

TAKE-HOME • SESSION 12

The Fruits

What We Found

Paul's grammar is his theology. The WORKS of the flesh, plural: separate deeds a person manufactures, and the catalog includes the respectable ones, enmity, strife, jealousy, factions, filed right beside the sins everyone gasps at. But the FRUIT of the Spirit, singular: one organic life with nine facets, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, tending to grow together the way one healthy tree carries leaf and blossom and fruit, even while particular virtues ripen unevenly and in season. Works are what we produce; fruit is what we become. We found the vine: the branches' foundational job is one word, repeated again and again: remain. And it is this study's favorite verb: the Spirit descended and REMAINED on Jesus at the Jordan; the branch REMAINS in the vine; fruit grows at that address and nowhere else. Fruit takes seasons; Scripture's own growth chart (Psalm 1) says "in its season." Anyone whose patience did not arrive this week has described week one of an orchard, not a failure.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (*Homilies on the First Letter of John*)

Love, and do what you will. Not that anything goes, but the opposite: a heart truly rooted in the love of God can be trusted with freedom, because what grows from that root will be good. The root determines the produce.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom (*Commentary on Galatians*)

Paul says WORKS of the flesh but FRUIT of the Spirit, and Chrysostom, expounding Galatians, drew out the contrast: evil deeds are wrought from ourselves, while the good grown in a believer is fruit of the Spirit, from a life shared with Another. The inventory-and-harvest wording is this study's gloss on his point.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thérèse of Lisieux (*Story of a Soul, Manuscript B*)

"In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be love": her own words. The rest is her life's evidence: sanctity made almost entirely of fruit borne in hidden, ordinary places, patience with the irritating, kindness with no audience, joy held onto in illness. Proof that the fruit list is a real job description, achievable at any age, in any hallway.

Live It This Week

Parent and candidate together. You chose one facet of the fruit your household most lacks. Every day this week, each of you does one deliberate act of it at home, and at dinner or in the car names what you did in one sentence, no speeches. One fruit, one act, one sentence, seven days. You are not manufacturing the fruit; you are practicing standing where it grows.

Memory Verse

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Table Talk

One question for the drive home or the dinner table: Who is someone we know whose life shows real fruit under real pressure? What do we think their root is?

Before Next Session

Read Acts 1:1-11 again. And one thing to start praying about this week: if you have not yet chosen a sponsor or a saint, ask God to start pointing.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 736, 1832, 2074.