Paul stands more within reach."[205] However, Chrysostom uses Christ as a model for imitation several times in these homilies, with no indication that Christ is only a model for the mature.

[205] Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet*, p. 51.

In Homily 14, Chrysostom wants his listeners to imitate Christ in living the cruciform life. He says, "Wasn't your master impaled? Imitate the master in other ways: crucify yourself [Μίμησαι σὺ ἄλλως τὸν δεσπότην· σταύρωσον σαυτὸν], even if nobody crucifies you… If you love your master, die his death" (269/142). Also in Homily 14, Chrysostom says to his audience, in an interesting example of mimetic logic, to moderate the appetite just as God put limits on things in the natural world. He says, "Put moderation as a limit for [the belly], just as God put sand for the sea. If it's seething, if it becomes wild, censure it with power that's in you. See how God has honored you so that you may imitate him [Ὅρα πῶς σε ἐτίμησεν ὁ θεὸς, ἵνα αὐτὸν μιμῇ]" (271/144).

Finally, in Homily 15, Chrysostom mentions that those who seek peace imitate Christ. He says, "Such people [the peacemakers] continually imitate the Son of God - you too must imitate him. Make your peace [Διαπαντὸς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μιμοῦνται οἱ τοιοῦτοι, καὶ μίμησαι καὶ σὺ αὐτόν· εἰρήνευσον]" (291/156).

Paul's Models of Virtue for the Philippians

Of course, it is not controversial to say that a preacher presents examples of virtues as models of conduct to his congregation. Also adding to Mitchell's work, I differentiate between Chrysostom's use of sacred scripture and his interpretation of it. The former deals with the way in which Chrysostom uses scripture as a psychagogical tool for his congregation. His presentation of examples of virtue to his congregation for the purpose of exhortation and imitation falls under this category. The latter is concerned with what Chrysostom sees as Paul's message for the recipients of his own letter. It is my contention that in Chrysostom's interpretation of Philippians, Paul presents to the Philippians models of virtue so that the

Philippians themselves may imitate them. Most notably, Paul presents himself and Jesus Christ as models of virtue for imitation. For Chrysostom, this is an integral part of Paul's teaching strategy.

In doing this, I am building on Rylaarsdam's work (see also chapter 1), which presents an interpretative framework in which to understand Chrysostom's intuition that Paul is presenting models of virtuous conduct to the Philippians. According to him, the key principle in Chrysostom's biblical interpretation is the understanding that God's adaptability - his condescension or *synkatabasis* - is at play, in which God presents the truths in scripture in ways that humans, limited in their language and history, can understand.[206] These truths involve moral truths about how to live, and one way that God communicates how to live is by presenting in scripture examples of conduct to imitate. Chrysostom sees God as a pedagogic philosopher-rhetor for whom imitation constitutes a major part in the curriculum of his *paideia*, presenting not only others in scripture as models of virtuous conduct but also Himself in the incarnation. About models of conduct, Rylaarsdam says that one way "in which God teaches humanity through corporeal symbols is by supplying human models worthy of imitation. These models serve as a kind of sign, leading people from a concrete example to a greater understanding of morality and to a more virtuous way of life."[207] Not only that, but also, according to Rylaarsdam, Chrysostom expects Paul, who also acts as a philosopher-rhetor, to adopt God's teaching strategies. As Rylaarsdam says, "Chrysostom depicts Paul as a philosopher–rhetor, who imitates and participates in God's persuasive teaching of the true philosophy. His teaching is able to persuade people all around the world to follow the way of life laid out by Christ."[208] Paul, in his letters, should therefore be making ample use of exemplary

[206] David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy*, p. 4-5.
[207] Ibid., p. 73.
[208] p. 159.

models, presenting both himself and others as worthy figures to imitate, with Christ being the example of highest virtue. If Rylaarsdam is correct, we should expect Chrysostom to be sensitive to Paul's pedagogical strategies and to understand Paul as presenting to the recipients of his letters, in this case the Philippians, models for the purpose of imitation.

In Homily 5, when Chrysostom interprets Phil. 1:29-30, in which Paul says that the Philippians are engaged in the same conflict that they saw and heard in Paul, conflict in which one suffers for the sake of Christ, Chrysostom understands this as Paul telling the Philippians that they have an example in him of how to conduct oneself in this conflict. Chrysostom says about this passage, "That is to say: 'You also have the example' [καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα ἔχετε]. Again he flatters them in this passage, showing that they are engaged in the same conflict as he is on all sides, engaged in the same struggles… enduring temptations with him… And in the same way he bears the same witness to them all: contests and struggles" (89/44-5).

In Homilies 7 and 8, Chrysostom interprets the christological verses in Phil. 2:5-11 as Paul exhorting the Philippians to humility by using Christ as an example of this virtue. He says, "Blessed Paul… by exhorting them to humility, brought Christ to the fore [Τοῦτο καὶ ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος ἐποίησε· προτρέπων αὐτοὺς εἰς ταπεινοφροσύνην, τὸν Χριστὸν εἰς μέσον παρήγαγε]" (113/58). Paul wants the Philippians to be humble and count others as more significant than themselves (Phil. 2:3), just as Christ did not count equality with God as something to be grasped and humbled himself by taking on the form of a man and being obedient to the point of death (Phil. 6-8). Chrysostom also assumes this psychagogical meaning of the passage when he engages with christological heresies of his day. For Chrysostom, the intent of the passage is to urge the Philippians to humility, and those that deny either Christ's divinity or his humanity cannot properly make sense of this passage, for if Christ was not divine, he would not have been

