

Radiant and Unfading

Take-Home • Session 9: Give Me the Wisdom That Sits by Your Throne

What We Found

After last week's answer, chapter 8 becomes more personal. The author courted Wisdom like a bride: I loved her and sought her from my youth, and I desired to take her for my bride, and I became enamored of her beauty (8:2). Wisdom is not a subject to master but a person to love, and the pursuit runs on desire, fidelity, and time together. Then the verse whose names every Catholic has been using since catechism class without knowing it: she teaches self-control and prudence, justice and courage (8:7), the four cardinal virtues, named as a set, in Scripture; when the Catechism teaches them, it quotes this verse (CCC 1805). And they are called her labors: the virtues are wisdom's own work in a soul, grown with God's grace, not a self-improvement program.

The author then made the smartest move intelligence can make: he discovered its poverty. I perceived that I would not possess wisdom unless God gave her to me, and it was a mark of insight to know whose gift she was (8:21). So he prayed, and we prayed his prayer with him: give me the wisdom that sits by your throne, the royal speaker, traditionally read in Solomon's voice, praying as a beggar, weak, short-lived, of little understanding, which the Catechism calls the foundation of all prayer (CCC 2559). His opening parallel, all things made by your word, by your wisdom formed man (9:1-2), we chased to John 1, where the Word is the person through whom all things were made. John does not use the word wisdom; Paul supplies it, naming that same person the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24), which is why the Church has always read the two lines as converging on one person. And the prayer's last line opened the door to next week: men were saved by wisdom (9:18).

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose • Exposition of the Gospel of Luke V.62; compare On the Duties of the Clergy, Book I (4th century)

Commenting on the Beatitudes, Ambrose gives one of the earliest Christian uses of the term cardinal, from *cardo*, hinge, for prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance: the four hinges the whole moral door swings on, practiced by the patriarchs long before the philosophers cataloged them.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John of the Cross • *The Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza 1 and its commentary (16th century)

The Church's mystical Doctor wrote in tonight's key: the poem opens with the soul as bride searching for the Beloved who seems hidden, where have you hidden, Beloved?, and for St. John the courtship language of Scripture is precision, not decoration, because the end of the spiritual life is a union so close that only marriage can describe it. Our takeaway from him: a person who pursues God as information will plateau, and a person who pursues him as the Bridegroom will be pursued back.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Catherine of Siena • *The Dialogue, and Raymond of Capua's Life of Catherine (14th century)*

Her biographer records the word she said she received (Life of St. Catherine, Part I, ch. 10): You are she who is not; I am he who is. Her Dialogue unfolds it, teaching that self-knowledge and the knowledge of God grow together, the posture of Wisdom 9:5-6. Catherine counseled popes, and prayed from that nothing.

Live It This Week

- **Pray the chapter.** Once each day, pray Wisdom 9:1-6 and 9:10 aloud, slowly, in your own name. Let the inspired words train yours.
- **Practice one cardinal virtue.** Choose the one in which you most need to grow, prudence, justice, fortitude, or temperance, and choose one small, repeatable way to practice it this week.
- **Lectio with James.** Sit with James 3:13-18 once. Ask which mark of the wisdom from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy, is most missing from your speech, online and off.
- **Warm up your Genesis.** Before next session, skim Genesis 1-12, 19, 22, 27-28, and 37-41, and Exodus 14-15. You will be glad you did. That is all we will say.

Memory Verse

“Give me the wisdom that sits by your throne, and do not reject me from among your servants.”
(**Wisdom 9:4**)

Before next session: read Wisdom 10, with Genesis close at hand.

Catechism references: CCC 1805, CCC 2559.

Scripture We Opened

- Tonight's text: Wisdom 8:2-9:18
- The discovery: John 1:1-3 (word and wisdom converge)
- The discovery: James 3:17 (the wisdom from above)
- Proverbs 4:6-8 (love her, and she will guard you)
- Wisdom 1:14 and 2:23 (creation wholesome; made for incorruption)
- Wisdom 3:9 and 7:14 (abiding in love; friendship with God)
- Wisdom 7:7 (Therefore I prayed; the asking method)
- Wisdom 7:22-23 (the twenty-one attributes)
- James 3:13-18 (the wisdom from above, in full)
- 1 Kings 3 and 1 Kings 8:27 (Gibeon; temple-dedication humility)
- Psalm 33:6 and Proverbs 3:19 (by his word; by wisdom he founded the earth)
- 1 Corinthians 1:24 (Christ the wisdom of God)
- Galatians 4:4; Luke 24:49 with Acts 1:4-5 and Acts 2:1-4 (the two sendings)
- James 1:5 (ask God, who gives generously)
- Jeremiah 1:5
- Romans 8:23 (the redemption of our bodies)