

Session 7 Take-Home: The Warnings Are Real

What We Found

The study kept its promise: John 15:6 got its night. Branches, people "in me", that stop abiding are "cast forth... thrown into the fire and burned." And the warnings kept coming, every one addressed to believers: the wilderness generation, "baptized into Moses," fed on Christ the Rock, "overthrown in the wilderness," written down "for our instruction... let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:1-12); grafted branches cut off unless they "continue in his kindness" (Rom 11:22); people "once enlightened... partakers of the Holy Spirit" falling away (Heb 6:4-6); the apostate "sanctified" by the very blood he profaned (Heb 10:29); Christians "severed from Christ... fallen away from grace" (Gal 5:4); and Paul disciplining himself "lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor 9:27). The warnings have no exemption clause for apostles.

We also granted, gladly, what the assurance texts promise: no one can **snatch** Christ's sheep from his hand (Jn 10:28); nothing in all creation, no external enemy on Paul's whole list, can separate us from God's love (Rom 8:35-39). But one thing is missing from that list, and Scripture warns of it elsewhere: "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God" (Isa 59:2). God's love never ceases; grave sin is what breaks our communion with it, from our side. The sheep cannot be stolen. The question is whether the sheep can wander, and the Shepherd tells a parable about exactly that. Assurance gets its own full night in Session 12; the promise stands.

On our own map, we are wilderness people: rescued at the font, fed on the way, not yet home, reading mail addressed specifically to the confident.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Cyprian of Carthage

On the Lapsed (251)

After the Decian persecution, St. Cyprian grieved over the *lapsi*: baptized, communicant Christians who denied Christ under threat. Their fall was real and their peril mortal, he teaches in substance, and then he spends his strength on the road back. The early Church's penitential practice plainly treated post-baptismal falling as a real pastoral reality, and built the theology of mercy for it.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Augustine of Hippo

On Rebuke and Grace (c. 427)

Some truly receive the grace of justification, St. Augustine teaches in substance, and yet do not persevere in it to the end; the gift of persevering is distinct, and no one may presume it of himself. Grace is entirely God's gift, and the warnings are entirely serious; the Doctor of Grace held both at once.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Alphonsus Liguori

The Great Means of Prayer (1759)

St. Alphonsus teaches in substance that persevering prayer is the necessary ordinary means of salvation: the grace to stand is offered to all, and prayer is how the believer goes on receiving it; abandoning prayer abandons the supply line. Falling has an anatomy, and so does standing. The one who keeps asking, keeps receiving.

Live It This Week

Pray daily for perseverance. One sentence, every day: "Lord, grant me the grace of final perseverance." The Church begs this gift because it is a gift; join her.

Walk the map. Reread 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 at home, through verse 13 this time: the warning chapter ends with a promise about temptation and the way of escape. Scripture warns like a Father.

Check the drift. Name, privately and honestly, the one place you have been coasting on "I stand." Bring it with you; next session is the one the envelopes have been waiting for.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."

1 Corinthians 10:12 (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read 1 John 1:5-2:2.

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