humble by not grasping equality with God because it would never have been an option for him, and if Christ was not human, he would not have condescended in any way. He says, "[L]et me ask this: what does Paul wish to achieve by this example? To urge the Philippians completely to humility. So tell me, why did he bring this [equality with God] to the fore?" (τί βούλεται κατασκευάσαι ὁ Παῦλος διὰ τούτου τοῦ ὑποδείγματος; Εἰς ταπεινοφροσύνην πάντως ἐναγαγεῖν τοὺς Φιλιππησίους. Τί οὖν, εἰπέ μοι, τοῦτο παρήνεγκεν εἰς μέσον;) (121/61). Chrysostom also makes a big deal about the term "counting" [ἡγούμαι] because the Philippians, even though equal among themselves, are supposed to count others as greater, just like Christ, though equal with God, humbled himself and became man. This is opposed to a forced subordinate that results from natural inequality, for Paul wants the Philippians to choose to be humble-minded. He says, "Paul said that Christ emptied himself, because if Christ had been subordinate, it wasn't a question of humility if he hadn't chosen this of his own accord, if it didn't come from himself" (145/74). Furthermore, Christ is the ultimate example of humility because he willingly condescended from such great heights to the point of death on a cross. About this, Chrysostom says, "The sublimity that he possessed was counterbalanced by the humility he underwent. Just as he is greater than everyone and nobody is his equal, so too did he surpass everybody by honoring the Father, not because he was compelled to or was unwilling - no, this too was a mark of his virtue… Wonderful! It's great and exceedingly ineffable to become a servant, but to undergo death is much more so again" (151/78). Chrysostom even goes on to say that one of the purposes of the Incarnation is for Christ to appear as a man in order to teach humility through his example. He says, "God the Word didn't change into a human, nor was his essence transformed, but he appeared as a human, not deluding us by his appearance but teaching us humility [ἀλλ' ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐφάνη, οὐ φαντασιοκοπῶν ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ παιδεύων εἰς ταπεινοφροσύνην]" (149/77).

In Phil. 3:17 (Homily 13), Paul explicitly tells the Philippians to become imitators of him (Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε), and Chrysostom emphasizes this point, saying "He brings them close to those whom they should imitate [προσάγει τούτοις, οὓς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι]. 'If somebody wants to imitate us,' he says, 'if somebody wants to walk along the same road, let him pay attention to them. Even if I'm not present, know my manner of walking, that is, of my behavior and lifestyle'" (257/136). Chrysostom then praises this method of teaching, calling it the best way of teaching. He says, "Indeed, the apostles were a type because they preserved the archetype as a kind of image. Imagine how exacting their way of life was, so that it laid down an archetype and example and living laws [Ἆρα τύπος ἦσαν οἱ ἀπόστολοι, ἀρχέτυπόν τινα εἰκόνα διασώζοντες. Ἐννοήσατε πῶς αὐτοῖς ὁ βίος ἀπηκριβωμένος ἦν, ὡς ἀρχέτυπον καὶ παράδειγμα κεῖσθαι, καὶ νόμους ἐμψύχους]" (257/136-7).

Chrysostom makes a similar point about Phil. 4:9 (Homily 15), when Paul says that Philippians are to practice what they have learned, received, heard, and seen in him. He says, "That's how he teaches - offering himself as a model in all his exhortations [Τοῦτο διδασκαλία, ἐν πάσαις ταῖς παραινέσεσιν ἑαυτὸν παρέχειν τύπον]" (289/154). Furthermore, Chrysostom also explains how this will lead to the peace of God being with the Philippians, as the rest of the verse says. Chrysostom says, "[W]hen we make our peace with him, we make our peace through virtue [Ὅταν γὰρ ἡμεῖς εἰρηνεύωμεν πρὸς αὐτὸν, εἰρηνεύομεν δὲ δὶα τῆς ἀρετῆς]" (289/154). Therefore, if the Philippians imitate Paul's virtue, they will have the peace of God.

Mimetic Soteriology

The literature on Chrysostom makes a big deal about mimesis, and it is of course justified in doing so. Imitation or mimesis plays a large role in Chrysostom's rhetoric, psychagogical strategies, and theology. As seen in his rhetoric, Chrysostom will often return to the point of

emphasizing the importance of imitating various saintly figures, persuading his audience to do so in the process. This is also part of his pedagogical or psychagogical regime, for, to Chrysostom, one can train his soul in virtue through imitation of virtuous people, so Chrysostom presents such figures to his listeners through his speech so as to teach them virtue. Trying to discern his theological thoughts concerning mimesis would shed light on why he spends so much effort trying to persuade his audience to imitate the figures he rhetorically presents before them. Therefore, here I will spend some time discussing the theological implications of mimesis in Chrysostom's thought, as seen in his homilies on Philippians. It is my contention that mimesis is important for Chrysostom because it teaches and trains the soul in virtue, and virtue is a precondition to be welcomed into the kingdom of God at the end of time. In other words, mimesis is significant because it is a pedagogical tool for how to live in peace with God and therefore inhabit his kingdom, as Chrysostom's congregation can train in their free choice, philosophy, and virtue by imitating the models presented to them. This is evident in the way that Chrysostom speaks about virtue or about a specific virtue, in that these passages often have soteriological implications and often come along with examples of such virtue to imitate.

Shippe argues that when Chrysostom talks about the kingdom of God, he is reflecting a semi-realized eschatology, in which "baptism and the church were actual, if partial, experiences of the kingdom of God, so that the Christian life was a form of the angelic, heavenly life."[209] Shippe also says that for Chrysostom "one sees a typology between the societies of church and heaven, where a participation in the church was a participation in heaven, although this way of life was perfected only in the resurrection."[210] This is compatible with my argument that the

[209] Arthur Bradford Shippe, "Paradoxes of Now and Not Yet: The Separation between Church and the Kingdom in John Chrysostom, Theodore, and Augustine," *Reading in Christian Communities: Essays on Interpretation in the Early Church*, eds. Charles A. Bobertz and David Brakke, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002, p. 106.
[210] Ibid., p. 111-2.

practice of virtue prepares one for the kingdom of God, as virtue allows for a proleptic experience of the kingdom, but both are fully actualized in the resurrection. This is not to suggest that Chrysostom's soteriology was simply moralistic. As Lawrenz notes, "The fact that Chrysostom… finds many occasions to point to the activities of Christ as examples for virtuous living probably does not in itself mean that Chrysostom had a completely moralistic view of salvation. The homily, by its very nature, leads to a moral exhortation, and if the text at hand provides anything that can be turned into an ethical application, the preacher will use it in that way."[211] Concerning Chrysostom's approach to salvation, Lawrenz adds, "He very definitely sees Christ as an exemplar, but also speaks in terms of the elevation of human nature through Christ's incarnation."[212] It is my contention that the ethical life that is lived in imitation of Christ and the saints plays an important, though not all-encompassing role, is Chrysostom's views on salvation. The next section will give a more complex picture of Chrysostom's soteriology, specifically as it relates to κοινωνία, but, for now, this section will focus only on mimesis and virtue.

