

THE STRONGER ONE · TAKE-HOME
Session 8: The Spoils of War

Keep this sheet. It is yours, and it is private.

WHAT WE FOUND

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore” (Galatians 5:1): the gift and the garrison in one sentence, and freedom’s content is love: “through love be servants of one another” (5:13). “The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes” (CCC 1733). The voice we tracked for eight weeks was finally named from Jesus’s own mouth: the devil is “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44): the pattern behind every whisper, amplified by flesh and world: and answered for good: “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free... if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (8:32, 36). The truth that frees is not merely information but ultimately a Person (John 14:6); against the father of lies, God sent his Son.

The Gerasene: tombs, chains, “Legion”: then “sitting there, clothed and in his right mind,” begging to come along: and sent home instead: “Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you” (Mark 5:19). Freedom’s first assignment is testimony, delivered where they knew you walled. And Isaiah’s buried fourth verse gave the study its final discovery: the captives freed in verse 1 become the builders in verse 4: “They shall build up the ancient ruins... the devastations of many generations” (Isaiah 61:4). The Stronger One “divides his spoil” (Luke 11:22): the spoils are people: recovered, then deployed. In the garrisoned house, the fruit grows (Galatians 5:22-23): and we went out with Israel’s shout: “the snare is broken, and we have escaped!” (Psalm 124:7).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Irenaeus of Lyons

Against Heresies IV.20.7

One of his best-known sentences, literally: “the glory of God is a living man, and the life of man is the vision of God” (the popular modern paraphrase: “the glory of God is man fully alive”). A human being restored to full life is what the Father’s renown looks like in public. Every wall that comes down makes God visible.

Both the common rendering and the more literal one are given; the sentence is his.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Augustine of Hippo

Confessions, Book I (ch. 1)

We began with Augustine bound (the chain of habit, Book VIII). We end with the sentence he placed at the front of the same book: “you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” Every stronghold was a counterfeit rest. The man of the chain became the man of the rest: by finally coming home.

Quoted in the standard English rendering of Confessions I.1.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. John Paul II

Homily at Oriole Park at Camden Yards, Baltimore, 8 October 1995

“Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.” The stronghold promised freedom as license and delivered slavery; Christ delivers freedom as the power to love: and it holds.

LIVE IT: THE STANDING ORDERS (FOR LIFE, NOT A WEEK)

- **Keep the garrison.** Morning suit-up, nightly examen, frequent Confession and Communion, the countersword, the tell-someone person: freedom's watch schedule, kept lightly and joyfully, from love, never for earning.
- **Work your card.** Pray the name daily. Do the act this month. Then find the next name; the ruins are large and the crew is hiring.
- **Tell the shape.** When God opens the door, tell the Gerasene version: how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

Galatians 5:1

From the Catechism: CCC 1733; 1832; 2044.

THE COMMISSIONING CARD

The restored rebuild the ruins (Isaiah 61:4). Somebody you know may need encouragement, prayer, or hope tonight, and your own history gives you a rare empathy and credibility for reaching them: used with discernment, stability, and help. Names are never shared aloud. Write, and then do:

One name I will pray for daily (someone who may need encouragement, prayer, or hope):

One act of strengthening within my reach this month (an invitation, a conversation, a meal, the shape of my story):

The Gerasene rule: narrate mercy, not pathology. What can always be told: "I was stuck; Christ was stronger; here is where mercy lives." How much more, and to whom, is discernment work: your confessor or director helps. Your Wall stays yours.