

## On Not Despairing (Saint Amfilokhios Bishop of Iconium)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



### ***Saint Amfilokhio's feast day is the 23rd November***

There was another brother who, after sinning, repented and then withdraw into solitude. It happened, though, that he struck his foot on a rock and injured it so badly that blood came pouring out of the wound. He lost so much blood, in fact, that he died. The demons came and wanted to carry him off, but the angels said: 'Look at the rock and the blood he shed for the Lord'. Because of what the angels said, his soul was set free.

Satan appeared to another brother who'd fallen into sin and told him: 'You're not a Christian'. The brother replied: 'Whatever I am, I'm still better than you'. Satan came back: 'I'm telling you, you'll go to hell'. The brother replied: 'You are neither my judge nor my God'. So Satan left empty-handed, whereas the monk showed genuine repentance before God and became a saint.

One monk who had succumbed entirely to depression asked an elder: 'What am I going to do? I'm thinking I made a mistake in abandoning the world and that I won't manage to be saved. The elder replied: 'Even if we can't enter the Promised Land, it's still better for us to leave our bones in the wilderness than to go back to Egypt'.



Another brother asked the same elder: 'Father, what does the prophet mean when he says: 'There's no salvation for him from his God'. The elder replied: 'He means the thoughts of despair that come from the demons to those who've sinned and tell them that there's no salvation for them from God. They do this in an effort to plunge them further into despair. What we have to do is tell the demons that the Lord is our refuge and He'll free our feet from the snares they've set'.

One of the fathers related that there was a women's convent in Thessaloniki. Through the actions of our common enemy, one of the nuns left the monastery and fell into the passion of fornication, which held her in thrall for a good long time. But at some stage, with the help of our merciful God, she repented and returned to her

monastery. When she arrived at the gate, she fell down dead. Her death was revealed to a saint, who saw the holy angels coming to receive her soul, as did the demons. In the argument which followed, the angels said that she'd repented, whereas the demons replied: 'She was enslaved to us for such a long time that she belongs to us. In any case, she didn't even manage to get back into the monastery, so how can you say she repented?'. The angels replied: 'From the moment God saw what it was she wanted to do, He accepted her repentance. Of course, repentance was within her power, because she'd made it her goal, but her life was within the power of the Lord of the universe'. At this, the demons were shamed and withdrew. The person who had this revelation then told those present about it.

A brother asked Abba Moses: 'Suppose somebody beats their servant for some mistake he's made. What should the servant say?' The elder replied: 'If he's a good servant, he'll ask forgiveness for making the mistake'. 'Nothing else?' 'Nothing, because from the moment he recognizes his mistake and acknowledges it, his master will have mercy on him'.

A brother said to Abba Pimen: 'If I fall into a serious transgression, it eats away at me and my thoughts condemn me for falling'. The elder replied: 'If, when you sin, at that moment you say "I've sinned", then the thoughts stop at once'.

There was a young girl called Taïsia whose parents died and so she became an orphan. She turned her home into a hostel for the fathers of Skete and for a long time she welcomed them and provided hospitality for them. But when she'd spent all she had, she fell on hard times. Then some perverted people approached her and got her to stray from the good path she'd been on. She lived a sinful life and ended up a harlot. When the fathers heard this, they were very sad. They called on Abba Ioannis Kolovos (John the Short) and said: 'We've heard that this woman is living in sin. When she was able to, she showed great love to us. We'd like to help her in any way we can. So go and see her and, with the wisdom God's given you, make her see the error of her ways'.

So the elder went to see her and said to the old woman who was the door-keeper: 'Tell your mistress I'm here'. She wouldn't let him and said: 'Before, you consumed everything she had and now she's poor'. The elder insisted: 'Tell her from me it'll turn out very well for her'. So the old woman went and told the young woman about the elder. She dressed and told the servant to show him in.

When Abba Ioannis went in, he sat down next to her and looked into her face: 'What caused you to reject Christ and get yourself into this situation?', he asked. When she heard his words, she froze, while he bent his head and began to weep

bitter tears. 'Why are you crying, Abba?' He raised his head, before bending again: 'In your face, I see Satan dancing'. 'Can I repent, Abba?', the girl asked. 'Yes', he replied. 'Then take me wherever you want'. 'Let's go', said the elder. She stood up straight away to follow him. The elder noticed that she left no instructions regarding the house and wondered at that.

When they were getting close to the desert it began to get dark. The elder made up a little pillow for her, made the sign of the cross over it and told her to sleep there. He did the same for himself a short distance away and, when he'd finished his prayers, he also lay down.

He woke at midnight and saw something like a path of light, starting with the girl and ending in the heavens. He also saw the angels of God ascending with her soul. He got up, went to her and nudged her with his foot. When he'd confirmed that she was dead he knelt and pressed his face to the ground, interceding with God. Then he heard a voice telling him that the one hour of her repentance had been accepted, more so than that of many others, which had lasted a lot longer but wasn't so heart-felt.

***Source: [agiazioni.gr](http://agiazioni.gr)***