Starting in Homily 1, after presenting the Philippians of models to imitate in their almsgiving to Paul, in their ἐλεμοσύνη, Chrysostom talks about how this virtue makes the soul beautiful and connects it salvation. He says, "Pity on a grand scale is something beautiful and valuable; it's a great gift. I should say it is a great goodness. If we learn to despise money, we'll learn other lessons too… The person who gives alms, as they should do, learns to despise money; the person who learns to despise money has cut out the root of evil" (15/5-6). Chrysostom then connects it to salvation when he says, "And those whom the bridegroom knows have honored it [pity], he'll bring in with great freedom… if pity brought God into the world and prevailed on him to become a human being, much more will it be able to bring a human being up to heaven

[211] Lawrenz, *The Christology of John Chrysostom*, p. 147.
[212] Ibid.

[πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἄνθρωπον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναγαγεῖν δυνήσεται]" (15/6). Again, in Homily 2, after Chrysostom exhorts his audience to financially support the clergy just as the Philippians entered into partnership with Paul, Chrysostom says that if we give freely, "[w]e shall become like God in this respect [Τούτῳ γὰρ ὅμοιοι ἐσόμεθα τῷ θεῷ] and admired, such that we shall reach immortal benefits as well" (35/17).

In Homily 3, after praising Paul's philosophy, specifically how he is rejoicing that the gospel is proclaimed despite his detention, Chrysostom exhorts his audience to train their will or disposition (προαίρεσις) to do proper philosophy (φιλοσοφία), specifically in regard to the proper attitude wealth. He says, ""Do you see that it's not poverty or wealth either that's good but our disposition [προαίρεσις]? Let's train it; let's teach it to do philosophy [φιλοσοφεῖν]. If it's properly disposed, wealth won't be able to exclude us from the kingdom, nor will poverty cause us to have less" (57/28). *Prohairesis* is a term from Greek philosophy that is certainly important to Chrysostom. In this way, he is similar to Aristotle, because, as Chamberlain argues, "[I]n nearly every major area of Aristotle's ethical thought the concept of *prohairesis* plays a central role."[213] There is, however, some ambiguity around the meaning of the term, and this gives rise to multiple possible translations.[214] Chamberlain argues that it refers to "the process by which orders of reason are brought upon desire as to change it."[215] This definition is dependent upon Aristotle's partition of the soul, in which the rational soul acts to control the irrational, so this definition of *prohairesis* cannot be carried over completely into Chrysostom, who does not concern himself so much with exact distinctions within the soul. That being said, identifying *prohairesis* as a process can still make sense of Chrysostom's use of the term. Chrysostom is

[213] Charles Chamberlain, "The Meaning of *Prohairesis* in Aristotle's Ethics," *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, vol. 114 (1984), p. 147.
[214] On the various ways the term has been translated in Aristotle, see Ibid. p. 148. Most revolve around words like 'intention', 'will', 'purpose', or some combination thereof.
[215] Ibid., p. 151.

concerned about the internal mindset and the external actions of his congregation. Here, he is concerned both with the way in which his congregation views money and how they choose to use it, and *prohairesis*, because it has to be trained to do *philosophia*, which is also both internal and external, is involved in both. It is possible that *prohairesis* is involved in the process in which internal dispositions bring about moral actions, as it can refer both to an internal disposition and to a free choice of the will in which the intention is brought into action. Bielfeldt notes the tension between the internal and the external that existed in moral philosophy, specifically in the late medieval period, saying, "[W]hile the ethical internalist contends that the moral properties and actions are internal to the agent, the ethical externalist must hold that virtue is linked indissolvably to the wider context in which it occurs."[216] His contention is that "within the context of late medieval scholasticism, virtue came to be increasingly understood as relational and extrinsic to the agent,"[217] which was in opposition to the *via moderna*'s focus on internal intention. Chrysostom did not view the internal and external as in tension, for he wanted to hold the two together as necessary, though perhaps with some ambiguity.

In Homily 4, Chrysostom again praises Paul's philosophy because he is steadfast in the face of danger. Chrysostom then says, interpreting Phil. 1:21 speaking for Paul, "'For to me,' he says, 'to live is Christ, to die is gain. And even in dying,' he says, 'I shall not have died, because I shall have life in myself. They would've got rid of me then, if they'd had the power to remove belief from my soul through fear. But as long as Christ is with me, even if death catches up with me, I'll live'" (65/32). He then says, "That's the sort of person the Christian ought to be

[216] Dennis Bielfeldt, "Virtue is Not in the Head: Contributions from the Late Medieval and Reformation Traditions for Understanding Virtue Extrinsically," *Habits in mind: integrating theology, philosophy, and the cognitive science of virtue, emotion, and character formation*, ed. Gregory R. Peterson, Leiden: Brill, 2017, p. 64.
[217] Ibid., p. 75.

[Τοιοῦτον χρὴ εἶναι τὸν Χριστιανόν]" (65/32). The inference here is that if a Christian is like Paul in this way, sharing his philosophy, he too will live when death catches up with him.

In the paraenetic section of Homily 5, Chrysostom returns to exhorting his listeners to perform acts of mercy. He references the soteriological effects of mercy when he says, "Do you see how powerful God's pity is? It has created everything; it has produced the world; it has created the angels… We reach the kingdom through pity [βασιλείας δὲ τυγχάνομεν δι' ἔλεον]" (95-7/49). He also calls upon his audience to imitate God in his mercy, saying to them, "Consider that the world was created through pity, and imitate the Master [μίμησαι τὸν δεσπότην]" (93/47).

As we already covered, in Homilies 7 and 8, Chrysostom interprets Paul as bringing forth Christ as an example of humility for the Philippians to imitate. Before this, however, in Homily 6 he explains the soteriological import of this virtue. He elaborates on two benefits of humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη): that it allows man to treat his fellow man out of love and that it allows man to relate to God with gratitude. He then says, interpreting Phil. 2:3 when Paul tells the Philippians to adopt humility, "'But in humility' he says, 'count others better than yourselves.' Wonderful! How did he expound a teaching full of philosophy, a device for our total salvation?" (Βαβαὶ, πῶς δόγμα φιλοσοφίας γέμον, καὶ πάσης ἡμῶν τῆς σωτηρίας συγκρότημα ἐξέθετο) (101/52). Also in Homily 6, in the paraenetic section, when discussing the virtues of free speech and courage, Chrysostom gives a number of examples of these virtues from scripture, Paul being the most prominent. He then says, "If we know about these deeds, we are blessed if we perform them [μακάριοί ἐσμεν, ἐὰν ποιῶμεν αὐτά]. I mean that knowing isn't enough… I should say that knowledge itself condemns when it occurs without action and virtuous deeds. So in order to avoid judgment, let us seek out action in order to attain the good things that have been promised" (111/57).

