

IN UNCERTAIN TIMES HOW DO THE HOMILIES OF SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA AND SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM SPEAK TO HUMAN IDENTITY IN THE BEATITUDES OF JESUS?

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Abstract

In this paper I present, through the eyes of Saint Gregory of Nyssa and Saint Chrysostom, a brief analysis of human resilience in the Beatitudes of Jesus Christ. I aim to explore how they equip the faithful to stand firm under both internal and external pressures and the swirling currents of uncertainty and fear.

How can we as individuals develop our inner resilience and peace of heart in order to be less impacted by the storms of life and persistent, challenging voices? I suggest a fresh look at this ancient wisdom would be beneficial. As Saint Gregory of Nyssa and Saint Chrysostom unpack the Beatitudes their wisdom unveils the glorious, salvific power in the words of Jesus.

Both Saints see the Beatitudes as a way towards greater purification, a cleaning of the image and so to increasing participation with the Godhead as wayward passions are brought under control. There is much agreement between them, and both are practical. Both speak directly into our response to the issues of our times.

By re-presenting the wisdom of the Saints to today's audience, all are invited to make steps towards greater beatitude, thereby being more empowered to stand firm. Those who wish for it can be transformed.

Keywords: Saint Gregory of Nyssa; Saint John Chrysostom; beatitudes; human identity

Writing Styles

Saint Gregory of Nyssa wrote a series of discrete, homilies that have the theme of ascent running through them; each beatitude being covered in one homily. He sees the Beatitudes as a series of steps up a ladder and his work is much the longer of the two. At times he writes about everyday life at great pace and in a theatrical style, jumping without breath into profound theology to hammer home his point. Inspired by Saint Origen, Saint Gregory