



## Saint John Chrysostom on the Miracles, Homily 32 on Matthew 9

But the miracles, perhaps, are what ye seek after, such as they wrought when they entered in; the lepers cleansed, the devils driven out, and the dead raised? Nay, but this is the great indication of your high birth, and of your love, that you should believe God without pledges. And in fact this, and one other thing, were the reasons why God made miracles to cease. I mean, that if when miracles are not performed, they that plume themselves on other advantages,—for instance, either on the word of wisdom, or on show of piety,—grow vainglorious, are puffed up, are separated one from another; did miracles also take place, how could there but be violent rendings? And that what I say is not mere conjecture, the Corinthians bear witness, who from this cause were divided into many parties.

Do not thou therefore seek signs, but the soul's health. Seek not to see one dead man raised; nay, for you have learned that the whole world is arising. Seek not to see a blind man healed, but behold all now restored unto that better and more profitable sight; and do thou too learn to look chastely, and amend your eye.

For in truth, if we all lived as we ought, workers of miracles would not be admired so much as we by the children of the heathen. For as to the signs, they often carry with them either a notion of mere fancy, or another evil suspicion, although ours be not such. But a pure life cannot admit of any such reproach; yea, all men's mouths are stopped by the acquisition of virtue.

Let virtue then be our study: for abundant are her riches, and great the wonder wrought in her. She bestows the true freedom, and causes the same to be discerned even in slavery, not releasing from slavery, but while men continue slaves, exhibiting them more honorable than freemen; which is much more than giving them freedom: not making the poor man rich, but while he continues poor, exhibiting him wealthier than the rich.

But if you would work miracles also, be rid of transgressions, and you have quite accomplished it. Yea, for sin is a great demon, beloved; and if thou exterminate this, you have wrought a greater thing than they who drive out ten thousand demons. Do thou listen to Paul, how he speaks, and prefers virtue to miracles. "But covet earnestly," says he, "the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." 1 Corinthians 12:31 And when he was to declare this "way," he spoke not of raising the dead, not of cleansing of lepers, not of any other such thing; but in place of all these he

set charity. Hearken also unto Christ, saying, "Rejoice not that the demons obey you, but that your names are written in Heaven." Luke 10:20 And again before this, "Many will say to me in that day, Have we not prophesied in Your name, and cast out devils, and done many mighty works, and then I will profess unto them, I know you not." Matthew 7:22-23 And when He was about to be crucified, He called His disciples, and said unto them, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples," not "if you cast out devils," but "if you have love one to another." John 13:35 And again, "Hereby shall all men know that You have sent me;" not "if these men raise the dead," but, "if they be one."

For, as to miracles, they oftentimes, while they profited another, have injured him who had the power, by lifting him up to pride and vainglory, or haply in some other way: but in our works there is no place for any such suspicion, but they profit both such as follow them, and many others.

These then let us perform with much diligence. For if thou change from inhumanity to almsgiving, you have stretched forth the hand that was withered. If thou withdraw from theatres and go to the church, you have cured the lame foot. If thou draw back your eyes from an harlot, and from beauty not your own, you have opened them when they were blind. If instead of satanical songs, you have learned spiritual psalms, being dumb, you have spoken.

These are the greatest miracles, these the wonderful signs. If we go on working these signs, we shall both ourselves be a great and admirable sort of persons through these, and shall win over all the wicked unto virtue, and shall enjoy the life to come; unto which may we all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might forever and ever. Amen.