In Homily 7, when discussing how Paul uses Christ as an example to exhort his audience to humility, Chrysostom discusses the effectiveness of using Christ as a model of virtue. It is a powerful exhortation because by imitating Christ, one can become like God. He says, "You see, nothing so rouses the great soul that loves wisdom to performing good works as understanding that through doing this it becomes like God [τῷ θεῷ… ὁμοιοῦται]. I mean, what is equal to this by way of exhortation? Nothing" (113/58).

In Homily 9, Chrysostom connects a couple of verses that mention salvation with the attainment of virtue. When Paul tells the Philippians that God works in them as they work out their salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13), it is implied that God will work virtue in the Philippians. Chrysostom gives his interpretation, speaking in the voice of Paul, "Don't be afraid because I said, 'with fear and trembling.' I didn't say that to make you give up, to make you think that virtue is hard to come by, but to make you attentive and not waste your efforts. If this happens, God will work everything. For your part, be bold, 'for it's God who is at work in you' [Phil. 2:13]. Therefore, if he's at work, we have continually to proffer a disciplined resolve, tight, indissoluble" (171/88). If the Philippians despair at Phil. 2:12 by thinking that virtue is hard to come by, they should learn in Phil 2:13 that God is at work in them to specifically produce virtue. Furthermore, when Paul says to the Philippians to hold fast to the word of life so that he would be proud that he did not labor in vain (Phil. 2:16), Chrysostom understands that Paul can be proud because he would share in the benefit of the Philippians' virtue, and this benefit is received on the day of Christ. He says, "'So I may be proud,' [Paul] says. 'I too share,' he says, 'in your benefits. Your virtue is so great that it doesn't only save you, but it also makes me illustrious' [Τοσαύτη ὑμῶν ἡ ἀρετὴ, ὡς μὴ ὑμᾶς σώζειν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμὲ λαμπρὸν ποιεῖν]" (183/94).

In Homily 13, there are also a number of places where Chrysostom explicitly connects virtue and salvation, the former of which is learned through imitation. In Phil. 3:13, Paul says that he forgets what lies behind him and strives forward to what lies ahead. For Chrysostom, what lies ahead is the advancement in virtue. Chrysostom uses the imagery of an athlete to make his point, saying that we should imitate athletes (Μίμησαι τούτους) in the sense that "[w]e must do this too - forget our successes and leave them behind us. After all, even a runner doesn't calculate how many laps he's finished but how many are left. Let us, too, not calculate how many laps of virtue we've finished but how many are left for us" (253/134). Paul is like this in the sense that "[e]very day Paul died; every day he gained credit. There wasn't an occasion, there wasn't a time in which his race didn't advance" (254/134). This advance in virtue leads on to the prize of the upward call of God (Phil. 3:14), and about this prize, Chrysostom says, "What's the prize? It's not a palm branch - no, what is it? The kingdom of heaven, eternal rest, glory with Christ [Βασιλεία οὐρανῶν, ἀνάπαυσις αἰώνιος, δόξα μετὰ Χριστοῦ], an inheritance, brotherhood, myriad good things that it's not possible to utter" (255/135). Also in Homily 13, in the paraenetic section, Chrysostom talks about how scripture provides many examples of virtue in scripture for a number of different circumstances. About this, he says, "There are myriad examples [εἰκόνες] in the Scriptures of virtuous lives. Go after whichever you wish, and after the Teacher find an example in his disciples… Proceed with what you want; after all, each one brings you to heaven [ἑκατέρα γὰρ φέρει πρὸς τὸν οὐρανόν]" (259/137). It is important to learn virtue from these examples because, according to Chrysostom, "virtue shines everywhere, and it's unconquerable, and nothing can stand in its way… Do you see that nothing can overcome virtue? Not wealth, not poverty, not ruling, not being ruled, not being prominent in affairs, not sickness, not ignominy,

not exile. No, leaving all these things below and on earth, virtue goes first to heaven. Just let the soul be noble, and there will be nothing to prevent its being virtuous" (261/138-9).

Finally, in Homily 15, after Chrysostom says that peacemakers imitate Christ and calls upon his listeners to likewise imitate Christ and make peace ("Be peaceful toward everyone… 'Blessed are the peacemakers, because they will be called sons of God' [Matt. 5:9]. Such people continually imitate the Son of God - you too must imitate him. Make peace" (291/156)), he explains that peacemaking is a virtue that brings one close to God, saying, "This is virtue; this is superior to human reason; this makes us close to God [Τοῦτο ἀρετὴ, τοῦτο μεῖζον ἀνθρωπίνου λογισμοῦ, τοῦτο θεοῦ ἐγγὺς εἶναι ποιεῖ]. Nothing gladdens God as much as the absence of malice. This releases you from your sins; this wipes out the charges against you. But if we fight and struggle, we are a long way from God" (291/156). The notion that the presence of virtue draws one close to God while the absence of virtue pulls one away from God means that virtue must be continually practiced throughout this life and into the next. In the same homily, Chrysostom expresses something similar when he says, "[W]hen we make our peace with him [God], we make our peace through virtue [Ὅταν γὰρ ἡμεῖς εἰρηνεύωμεν πρὸς αὐτὸν, εἰρηνεύομεν δὲ δὶα τῆς ἀρετῆς]" (289/154). MacIntyre defines the virtues as "precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve *eudaimonia* and the lack of which will frustrate his movement towards that *telos*."[218] In doing this, he differentiates between external and internal goods of virtuous actions. An external good is something like a prize or a trophy or money, while, with an internal good, the end is the life that one lives through the virtues. In the case of the former, the virtues that allowed one to reach these goods can be abandoned once the goal is reached. In the case of the latter, man continues to have need of the

[218] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed., Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2007, p. 148.

virtues, and if one abandons them they lose this good.[219] Applying this framework to Chrysostom, we can say that living through the virtues means living in closeness to and at peace with God, and this goal is the internal good of virtuous action. Living in this relationship with God is what it means for Chrysostom to live the good life. However, because this conception of the good life can only be fully achieved after death, living a virtuous life in closeness with God must remain in some sense a proleptic experience of the kingdom of God that comes to complete fruition after death. Nevertheless, the practice of virtue is still necessary throughout this life to maintain a closeness with God that will continue past death.

