

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

TOB 52, General Audience of Jan. 7, 1981

# Some General Points

- The desires of the flesh are in opposition to the desires of the Holy Spirit
- The life according to the flesh is antithetical to the New Testament ethos
- The New Testament ethos has at its basis an ethical and anthropological realism
  - Includes the redemption of the body
- In the heart of man redemption bears fruit thanks to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which brings about justification
  - See our video on TOB 51 wherein we defined what is justification

# Christ's and St. Paul's Teaching

- Christ in Matt. 15: 2-20
  - Purity and impurity have their seat in the human heart
  - Impure works includes evil acts of the flesh, evil intentions, and more.
  - Uses purity and impurity in both a general and specific manner
    - General: all morally good deeds fall under purity, similarly with evil deeds and impurity
    - Specific: reference to acts of the flesh
- St. Paul is analogous with his distinction between life according to the Spirit and life according to the flesh

## Rom. 8:12-13

- “So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh; for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live”
- Definitive meaning is parenetic and exhortative, so belongs to the ethos of the New Testament
  - Parenetic, “hortatory; encouraging; persuasive.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary
- Must put to death the works of the flesh
  - Helped by the Holy Spirit
  - Same message as Christ on the Sermon on the Mount with the appeal to the heart and master over concupiscent desire
  - Indispensable condition for the New Testament ethos
  - Self-mastery over the works of the flesh

# Life according to the Flesh and Death

- Death does not simply refer to bodily death, but also spiritual death
- Death refers to both mortality and mortal sin
- Mortal sin excludes man from the Kingdom of God
  - These sins include those against purity
- Mortal sin
  - “Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him. Venial sin allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it.” CCC 1855
  - “If any one sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is to pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which is not mortal.” 1 John 5:16-17
  - For more information, see CCC 1852-1864

# Works of the Flesh

- “Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Gal. 5:19-21
- “But immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints. Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving. Be sure of this, that no immoral or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” Eph. 5:3-5

# Concluding Remarks

- Man is called to freedom
- This freedom is a freedom with which Christ sets us free
- Man reaches justification in faith that works through love
  - This justification comes from the Holy Spirit
- We realize the purity of heart to the degree of freedom we possess

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