

TAKE-HOME • SESSION 4

The Promise of Outpouring

What We Found

The prophets did not just describe the old pattern of the Spirit; they promised its end, and they made the promises to a nation at rock bottom. Ezekiel: a new heart, a heart of flesh for the heart of stone, and "I will put my Spirit WITHIN you," not upon but within. Jeremiah: a new covenant, not like Sinai, with the law written on hearts, God supplying from inside what He commands. And Joel, after the locusts ate everything: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh," sons and daughters, old and young, even the servants, people of every age, sex, and standing, including all the overlooked. Moses' wish from the wilderness has become a signed promise. One question is left open on purpose: when does the promise get kept?

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (*On the Spirit and the Letter*)

The letter of the law, standing outside a person, commands what it cannot give; the Spirit of the new covenant writes God's law inwardly and supplies the love that fulfills it. As Augustine prayed elsewhere: give what You command, and command what You will.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 106*)

The New Law is chiefly the grace of the Holy Spirit, given inwardly to believers; the written teachings of the Gospel express and guide the life that grace gives (I-II, q. 106, a. 1). Jeremiah's law written on hearts describes what the Holy Spirit does to a person.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Gregory Nazianzen (*Oration 41, On Pentecost*)

God gives the Spirit by stages, accustoming us to His gifts by degrees: the Spirit worked in the prophets, was breathed on the apostles by the risen Christ, and was manifested with new fullness at Pentecost.

Live It This Week

Parent and candidate together. Each evening, each of you names one "stone moment" from the day, one moment your heart went hard: impatience, a grudge, a cold shoulder. No commentary and no fixing each other. Then pray one line together: "Take our hearts of stone, and give us hearts of flesh." Name it, pray it, done.

Memory Verse

"A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26)

Table Talk

One question for the drive home or the dinner table: Joel's list included every kind of person nobody expected. Who is someone the world overlooks that you suspect God has big plans for?

Before Next Session

Read Luke 3:15-22, twice.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 715, 1965, 1966.