



C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE

## THE IMPORTANCE OF DAILY SCRIPTURE READING FROM THE SERMON, “ON LAZURUS”

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (350 – 407 AD)

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, TALBOT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY



usual custom is to let you know beforehand what subject I intend to preach on next week, so that before you come to church again you can read the passage for yourselves and get an idea of what it is all about.

At the same time this will help you to remember what I have already said about the subject, and what still needs explaining; and so you will be better prepared to hear what I'm going to say next. And may I urge you — as I always have done, and always will — don't just listen carefully to what the preacher says, but take time regularly to read the Bible at home as well.

When I have been with each of you in private, I have not stopped giving you the same advice. Do not let anyone say to me those vain words, worthy of heavy condemnation, “I'm too busy with government work and politics. I administer the business of the city. I'm a skilled laborer. I have a wife. I am raising children. I am in charge of a household. I am a man of the world; reading the Scriptures is not for me, but for those who have been set apart, the professional Christians like pastors and priests. The Scriptures are for monks and nuns, who have settled on the mountaintops, who keep this way of life continuously.”





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What are you saying, man? That attending to the Scriptures is not for you, since you are surrounded by a multitude of cares? Rather reading the Bible is for you more than for them. The more worries you have, the more you need the Bible to help you through your day! Monks and nuns who are set apart from the world are in quiet waters. They do not need the help of the divine Scriptures as much as those do who are involved in many occupations. You who are living in the midst of a tossing sea, driven by a multitude of sins, always need the continuous and ceaseless aid of the Scriptures. The monks rest far from the battle, and so they do not receive many wounds; but you stand continuously in the front rank, and you receive continual blows. So you need more remedies.

Your wife provokes you, for example,

your son grieves you,

your servant angers you,

your enemy plots against you,

your friend envies you,

your neighbor curses you,

your fellow soldier trips you up,

often a law suit threatens you,

poverty troubles you,

loss of your property gives you grief,

prosperity puffs you up,

misfortune depresses you,

and many causes and compulsions to discouragement

and grief, to conceit and desperation surround us on all sides,

and a multitude of missiles fall from everywhere.



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Therefore, we have a continuous need for the full armor of the Scriptures.

...there are many things which besiege our souls: we need the divine medicines to heal the wounds which we have received and to protect us from those which we have not yet received but will receive.

We must thoroughly quench the darts of the devil and beat them off by continual reading of the divine Scriptures...

Haven't you noticed how a blacksmith, stonemason, or carpenter, or any other craftsman, however much his back is against the wall, will never sell or pawn the tools of his trade? If he did, how could he earn his living? That is how we should think of the Bible. Just as mallets, hammers, saws, chisels, axes and hatchets are the tools of the tradesman, so the books of the prophets and the apostles, and all scripture inspired by the Holy Spirit are the tools of our salvation. ■

## JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (350 – 407 AD)

Known as one of the greatest preachers of all time, John's nickname, “Chrysostom” means “golden tongue”. His sermons are full of wisdom and illustrations still used by pastors today.

He grew up in a Christian home and was dissuaded by his mother from becoming a hermit. He eventually became the Bishop of Constantinople (today's Istanbul, Turkey). He often preached against the politicians of his day who he believed were doing harm to the church and society. Eventually this led to his banishment. He once stated, “Preaching makes me well. As soon as I open my mouth to speak, all my weariness is gone.”