Another Way of Talking about Salvation - Κοινωνία as Soteriology

Despite all this focus on mimesis, I believe that it does not offer the full picture of Chrysostom's soteriological thought, and it is certainly not the only way that he talks about salvation with his homilies on Philippians. In discussing soteriology in Chrysostom's homilies, an analysis of the way he uses the term κοινωνία is indispensable; therefore, here, I will cover the way in which Chrysostom invokes the language of κοινωνία in his homilies on Philippians, focusing particularly on the way that it relates to salvation. My goal is to show that Chrysostom's soteriological thought is more than simply virtue ethics that can be learned through imitation. At the same time, my goal is not to introduce κοινωνία as an alternative soteriological scheme for Chrysostom, nor is it to integrate κοινωνία and mimesis into one scheme. My goal is simply to show the various ways Chrysostom describes actions with soteriological significance. I will also argue, however, that one of Chrysostom's goals in his rhetoric is for his listeners to have κοινωνία with those in the church and with Christ.

[219] Ibid., p. 149.

In modern scholarship, there is a general recognition that Chrysostom's soteriology involves a transformation of human nature in Christ. For example, Papageorgiou describes the soteriological implications of Christ's work in Chrysostom's thought in terms of a transformation of creation that puts on immortality. For Chrysostom, "God proved His love for us by the death of His own Son, which changed the world once and for all. He wiped out sin and destroyed death by defeating death in the resurrection and attaining immortality in His human nature."[220] Others, such as Lai, lean on the notion of participation to describe how one takes part in the life of Christ. For Lai, the "doctrine of recapitulation" is the framework for Chrysostom's soteriology, as well as the basis for his pastoral work. This means that Lai sees Chrysostom's soteriological system as a participation in the life of Christ, for, because Christ recapitulated the life of humanity, it is now possible to participate in his life and therefore elevate human nature. He says that "through His work of recapitulation, Christ has made it possible for Christians to renew or, in fact, transcend their nature, so as to participate in His life of obedience."[221] Lai also equates this participation in the life of Christ with being transformed into the image of Christ. He says that "the Christian's journey towards becoming the imago Christi, is no less than a life-long participation in Christ's work of recapitulation or, indeed, an actualisation of the human restoration won by Christ."[222] Chrysostom's goal of his preaching is to encourage people to participate in the life of Christ, as well as to teach them how. Lai says, "Chrysostom's psychic therapy, therefore, is the means by which he helps those under his care perceive how this doctrine may be practised in their lives."[223] Lai then connects Chrysostom's use of exemplary

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[220] Panayiotis E. Papageorgiou, "A Theological Analysis of Selected Themes in the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," PhD Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1995 (accessed through ProQuest Dissertations Publishing), p. 171.
[221] Pak-Wah Lai, "Exemplar Portraits and the Interpretation of John Chrysostom's Doctrine of Recapitulation," *Revisioning John Chrysostom: New Approaches, New Perspectives*, ed. Chris De Wet & Wendy Mayer, Boston: Brill, 2019, p. 589.
[222] Ibid., p. 592.
[223] p. 589-90.

portraits, or models of virtue, with the participation in the life of Christ when he says that when Chrysostom brings up these saintly models, it is understood that he is drawing from a metanarrative in which the saints participate in the life of Christ. This allows Chrysostom to describe what the Christian life should look like. Lai says, "Rather than mere ad hoc rhetorical devices applied randomly to the saints, it should now be clear that these traits actually form a coherent narrative structure that enables Chrysostom to depict a very specific vision of the Christian life. That is, a Christian should transcend the limits of his or her humanity by the power of the Spirit so that he or she can participate in or recapitulate Christ's human and yet divine life— the imago Christi."[224]

Similarly, Naidu is another scholar who draws on both participation and transformation to describe Chrysostom's underlying system of salvation. Both he and Lai view ethical behavior within the framework of participation in Christ. When Naidu discusses living the life of virtue in imitation of Christ in Chrysostom's thought, he embeds it within the ontological transformation of the believer in Christ, which he also describes as a sacramental participation with Christ. He says, "The life of virtue is viewed as a reflection of the transformation that has taken place in one's life. It is against this contextual background that Chrysostom's constant exhortations to his listeners to imitate Christ and live a virtuous life should be viewed."[225] Naidu can also bring in the language of conformity to Christ's likeness and the restoration of the divine nature. To him, these are also ways to describe Chrysostom's views on the believer's transformation in Christ, which he says precedes any sort of ethical imitation of Christ. He says, "The existential transformation wrought through Christ precedes our imitation of him in our lives… As sons who have been conformed to Christ's likeness, in whom the divine image has been renewed, we have

[224] p. 609.
[225] Naidu, *Transformed in Christ*, p. 149.

now been clothed with virtue because Christ is in us. The virtuous Christian life is the external evidence of the inward spiritual renewal because Christ is formed in us."[226]

For Naidu, Chrysostom's soteriology is his christology, for, as he says, "Chrysostom emphasizes the complete human experience of Christ: a Savior who has identified with us in his human nature, suffering, and death. The reality of our salvation depends on this complete identification with us."[227] Therefore, when one imitates Christ in suffering, one should not simply be increasing in virtue, for suffering allows the believer to be conformed to Christ's likeness. About this, Naidu says, "As a noble champion who has withstood the rigors of testing and affliction in his human experience, Christ has become our example. Christians must be willing to take up the cross and follow him. Christ not only identified with us in his human nature by entering brotherhood with us, he also experienced the pain of suffering. As the ascended Son and high priest he sympathizes with us, for he became an example by blazing a trail for the faithful to follow and can therefore rightfully be called the Captain or Author of our salvation."[228] For Naidu, the process of salvation in Chrysostom's thought, which is also the process of christological identification of the believer, is restoration, participation, and practice, and this process takes place within the sacramental life of the church. He says, "The christological picture that develops from the three perspectives of *restoration*, *participation*, and *practice* [sic] is thus framed around the life of faith in a sacramental and ecclesiastical context… This is apparent in the depictions of his christological thought which emphasize God's initiative in restoring humankind from the corruption of sin, giving them the privilege of enjoying divine communion,

[226] Ibid., p. 166.
[227] p. 195
[228] p. 195

and enabling them to live a life consistent with the existential transformation that has taken place in the Christian."[229]

Here, I am not trying to present or argue for a certain underlying soteriological scheme in Chrysostom's thought, merely point out what concepts he draws upon when talking about his congregation's salvation. However, some of Chrysostom's discussion around κοινωνία in his homilies on Philippians, which I will now discuss, is certainly not incongruous with some of what Lai and Naidu say about salvation as participation in Christ. That being said, integrating Chrysostom's language of participation into the same soteriological scheme as his language around virtue presents some difficulty, for, as we will see, he tends to keep the two discourses separate. They appear to be separate ways of talking of salvation for Chrysostom, so, here, I am content to simply point out the existence of these separate modes of discourse.

