

TAKE-HOME • SESSION 11

The Seven Gifts

What We Found

The seal marks the crate; tonight we opened the cargo. Two kinds of equipment, and the difference matters: the seven GIFTS (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord) are received with grace at Baptism and strengthened at Confirmation, and their job is the receiver's holiness, making a soul in grace quick to catch the Spirit's promptings. The CHARISMS of 1 Corinthians 12 are distributed deliberately unevenly, one to this person and another to that, and their purpose is stated in five words: for the common good. The gifts are the Church's naming of Christ's own equipment become our inheritance: what rested on the Head at the Jordan was distributed at Pentecost, one flame per person, and the Spirit believers receive is the Spirit of Christ Himself, not a lesser substitute; tradition hears Psalm 133 singing it, the oil on Aaron's head running down onto the robes. And the first person in the whole Bible whom God says He FILLED with His Spirit was not a prophet, priest, or king: he was Bezalel, a craftsman, filled with the Spirit for excellent work with his hands. The gifts are for Tuesdays.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Basil the Great (*On the Holy Spirit, chapter 9*)

The Spirit is like sunlight, which each person enjoys as if it shone for him alone, yet it lights land and sea and mingles with the whole air. He gives Himself in proportion to each one's capacity, yet remains whole to each and wholly present everywhere. Nobody is working from the Spirit's leftovers.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Gregory the Great (*Moralia on Job*)

The seven gifts are an ascent the Spirit works in a soul: fear of the Lord the first step and wisdom the summit, the climb rising until the soul tastes things as God tastes them. Not seven trophies on a shelf, but one Spirit's ascending work, and the gifts operate together rather than one rung at a time.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 111*)

There is grace that makes the receiver holy and pleasing to God, and there are graces freely given so that through one person others may be helped toward God (I-II, q. 111; on the gifts themselves, q. 68). The seven gifts belong with the first kind; the charisms are the second, distributed as the Spirit wills. Knowing which you are looking at is half of spiritual sanity.

Live It This Week

Parent and candidate together: gift-spotting. Once a day, each of you names ONE of the seven gifts you saw operating in the other person that day, out loud and specifically: "I saw fortitude in you when you..." You are not complimenting; you are bearing witness to the Spirit's activity in someone who probably cannot see it in themselves. By Sunday you will both have seven pieces of evidence.

Memory Verse

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

Table Talk

One question for the drive home or the dinner table: The first man Scripture calls filled with the Spirit was a craftsman, filled for building God's sanctuary. What is the work in each of our hands right now, and what would doing it for God change?

Before Next Session

Read Galatians 5:16-26, twice.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 1830, 799, 800.