

## Session 2 · When Doing Right Goes Wrong

*Tobit 2:1-3:6*

### What We Found

At a Pentecost feast, Tobit's first instinct was to invite a poor man to his table, the very banquet policy Jesus would later command in Luke 14. What arrived instead was news of a body, and Tobit left his dinner to bury the dead, again, while the neighbors laughed at a man who never learns. Virtue in this book is not one heroic decision; it is a habit that survives its own punishment.

Then the absurdity: sleeping outside after the burial, Tobit was blinded by sparrow droppings. The wound is strikingly undignified, and the story seems to want it that way: most real suffering is not cinematic. And quietly, in one verse, it was Ahikar, the nephew from chapter 1, who fed Tobit for two years.

The deepest cut came from inside the house. Suffering had made Tobit suspicious, and he wrongly accused Anna over a gift goat; her reply is the question of the whole book: Where are your charities and your righteous deeds? It is Job's wife in a Nineveh doorway, and the book will spend all its remaining chapters answering her.

Tobit's prayer (3:1-6) held two things in one breath: flawless praise of God's righteousness, and a plea to die. We learned that biblical faith under pressure is not serenity; it is anguish that still knows God's address. And against the skeptic's case that the sparrows prove providence false, we conceded what is true, refused the cheap answers God himself condemned in Job's friends, and held the Catholic answer: no explanation, but a history, creation, covenant, cross, and resurrection, in which God brings good out of evil in his own time.

### Voices of the Church

#### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

**St. Augustine of Hippo** · *Sermon 88, on the blind men of Jericho (early 400s)*

Augustine points to Tobit as the great paradox: a man blind in his eyes who nevertheless showed his son the way of life. The truest sight is not in the body, a word we need when the meaning of suffering stays hidden.

#### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

**St. Gregory the Great** · *Moral Reflections on Job, Preface (c. AD 590)*

Gregory teaches that God permits the just to suffer for different reasons than the wicked: sometimes correction, sometimes protection, sometimes purely so that hidden virtue may be revealed and increased. He forbids the arithmetic of Job's friends, who read every wound as a punishment.

#### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

**St. John Chrysostom** · *No One Can Harm the Man Who Does Not Injure Himself* (c. AD 405)

Writing from his own unjust exile, Chrysostom argues that no external catastrophe can damage a person's real treasure, a soul set on God; only sin can do that. Tobit lost property, standing, and sight, yet the one thing that made him Tobit was untouched.

## Live It This Week

1. Pray one Tobit prayer: out loud or on paper, tell God the truest thing about your current struggle, and end it, as Tobit does, by saying one true thing about who God is.
2. Identify one place where your own pain is making you suspicious or unfair to someone close to you, as Tobit was to Anna, and make one concrete repair: an apology, a question asked instead of an accusation, a benefit of the doubt extended.
3. Read Tobit 3:7-17 before next session. Pay attention to where the scene changes, and to what the narrator lets you see that no character can.

**Scripture Memory** · **Tobit 3:2 (RSV2CE)**

*"Righteous art thou, O Lord; all thy deeds and all thy ways are mercy and truth, and thou dost render true and righteous judgment for ever."*

**Before Next Session.** Read Tobit 3:7-17.

**Catechism** CCC 164 · CCC 309 · CCC 312 · CCC 1500-1501