

Let us take to ourselves a soul severe in goodness.

St John Chrysostom on St Matthew's Gospel, Homily XLVIII

Know that if fire goes forth from you
and consumes other men,
God will demand from your hands
the souls which your fire has burned.

And if you yourself do not put forth the fire, but are in agreement with him who does,
and are pleased by it, in the judgment you will be reckoned as his accomplice.

Saint Isaac the Syrian, *Ascetical Homily 51*, p. 383

NOT FOR THE SUFFERERS but for the wrongdoers do all righteous men grieve, since in fact these are they who, properly speaking, suffer ill. For neither was John [*the Baptist*] injured, but these the contrivers of such proceedings [*i.e. Herod who beheaded him at Herodias's instigation*]. Them [*i.e. righteous men who grieve for wrongdoers*] let us also imitate, and not trample upon our neighbors' sins, but so far as is right, shadow them over. Let us take to ourselves a soul severe in goodness. For so the very evangelist, speaking of a harlot and a blood-stained woman, avoided harshness, as far as might be. For neither did he say [*that St. John the Baptist's head was asked for*] "by the blood-stained and accursed woman," but "being before instructed of her mother," using such names as have rather an innocent sound.

But thou dost even insult and revile thy neighbor, and couldest never endure to make mention of a brother that had grieved thee in such terms, as he hath done of the harlot, but with much brutal fierceness, and reproaches, calling him *the wicked one, the malefactor, the crafty, the fool*, and many other names more grievous than these. For so we make ourselves more and more like wild beasts, and talk of him as of a man of monstrous origin, vilifying, reviling, insulting. But not so the saints; they on the contrary mourn for such as sin, rather than curse them.

St John Chrysostom, Homily XLVIII on St Matthew's Gospel
NPNE, First Series, Vol. X, p. 301

ON THE DAY WHEN YOU ARE PAINED IN SOME WAY, either in body or in mind, for the sake of any man, be he good or evil, reckon yourself as a martyr on that day, and as one who suffers for Christ's sake and is deemed worthy of confession. For remember that Christ died for sinners, not for the just. See how great a thing it is to grieve for wicked men and to benefit sinners even more than the righteous!

St Isaac the Syrian, *Ascetical Homily 51*, p. 381

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