

Take-Home Five

Faith Working Through Love

Abide

The Eucharist, Grace, and Staying in Christ

What We Found

We opened the envelopes, and the range was wide. Most of the hedging was protecting something sound: Catholics hesitate at the question because they know something about perseverance and do not want to sound presumptuous. That instinct just had no words yet.

Now it does. Scripture speaks of salvation in three tenses. By grace you have been saved. To us who are being saved. He who endures to the end will be saved. So the honest answer is: I have been saved, I am being saved, and I hope to be saved. Not a dodge. Three verses.

Then we found what James does with Abraham. He says the scripture was fulfilled which says Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him, and he says it was fulfilled when Abraham offered Isaac. But that scripture is Genesis 15 and the offering is Genesis 22, many years later. The gap is his argument.

Voices of the Church

Voice of the Church

The Second Council of Orange

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The council condemned the view that anyone can make the first movement toward God by natural powers, and taught that even the beginning of faith is the effect of grace. Roughly a thousand years before the question was raised again.

Voice of the Church

St. Augustine

Given as a summary of his teaching; no locus printed

What distinguishes living faith from the faith the demons have is love, and the same grace that gives faith gives the love by which it works.

Voice of the Church

St. Gregory the Great

Given as a summary of his teaching; no locus printed

The proof of love is shown in deeds. A faith that never issues in action has given us no reason to think it is there.

Ready Response

“Are you saved?” This is the question you sealed in an envelope in week one, so answer it now the way you could not then, warmly and without apologising: I have been saved, I am being saved, and I hope to be saved. If your friend wants to know where it comes from, it is Ephesians 2:8, 1 Corinthians 1:18, and Matthew 24:13, one verse for each tense.

“James means justified before men.” Grant that it is a serious reading held by serious people, and grant too that James is going after dead assent, which your friend very likely opposes as strongly as you do. Then put the gap in front of them, which is what the group found for itself: whatever justify means, James says the reckoning of Genesis 15 was fulfilled at Genesis 22, many years later; depending on how one reads the chronology of Abraham’s life, decades separate them. That is a claim about the shape of faith over time.

“So faith is not enough for Catholics.” The question hides a premise, that faith and love are two separate things to be stacked up. You do not believe that, so say so before you answer anything. Living faith is enough, and Galatians 5:6 is where you found the phrase for it: faith working through love. Note who wrote it. It is Paul, and it is your memory verse this week.

Live It This Week

- Memorise the three-tense answer. Practise it until it is not a speech.
- Read James 2 in one sitting and notice how practical the whole chapter is.
- Do one concrete thing for one person, this week, that costs you something.
- Keep praying for your person by name.

Memory Verse

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love.” **Galatians 5:6**

Before Next Session

Read: John 10:27-30. Four verses, and in 28-29 no one can snatch. Sit with how good it is.

Catechism: CCC 1814-1816. If you read only one, read 1814.