



June 24, 2020 Vol. 72, No. 24

## Reconciliation According to John Chrysostom\*



In fourth-century Antioch, a man died leaving his young wife a widow. She was only 20 years old and had a son named John to raise by herself. I cannot imagine what that must have been like for her. Christians had been in Antioch since the time of the Apostles. Peter was the Patriarch of Antioch, and Paul and Barnabas visited as missionaries. By the time of the Roman Emperor Theodosius I, one estimate put the number of Christians in the city at about 100,000 people.

The young widow's son John grew up to become a monk. When he was about 34 years old, he became a deacon. A few years later, in 386 CE, the Antioch church ordained John as a priest. According to history, he preached with such eloquence, people called him "Golden Mouth." In 398 CE, the church called him to be the bishop of Constantinople. This calling is somewhat ironic because he did not want to be a bishop. During the years he served, he spoke during many times of crisis.

Sharing God's message rarely leaves people unscathed. As the Bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom collected enemies who found his sermons hitting too close to home. On three occasions, his enemies convinced the emperor to send him into exile. During his third exile, in the modern country of Georgia, John died at 58 years old.

In a sermon with the title, "To Those Who Had Not Attended the Assembly," John addresses the apostolic saying, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them." It sounds like a combination of Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," and Matthew 25:35, "For I was hungry and you gave me food." The English translation of his sermon is over eight thousand words, which would take over an hour to deliver.

John begins, "My recent long sermon was useless... to address

## SERVICE OF HOLY WORSHIP

June 28, 2020  
11:00 AM

**Sermon:**  
"Listen to God"  
Dr. Matthew Tennant

**Scripture:**  
Jeremiah 28:5-9

**Anthem:**  
"Be Thou My Vision"  
(Rutter)

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## CALENDAR

### WEDNESDAY, June 24

10:00 PBJ Bible Study (*Zoom*)  
7:00 Sanctuary Choir (*Zoom*)

### SUNDAY, June 28

9:45 Online Bible Study  
11:00 Morning Worship  
(*radio and livestream*)  
7:00 Youth: Real Life (*Zoom*)

Other events and activities are being canceled or modified to be online-only when possible. Please contact your group leader or the Church Office with any questions

the missing people at church.” He was talking about people who had left the church or were not attending regularly. Even though the sermon was first heard over sixteen hundred years ago, the tone is fresh. He weaves theological brilliance with a practical faith. It includes some subtle arguments against several heresies.

In this sermon, John worries about the church becoming inconsequential. His liturgical context included regular feast days. He laments, “How am I distressed when we used to have so many gather for feasts, but now not even the smallest part of that multitude is gathered here?” It sounds like the fourth-century equivalent to saying, “Do you remember the good old days?” When I read his sermon, I wondered if the Christ-followers have recalled a brighter past since Jesus sent out the seventy (Luke 10:1-24). Imagine if a few days later someone muttered, “Remember when he sent out seventy? That was a good crowd.”

John Chrysostom’s sermon concluded that his listeners should reconcile with the people who “had not attended the assembly.” He wrote, “Forgive those who offend you so that you are forgiven for your own offenses. The greater the wrongs you can forgive, the greater the pardon you will receive... Forgiveness begins by forgiving oneself... Therefore, let us be earnest and eager to reconcile with those who have vexed us.”

John doesn’t introduce a new outreach program to bring back those who were missing from past feast days. He doesn’t try to shame anyone for leaving the church. He doesn’t use any of the counter-productive church growth techniques. He championed forgiveness and reconciliation—the basic building blocks of a life in Christ. For John, the two are connected. Reconciliation is built on forgiveness.

As we look at this broken world, we can be agents of reconciliation. We can follow the advice of a parent of the church, John Chrysostom, and we can look for ways to reconcile with others.