Κοινωνία as Financial Support

Κοινωνία is usually glossed as 'fellowship', 'participation', or 'sharing'. Chrysostom uses it to describe two contexts. The first is that κοινωνία refers to financial contributions one makes to support those who are performing meritorious works for the sake of Christ, such as preaching or braving dangers. By supporting such figures, who in Chrysostom's day correspond to the clergy, one can share in the merit of these works. The second way that Chrysostom uses the term κοινωνία refers to the fellowship that one can have in the life of Christ by taking on suffering in the flesh. For Chrysostom, if one walks the same road as Christ and other figures like Paul who also share in the life of Christ through suffering, one becomes like Christ. Both situations that Chrysostom describes as κοινωνία have soteriological implications.

[229] p. 166

Chrysostom first starts talking about the financial aspect of κοινωνία in Homily 1 when he says that Paul is praising the Philippians by calling them partners in his preaching (συγκοινωνοῦντές μου τῷ κυρύγματι). For Chrysostom, this is "a great testimony - both exceedingly great, and one that somebody would have given to apostles and evangelists" (21/9). Being a partner with Paul in the gospel is significant because, through their financial support, the Philippians share in the merits of Paul. Chrysostom explains that "the Philippians, even when they weren't with him, shared in his troubles, both sending men to him and supporting him as much as they could, neglecting absolutely nothing… Indeed, this is sharing in the gospel [κοινωνία ἐστὶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο]. You see, while he's preaching, you're looking after the preacher; you're partners in his crowns [κοινωνεῖς αὐτῷ τῶν στεφάνων]" (21/9-10). Chrysostom explains this by referencing two images, that of the athlete and that of the hero. He says,

> [E]ven in civic sports the crown goes not only to the sportsman but also to the trainer and the attendant, and in short to all who train the athlete. I mean that it would be fair for those who have brought him to peak fitness and enabled his recovery to have a share in the victory. And again, in war it would be fair that nor only the hero but also all those who look after him partake of the trophies and participate in the glory [καὶ τῆς δόξης μετέχοιεν], for the reason that they have shared in the battle by attending him [ἅτε κοινωνήσαντες αὐτῷ τοῦ ἀγῶνος τῇ θεραπείᾳ] (21/10).

He then sums up the principle, saying, "Attending saints can't be a small affair - no, it's a big one. Indeed, it makes us sharers in the wages accruing to them [κοινωνοὺς γὰρ ἡμᾶς ποιεῖ τῶν ἐκείνοις ἀποκειμένων μισθῶν]" (21/10). For Chrysostom, "this is part of God's beneficence [τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ φιλανθρωνίας], namely, to lead back by another road to the same rank as the saints above those who are more sluggish and incapable of taking up the hard, rugged, and strict life. This too Paul calls sharing [κοινωνίαν]" (23/10). Likewise, Chrysostom then exhorts his listeners to support those preaching the gospel in their own day, and in doing so they can have their sins

forgiven. He says, "I want both to urge you on and to exhort you to be an ally and supporter of God's saints [καὶ παρακαλέσαι πρὸς τὴν συμμαχίαν καὶ τὴν ἀντίληψιν τῶν ἁγίων τοῦ θεοῦ]… Accordingly, if you know that you, not they, are going to gain, you know that your gain is greater. Indeed, their body is nourished, but your soul enjoys esteem [ὑμῖν δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ εὐδοκιμεῖ]. None of their sins is remitted when they receive, but many of your offenses are cut off. Let us become partners in the saints' struggles so that we can become partners in their great prizes [Κοινωνῶμεν τοίνυν αὐτοῖς τῶν ἄθλων, ἵνα καὶ τῶν ἐκείνοις κοινωνήσωμεν μεγάλων ἐπάθλων]" (31/14-5).

Chrysostom's discussion around supporting the saints supports Hartney's contention that Chrysostom's ideal state of affairs did not require everyone to adopt a monastic lifestyle. He says, "But it would be a mistake to think that his preaching energies were devoted to encouraging his congregations to retire from urban life and adopt asceticism in all its extremes in the deserts or mountains outside of their cities… Instead he asks for a reinterpretation of existing models in a Christian framework. In fact, much of Chrysostom's preaching is directed at keeping the ancient city alive and thriving. The only difference is that it would be a demonstrably Christian city in all its components."[230] For Chrysostom, those who are not inclined to rigorous asceticism can still live Christian lives by financially supporting those who are, and the souls of the former benefit from this arrangement.[231]

In Homily 16, Chrysostom returns to the theme of the Philippians benefiting through their participating in the mission and troubles of Paul with their financial support. He says, "[I]n the

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[230] Hartney, *John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City*, p. 11.

[231] Some scholars nevertheless contend that Chrysostom wanted his congregation to adapt some ascetic practices in their daily lives. For example, Liebeschuetz says, "Chrysostom always made his programme of moral transformation seem much less revolutionary than it actually was… He does not want to restrict austerity and renunciation to limited periods of training. He wants it to pervade the entire life, and his hearers are to renounce every kind of luxury and display. Above all they are to understand that their every action has a religious significance… and that every aspect of life should be shaped in obedience to God" (Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom*, p. 203).

following passage he makes their enthusiasm burn by saying, 'Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble [συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει]' [Phil. 4:14]… Note that he didn't say, 'to give,' but 'to share,' showing that they were gaining too, if they became participants in his contests [εἴγε τῶν ἄθλων ἐγένοντο κοινωνοί]. He didn't say, 'you have lightened my troubles,' but, 'to share my trouble,' which was more serious" (301-3/161). Chrysostom explains the gain that the Philippians receive in terms of a trade, saying, "How did they enter into partnership [Πῶς ἐκοινώνησαν]? By the reason of giving material things and receiving spiritual things… I mean, there's nothing more profitable than this buying and selling. After all, while it happens on earth, it's perfected in heaven: the buyers have been stationed on earth, but they buy and strike bargain over heavenly things, depositing the price on earth" (305/162).

