

Take-Home · Session 3

The Works of the Flesh

What We Found

Paul's fifteen works sort into clusters: body, worship, community, appetite. Eight of fifteen wreck community, a proportion that suggests how seriously Paul takes the sins the pious excuse in themselves.

"And the like" keeps the list open: the flesh is one heart-direction with endless expressions, so it cannot be managed by inventory. It must be crucified (Galatians 5:24), a death begun in baptism.

Genesis 4:7 pictures sin as a beast crouching at the door: personal, hungry, and resistible. Cain was not doomed; warned at the door, he still chose to open it, so to speak.

The warning of Galatians 5:21 is addressed to the baptized and meant seriously: unrepented mortal sin, grave matter chosen with full knowledge and deliberate consent, forfeits the kingdom, which is why the Church offers confession as the remedy.

Voices of the Church

St. Gregory the Great · *Moralia in Job XXXI.45, summary*

The great vices are commanders, each leading an army of smaller sins into the soul. The battle plan we draw from his image: meet the captains, not only the foot soldiers.

St. Augustine · *City of God 14.28, summary*

Two loves built two cities: love of self unto contempt of God, and love of God unto contempt of self. His two loves are a lens for reading the works: ask which love each one serves.

St. Thomas Aquinas · *Summa Theologiae I-II q. 84, summary*

Capital sins are heads, sources from which other sins flow as means to their ends. The application is ours: find the head, and the fight gets simpler.

Live It This Week

This week's one thing. Make a ten-minute examination of conscience using the four clusters.

Important. If you are aware of mortal sin, turn back to God and seek sacramental Confession as soon as possible; do not wait for a pattern to develop. Regular Confession also helps us grow when our sins are venial.

• Optional: Pray Genesis 4:7 at the door of your most familiar temptation.

Memory Verse

Galatians 5:24 · And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Before Next Session

Read Ephesians 5:3-14 and John 3:19-21.

Scripture this session: Galatians 5:19-21; 5:24; Genesis 4:1-7; Romans 5:20; Ephesians 5:8a · Catechism: 1852, 1861, 1866, 1989-1993, 2010