Peace,  
Matt

\* This is my 100<sup>th</sup> ‘On Watch’ and I want to thank everyone who reads this column each week. For those who have emailed me over the years to compliment, question, or complain, thank you all. Your engagement, whether it is positive, neutral, or negative, tells me you are reading it. Your readership is the only reason I write these words each week. If they do anything to help further your walk with Christ, I am blessed to be part of

## Prayer Concerns

Martha Williams - UVA Hospital

Sympathy is expressed to the family of Evelyn Odell who passed away in Seattle on June 9 at the age of 99. She and Henry were active members of UBC when they lived in Charlottesville.

Pray for our world, as we all face the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pray for those infected with the virus, for people who are taking care of them, and for all who are especially at risk.

Pray for our church family, that we may draw closer, even as we keep a physical distance from one another.

## Worship Leadership

Would you like to help lead in worship? Each week we are looking for people to read a Scripture lesson or lead in other ways. Typically, this means taking a short video of yourself--the camera on your phone is perfect for this. Talk to Alba if you're interested!

it. May God be with us as we continue on this journey together.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Join us in wishing some of our church family a Happy Birthday this week!

**June 27:** Sam Lee

**June 29:** Carolyn Lowry

May God bless you all with abundant joy on your birthday and always.

Having a birthday and do not see your name here? Please help us update our records. Contact Lexi to provide your updated information at (434)-293-5706



## Get Ready for Bible Study

This Sunday morning at 9:45, we conclude our Sunday Bible Study series in 1 Peter. Our focus will be 1 Peter 5, and we will also spend time tying up our series as a whole. As you prepare for our session, we invite you to read through 1 Peter—the entire book if you can, and especially the fifth chapter. In what ways does this chapter speak to the life of the church today? How does this passage wrap up the letter, bringing together the themes we have been exploring the past two months? We hope you will join us on Sunday and participate in the conversation as we conclude this series.

## Report from the Associate Minister Search Committee

As we reported last week, the Associate Minister Search Committee is continuing its work. They are meeting via Zoom, have interviewed candidates via Zoom, and are continuing to receive and review responses to questionnaires they have sent to select candidates. They continue to ask for your prayers and support.

## New Speakers Installed!

Installation is complete for the new speakers in our sanctuary. These audio improvements will provide a better sound quality when we are all able to gather again for worship.



## Need a Mask??

Volunteers in our church have been hard at work sewing beautiful fabric masks. Do you need one? This expression of love from our talented church members is one way that we can take care of one another. If you do not have a mask yet or if you need another, please contact the church office or one of the ministers so that we can get a fabric mask to you. There are also baskets of masks in the church lobby if you'd like to stop by and pick one up!

## Like to Sew?

We extend our deep gratitude to the volunteers in our church who have already made dozens of fabric masks for others who need them. If you would like to share your skills and join in this effort, call Will Brown or email him at [wbrown@universitybaptist.org](mailto:wbrown@universitybaptist.org)

**Sunday Mornings Online**

Even though we are not gathering in person, we are still joining together each Sunday morning for worship and Bible study. We hope you will join us!

### Bible Study

At 9:45 am, we begin an interactive Bible Study that is broadcast via [YouTube](#). We invite you to join in the conversation by adding comments during the session. To download the handout ahead of time, visit [universitybaptist.org/live](http://universitybaptist.org/live)

### Worship

Our Sunday morning worship service will begin, as usual, at 11:00 am. We encourage everyone in the congregation to join us from home. As always, you can listen by radio on WINA (1070 AM and 98.9 FM), or you can join us online for our live broadcast. To view the live video broadcast, visit our [Facebook page](#) or click [this link](#) to watch on YouTube.

### Online and Automatic Giving

## DID YOU KNOW?

Online giving simplifies contributing by allowing for a specific dollar amount to be sent to University Baptist Church on a specific date, thus decreasing the number of checks you have to write. You can set this up to happen automatically from your bank account, or make a single contribution on our website or Facebook page. For more information, visit [universitybaptist.org/give](http://universitybaptist.org/give) or call our church office.

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