Κοινωνία and Suffering

For Chrysostom, κοινωνία usually carries with it the notion of joining in suffering with Christ and others within the church. Chrysostom also connects this κοινωνία in suffering with other soteriological language. Joining with Christ in suffering fashions one into the image and likeness of Christ, and if one becomes like Christ in his death, one takes on the power of his life, and the body will be able to put on immortality at the resurrection. Chrysostom can also draw a connection between κοινωνία and mimesis, and this has consequences for his rhetoric. He interprets Paul as imitating Christ by participating in the suffering and therefore the life and resurrection of Christ, and he can call upon his audience to imitate Christ in crucifying themselves and dying his death, which will in turn allow for the transformation of their lowly bodies into glorious bodies in the likeness of Christ.

In Homily 12, Chrysostom connects righteousness that comes through faith (Phil. 3:9) with participation in the life and resurrection of Christ. He explains that faith "bring[s] about righteousness. You see, you have to believe this because [Christ] has been able to do it… For it's from faith that fellowship in his sufferings comes [Ἀπο γὰρ πίστεως καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τῶν παθημάτων]. How? If we don't believe, we won't experience it either; if we don't believe that by enduring in common we shall reign in common [2 Tim. 2:12], we won't even have these sufferings [εἰ μὴ ἐπιστεύομεν ὅτι συνυπομένοντες συμβασιλεύσομεν, οὐδ' ἄν ἐπάθομεν τὰ παθήματα]" (239/126). This means that if we do believe in the power of Christ's death and resurrection, we will be able to suffer with Christ and therefore reign with him. Phil. 3:10 is also important here because it connects the power of the resurrection with sharing in the suffering of Christ and becoming like him in his death. Chrysostom gives Paul as an example of someone who becomes like Christ through his suffering. He says, "Paul, who recklessly surrendered himself to dangers, who was a participant with Christ in his sufferings, believed especially that Christ had risen; for he was a participant with the one who rose, who was living" (Οὗτος γὰρ μάλιστα πιστεύει, ὅτι ἀνέστη Χριστὸς, ὁ παραβόλως ἑαυτον τοῖς κινδύνοις ἐκδιδοὺς, ὁ κοινωνῶν αὐτῷ ἐν τοῖς παθήμασι· τῷ γὰρ ἀναστάντι κοινωνεῖ, τῷ ζῶντι) (239/126). He also says that by becoming like Christ in his death through suffering, Paul is made into an image of Christ. He says, "'Becoming like him in his death, [Phil. 3:10]' he says - 'that is, sharing. You see, just as he suffered on behalf of human beings, so too do I suffer' [τουτέστι κοινωνῶν. Καθάπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὑπο τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἔπαθεν, οὕτω κἀγὼ]… That is, Paul's persecutions and those sufferings fashioned that likeness of Christ's death [Τουτέστιν, οἱ διωγμοὶ καὶ τὰ παθήματα ταῦτα τὴν εἰκόνα δημιουργοῦσιν ἐκείνην τοῦ θανάτου]. For he sought not his own good but that of many… So it's as if he said: 'we are made an image of him [ἐξεικονιζόμεθα]'" (239/126-7).

Chrysotom then connects this with the resurrection when he says that through suffering we walk the same road as Christ, a road that ends in the resurrection of the body: "We believe not only that he rose but also that after the resurrection he had great strength. That's why we're traveling that same road that he traveled [τὴν αὐτὴν ὁδὸν ὁδεύομεν, ἥνπερ ὥδευσε]; that is, we are his brothers in that respect too [ἀδελφοὶ γινόμεθα αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο]. So it's as if he said, 'we are Christs in that respect too' [χριστοὶ γινόμεθα κατὰ τοῦτο]. Wonderful - is the reward of suffering so great [πόσον τῶν παθῶν τὸ αξίωμα;]? We believe that we are becoming like him in his death through his sufferings [πιστεύομεν ὅτι συμμορφούμεθα τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ διὰ τῶν παθημάτων]" (241/127).

Chrysostom also sometimes overlaps the language of κοινωνία with the language of mimesis. This is not too surprising given that both discourses are connected to salvation. This suggests that these discourses can be conceptually harmonized; however, given that I am not trying to present an integrated scheme that can be called 'Chrysostom's view of salvation,' and given that this overlap only occurs only in a couple of places, I will not pursue this connection further and simply point it out. Still in Homily 12, when Chrysostom reaches Phil. 3:12, when Paul says that he has not yet made the resurrection his own, Chrysostom connects imitations with suffering and becoming like Christ. He says,

> But if suffering so much, if being persecuted, if being mortified, he still couldn't pluck up courage concerning that resurrection, what are we to say? What's the meaning of 'to make it my own'? It's what he said earlier: 'if I attain the resurrection of the dead.' He means, 'If I make his resurrection my own. That is, if I'm able to suffer so much, if I'm able to imitate him, if I'm able to become like to him [Τουτέστιν, ἐὰν δυνηθῶ τοσαῦτα παθεῖν, ἂν δυνηθῶ μιμήσασθαι αὐτὸν, ἂν δυνηθῶ σύμμορφος αὐτῷ γενέσθαι]. For example, Christ suffered greatly, he was spat on, thrashed, flogged; later on he suffered what he suffered. That is a stadium: all those winning races

> have to go through these things before reaching Christ's resurrection in first place… If I can endure all the contests, I shall have been able both to achieve his resurrection and to rise in glory' [Ἂν γὰρ δυνηθῶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας πάντας ἐνεγκεῖν, καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν αὐτοῦ δυνήσομαι σχεῖν, καὶ μετὰ δόξης ἀναστῆναι] (243/128).

It is also interesting to note, however, that at the beginning of Homily 13 when Chrysostom interprets Phil. 3:13, in which Paul repeats that he has not made the resurrection his own, Chrysostom interprets it only in terms of virtue, making no mention of joining in the suffering of Christ. He says, "But if Paul hadn't yet made it his own, he could pluck up courage neither concerning the resurrection nor concerning what was to come - much less so, then, could they do so, who hadn't done a fraction of his virtuous actions. What he's saying is, 'I think I haven't yet made virtue completely my own' [οὐδέπω κατειληφέναι τὴν ἀρετὴν ἅπασαν ἡγοῦμαι], as if someone were speaking about a race" (251/132-3). He continues on to discuss the image of an athlete and how his audience should imitate the virtues involved in athletic training.

