

Take-Home 8: The Law Is Holy

Romans 7 · Keep this sheet; bring it back each week

What We Found

The sealed guesses opened. Measured against seven weeks of text, the study's answer so far: salvation begins in grace, free and unearned (3:24; Gen 15:6); it is received through faith in Christ crucified and risen (3:25; 4:25); that faith is met and sealed by God's own act in Baptism, the sacrament of faith, where the heart is circumcised without hands (6:3-4; Col 2:11-12); and the faith that receives it is living: the obedience of faith (1:5), completed by works (Jas 2:22). We asked what we must do; half the answer was receive.

Then chapter 7 named what is still missing. The law is holy, just, and good (7:12): it exposes even desire ("You shall not covet," Ex 20:17) but cannot cure what it exposes. So the honest heart finds itself at war: "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (7:19), Eden's deception replayed in every one of us (7:11; Gen 3:13). The chapter ends in a cry and its answer: "Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (7:24-25). Deliverance is a Person. What his Spirit does in us is next week.

My Answer, Revisited

In one sentence, dated today: what must a person do to be saved? Write your Session 8 answer below and keep it with your original to the end of the study.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

On the edge of conversion St. Augustine caught himself praying, "Give me chastity and continence, but not yet" (Confessions VIII.7): one man, two wills. And in his *Retractations* he tells us he first read the "I" of Romans 7 as man without grace, and later heard in it the spiritual man still at war. Both readings have continued within Catholic interpretation; the chapter is a mirror.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

St. John Chrysostom, in his homilies on Romans, teaches in substance that the wretched "I" is humanity under the law without grace, dramatized in the present tense so that the rescue of chapter 8 lands with full force: a before picture, painted by a man who remembers.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

St. Francis de Sales, counseling gentleness toward ourselves in the *Introduction to the Devout Life* (III.9), teaches in substance that the soul that falls should be lifted quietly and set back on the road: bitterness at

our own weakness is pride in disguise. Lose without despair; rise without delay.

Live It This Week

- Each time the war of 7:19 flares this week, pray the chapter's own prayer, all of it: Who will deliver me? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- If a recurring fall has been carrying shame, take it to Confession this week, and receive the sacrament as God acting.
- Remember: temptation and inclination are the war, not the defeat; they "cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ" (CCC 1264).

Memory Verse

"Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Romans 7:24-25 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Romans 8 once, slowly; many call it the greatest chapter in the Bible. Catechism references for this session: CCC 1963, 1264, 405.