

Le Nouvel Esprit:
A Video Series on the Theology of
the Body

TOB 51, General Audience of Dec. 17, 1980

Gal. 5:17

- “The flesh has desires contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires contrary to the flesh.”
- Tension within man’s innermost being, the heart
- There is a power within the heart as a fruit of original sin where the body sets itself against the spirit and can gain the upperhand
- This dominance of the flesh coincides with St. John’s conception of threefold concupiscence, 1 John 2:15-16

The Meaning of Flesh

- Meaning of flesh, fn 59
 - Sinful flesh is not identified with the psychical body
 - Flesh understood as the vehicle of the self in its relating to the external world and lower levels of experience
- Two false meanings of flesh, fn 60
 - 1) Jewish pagans demanded that pagan converts get circumcision
 - Flesh here is a symbol of submission to the laws of the Old Testament
 - 2) Pneumatics who believed that the work of the Holy Spirit as man's divinization
 - This interpretation did not capture the ethical content of this work
 - Flesh is understood as all that brings man to the object of concupiscence
 - St. Paul distinguishes between the object of an action and flesh
 - Man is enslaved once he entrusts himself to flesh

Two Lives

- Meaning of world, fn 61
 - St. Paul, God is forgotten in this realm that abandoned itself to impurity of the heart and sexual deviancy
 - This disfigures the sexual, social, economic, and culture spheres of man's life
 - St. John, the world is the place of the threefold concupiscence
 - Place of Christ's enemies and false prophets who try and seduce the faithful away from Christ
- Two lives
 - Life according to the flesh
 - Is opposite of life according to the Holy Spirit
 - Is a reality different from that of the Spirit
 - The tension and conflict between Spirit and flesh is immanent, taking place within the heart of man
 - The desire spoken of in Matt. 5:27-28 is living in accordance to the flesh

Justification

- Justification

- “the power of Christ himself working in man’s innermost being through the Holy Spirit.” TOB 51:3, (p. 332)
- “The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us ‘the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’ and through Baptism.” CCC 1987
- “...is not merely remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man through the voluntary reception of the grace and gifts...” Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, ch 7; Cf. CCC 1989

- Causes of Justification

- Final cause: glory of God and eternal life
- Efficient cause: God who washes us, infusion of grace
- Meritorious cause: Christ through his death and resurrection on the cross
- Instrumental cause: the sacrament of baptism
- Formal cause: God’s justice

Romans 8:5-11

- “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit on the things of the Spirit. But the desires of the flesh lead to death while the desires of the Spirit lead to life and peace. In fact, the desires of the flesh are in revolt against God because they do not submit to God’s law nor are they able to. Those who live according to the flesh cannot please God. But you are not under the dominion of the flesh but of the Spirit from the moment that the Spirit of God dwells in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. And if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of justification. The one who raised Jesus from the dead will give life also to your mortal bodies by his Spirit, which dwells in you.”

Reflections on Romans 8:5-11

- Describes a return to the “beginning” and the origin of life according to the flesh
- Looks ahead to the final victory over sin and death
- Justification in Christ is intended for historical man
- Justification is essential for the interior man, for the heart of man
- Justification is a real power at work within man that reveals itself in man’s actions

Gal. 5:19-23

- “Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these...The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-mastery”
- Life according to the flesh has both interior and exterior acts
- Works of the flesh are the fruit of threefold concupiscence
- New Testament ethos has the actions of the fruit of the Holy Spirit
- This fruit is mastery over the threefold concupiscence

More on Fruit of the Spirit

- Fn 61, meaning of “fruit” of the Spirit
 - Emphasizes God’s action within man, the effect of the action of the Holy Spirit
 - This fruit is a gift
- Behind the fruit of the Spirit is a decision by man
- Man must choose virtue, there is an effort of the will
- The Holy Spirit
 - The reason man is stronger over flesh
 - Has stronger desires than the desires of the flesh
 - Causes its desire to bear fruit in the good

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