

YEAR 2 (5 of 12) May 2026

5 & 10 – Victorious Christians You Should Know: John Chrysostom

Dear Church Family,

Some victories in the Christian life are not won in private struggle alone, but in the costly courage to speak truth when it would be safer to remain silent. The life of John Chrysostom reminds us that faithfulness to Christ often requires both conviction and courage.

John Chrysostom (c. 347–407), whose name means “golden-mouthed,” was known for his extraordinary preaching. Yet his boldness was not formed overnight – it was shaped through both careful training and deep personal discipline.

Raised in Antioch, John was influenced profoundly by his mother, Anthusa, a widowed believer who chose not to remarry so she could devote herself to raising her son in the Christian faith. Her example of sacrificial devotion left a lasting impression on him. Even as a young man trained in rhetoric – the art of persuasive speech – John turned away from ambition and withdrew for a time to live an ascetic life, immersing himself in Scripture and prayer. These hidden years helped form the spiritual depth that would later mark his public ministry.

When John eventually began preaching in Antioch, crowds gathered to hear him – not because he entertained them, but because he spoke plainly, directly, and biblically. He addressed sin without flinching and called people to wholehearted obedience to Christ.

One well-known moment came during a season of political unrest, when citizens feared severe punishment from the emperor after acts of rebellion. John preached a series of sermons urging repentance, humility, and trust in God rather than panic. His steady voice helped calm the city and direct hearts back to the Lord.

Later, as bishop of Constantinople, his faithfulness was tested even more deeply. John spoke openly against corruption, greed, and moral compromise – even among the powerful. He lived simply and redirected church resources to care for the poor, refusing the luxury expected of his position.

This boldness came at a cost. After publicly confronting the excess and sin of the imperial court, John made powerful enemies. On one occasion, he preached against vanity and extravagance, which was widely understood as a rebuke of the empress herself. Not long after, he was arrested and exiled.

Even in exile, his resolve did not waver. When told that his banishment would silence him, John is remembered for responding in essence that no earthly power could separate him from Christ. Hardship, distance, and suffering did not diminish his faith – they refined it. What sustained John through such trials was a deep confidence in God’s Word.

One passage that shaped his preaching and life was: “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.” (2 Timothy 4:2)

John lived this out with remarkable consistency. He did not adjust his message to suit his audience – he faithfully proclaimed Scripture, trusting God with the results.

He also held a strong conviction about the Christian life being visibly distinct: “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

For John, this was not theoretical. Whether in the pulpit, in the streets, or in exile, his life pointed beyond himself to Christ.

His writings and sermons continue to influence the church to this day, marked by clarity, conviction, and a deep concern for both truth and love.

John’s life reminds us that Christian victory is not found in approval, comfort, or security – but in faithfulness to Christ, whatever the cost.

Most of us will not stand before emperors or face exile for our faith. But we are called to the same kind of courage in our own settings – to speak truth, to live with integrity, and to remain steadfast when obedience is difficult.

“Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

John Chrysostom lived this out – boldly, faithfully, and without compromise.

May his example lead us to deeper conviction, greater courage, and a renewed commitment to stand firm in the truth of God’s Word.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Chris