In Homily 14, Chrysostom also connects imitation with sharing in the death of Christ when he calls upon his congregation to imitate Christ and die his death. He says, "Wasn't your master impaled? Imitate the master in other ways: crucify yourself [Μίμησαι σὺ ἄλλως τὸν δεσπότην· σταύρωσον σαυτὸν], even if nobody crucifies you… If you love your master, die his death [Εἰ φιλεῖς τὸν δεσπότην σου, τὸν θάνατον ἀπόθανε τὸν ἐκείνου]. Learn how great the strength of the cross is, how much it has set right, how much it will set right, how it is the assurance of life" (267-9/142). Also in Homily 14, Chrysostom interperprets the transformation of lowly bodies to be like Christ's glorious body (Phil. 3:21) as something that requires suffering. He says, "Our body is suffering a lot now - it's in chains, it's scourged, it's suffering myriad terrible sufferings, but Christ's body suffered as much too [Πολλὰ πάσχει νῦν τὸ σῶμα… ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοσαῦτα ἔπαθε]. I suppose he's alluding to this when he says, 'to be like his

glorious body.' Indeed, the body's the same, but it puts on immortality [τὸ αὐτὸ μὲν ἔστιν, ἐνδύεται δὲ ἀφθαρσίαν]… Wonderful! This body of ours becomes like the one who sits at the right hand of the Father [ἐκείνῳ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ πατρὸς, σύμμορφον τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα γίνεται]" (273/145).

Furthermore, the road of suffering is not just with Christ, but Chrysostom can also invoke other saintly figures with whom he can then call his congregation to suffer alongside. This is apparent at the end of Homily 16, when he says to his congregation, "Let's be troubled with trouble [θλιβῶμεν θλῖψιν] from which respite blossoms, and let's not seek luxury from which great trouble and pain are produced… You aren't better than Paul, or than Peter either, or those who never attain respite, those who live in hunger and thirst and nakedness. If you want to attain the same things as Paul and Peter… if you want to reach that city that they have been deemed worthy of, walk along that road that leads there. The road of respite doesn't lead there, but the road of trouble does [Οὐ φέρει ἡ τῆς ἀνέσεως ὁδὸς ἐκεῖ, ἀλλ' ἡ τῆς θλίψεως]" (319/171).

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter, as well as this work as a whole, was to analyze some of the ways in which Chrysostom reads Philippians in terms of psychagogical strategies, as well as present some of Chrysostom's soteriological reasoning for reading the text as such. Adding to Mitchell, we showed that Chrysostom does not just use encomia of Paul to present him as a model of virtue for this congregation to imitate. We also showed that Chrysostom calls upon his audience to imitate various figures in Philippians and that his calls to imitation often follow simple *epainos* and do not have to be accompanied by full-scale encomia.

Adding to Rylaarsdam, who argues that Chrysostom sees Paul as a philosopher-rhetor, for whom the presentation of virtuous models of conduct is a teaching strategy, we showed that Chrysostom interprets Paul as presenting models of conduct to the Philippians. One of Paul's pastoral strategies, therefore, is to exhort the recipients of his letters to imitate various figures he presents to them in his letters. Chrysostom's rhetoric around imitation, therefore, is not unprecedented, as he himself is imitating the teaching strategies of Paul and of God, the ultimate philosopher-rhetor and co-author of scripture.

After this, we analyze the ways in which Chrysostom connects mimesis with salvation. In general, mimesis teaches the soul virtue, and it is virtue that allows one to have peace with and live in a close relationship with God (Homily 15). Ἐλεμοσύνη and humility are particular virtues that Chrysostom discusses at length in these homilies, but he often talks about ἀρετή in general terms. In Homilies 9 and 13, Chrysostom connects salvation to the advancement of virtue, and in Homily 13 he emphasizes that this virtue is learned through the imitation of Paul. Also connected to virtue is the embodiment of right *philosophia* and right *prohairesis*, though the one that features most prominently in these homilies is virtue, the prize of which is a beautiful soul that can live in the kingdom of heaven.

Also discussed in this chapter is another way that Chrysostom, when drawing on different concepts than virtue, *philosophia*, and *prohairesis*, can talk about salvation, and this discourse is centered around κοινωνία. Some of what Chrysostom says in these homilies supports the arguments of Lai and Naidu, who both locate Chrysostom's soteriology with participation in Christ and the resulting elevation of human nature. Chrysostom certainly connects participation (κοινωνία) in the sufferings of Christ with salvation, for it fashions one into the image and likeness of Christ (Homilies 12). By becoming like Christ in his death, one takes on the power of

his life, and the body will be able to put on immortality at the resurrection (Homily 14). Chrysostom can also draw a connection between κοινωνία and mimesis. He interprets Paul as imitating Christ by participating in the suffering and therefore the life and resurrection of Christ (Homily 12). He also calls upon his audience to imitate Christ in crucifying themselves and dying his death, which will in turn allow for the transformation of their lowly bodies into glorious bodies in the likeness of Christ (Homily 14).

However, something that complicates any reconstruction of a soteriological system in Chrysostom is that, at least in these homilies, he always keeps discourse around virtue separate from discourse around κοινωνία. This is why I hesitate to interpret one in terms of the other. I cannot say that virtue is to be understood as a way of participation in Christ or that participation in Christ is to be understood in terms of virtue because Chrysostom keeps these terms separated. In Homily 12, he even interprets Phil. 3:12, which is about Paul pressing on to make the resurrection his own, in terms joining in the suffering of Christ, but in Homily 13 when he interprets Phil. 3:13, which is also about Paul pressing on to make the resurrection his own, he only mentions virtue and not suffering or fellowship. Virtue and κοινωνία appear to be different ways of speaking about salvation in Chrysostom, and if one wants to reconstruct Chrysostom's soteriological thought, this separation needs to be overcome or at least noted.

Finally, we also point out that κοινωνία in Chrysostom can also refer to a sharing of finances in support of the saints and the clergy. Through such transactions, one can enter into a kind of fellowship with these figures and can gain a share of their heavenly rewards. The literature on Chrysostom's soteriology does not typically discuss this kind of κοινωνία and the soteriological import that Chrysostom attaches to it, perhaps because it is hard to fit this

discourse into other soteriological schemes. For future work on Chrysostom's soteriology might be wise to take it into account.

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