



# CATHOLIC SCRIPTURE STUDY

Catholic Scripture Study Notes written by Sister Marie Therese, are provided for the personal use of students during their active participation and must not be loaned or given to others.

## SERIES I

### THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson 11 Commentary Luke 8 – 9:1 - 50

Lesson 12 Questions Luke 9:51 - 10

### JESUS BEGINS THE CHURCH

Luke 8 - 9:1-50

#### I. THE NEW ISRAEL, THE CHURCH (Luke 8:1-56)

**A. Women Disciples.** As Jesus journeyed, women disciples followed him. The practice of the Jews was that women were outsiders, for they belong in the home, Luke points out faithful women throughout his Gospel (See Luke 23:49; 23:55; 24:1-11). This practice prepares the early church for including women in the community, as we see in Romans 16:1,3,6; 1 Corinthians 16:19, and finally, again in Luke— Acts 1:14,

The mention of Mary of Magdala (town on the west bank of Lake Galilee) whom Jesus cured of “evil spirits and maladies” led to an assumption, perhaps a real tradition from oral sources, of this Mary as a sinful woman. But the Greek does not really imply that. Her trouble may have been mental or emotional illness, or, of course, it could be possession, though these early peoples thought all abnormalities were from the devil.

#### B. Parables

**1. The Sower (Luke 8:4-15).** Jesus used examples from the lives of the people; fields of grain were around Him. What would Jesus use today if He were talking to us? Here, He reflects the method of sowing in that early land, and gives four conditions the seed may fall on, with only one producing harvest. When asked, Jesus explained the seed as the Word of God (his preaching and teaching) and the conditions were the kinds of responses people give to it. Carefully examine your own responses to the Word—allowing the evil one to take it from your heart, to open yourself to temptation, or “stifle it with the riches, cares, and pleasures of life?”

Notice verse 15 and the three ways the good grain matures.

**2. The Lamp (Luke 8:16-18).** Those who hear the word are not to guard it for themselves, or develop it for their private growth and holiness, but to shine on others.

**C. The Mother and Brothers of Jesus (Luke 8:19-21).** Luke sees Mary as the type or model of the Christian disciples, the community.

She is one who, as he remarks, “hears the word of God and keeps it.” It is for this she is great; not just for her motherhood. The “brothers” mentioned here need an explanation for Catholics. See Mark 16:3 and 15:40, Luke 24:10, Matthew 27:56, and John 19:25. These were relatives of Jesus (all such were called “brothers”), with a different mother and a different father. Here, Jesus teaches and declares himself dedicated to the mission God has given which requires a transcendence of an earthly family. We call this “vocation.” God’s call on us is primary, our priority. The Christian community bonds us in a new way!

## II. JESUS POWER OVER NATURE: FOUR MIRACLES (Luke 8:22-56)

**A. The Stilling of a Storm (Luke 8:22-25).** This and the following events show Jesus responding to faith, trust; even demanding it before He consents to use His power. Where is your faith?” He says, clearly disappointed; then He rebuked the sea as one does a misbehaving child. The disciples’ fear changes to an astonished awe, and they have a question, “Who is this man?”

**B. Then they take Him to the Gerasene’s land,** on the other side of the lake, not in Jewish territory (Luke 8:26-38). The state of the deranged man suggests a disorder that began in Eden: with God, others, self, nature.

The man is driven to the desert, not by the Spirit, but by Satan; he lives among the tombs of the dead; he seems tormented by the presence of Jesus—God; he wants to hide himself, as Adam did; he refuses to wear clothes—in Eden the gift of a compassionate God; his name is lost; demons reply when Jesus asks his name.

Jesus seems almost compassionate to send the devils into the swine instead of into hell, their place of torment. This causes the owners and profiteers of the swine to ask Jesus to leave—he disturbed their economy! The lesson was lost on them. But the lost and abandoned man immedi-

ately turns to Jesus, clothed, and full of joy and gratitude. It is a picture of two ways of reacting to Jesus. He knows the man will be faithful to the effect of Jesus in his life, and sends him to tell “all that God has done for you.” This is all Jesus asks of many of us; to go to our friends, neighbors, and family and tell about Jesus’ effect on us. This is to be an “evangelist”—the bearer of the good news of Jesus to others.

**C. Jairus’ Child and a Hemorrhage Victim (Luke 8:40-56).** Back on the western shore, Jesus is warmly welcomed, even by the chief of the synagogue. He pleads for his dying daughter, begging that Jesus come to her. Leaving the crowd, Jesus starts off, only to be engulfed in the pressing crowd. Then a mere touch on His garment stops Him. The strange scene reveals that Jesus knows when “power goes out from him.” Here, He wanted to call forth a public witness. He loves the woman’s simple faith and praises it with these important words for us: “It is your faith that has cured you. Go in peace.” Jesus, it seems, almost automatically responds to our trust, our great belief that He can and will; as a child of ours does when coming to us. Can we learn this trust that works miracles?

At the house the little girl has died; in the midst of a scornful crowd who does not trust Him, Jesus says, “Fear is useless; what is needed is trust, and her life will be spared.” The father trusts, and leads Jesus to the room of the dead child, where Jesus gives one of His greatest miracles, to a child: a resurrection from the dead. He is to do this twice more, each time with one who was dead longer than the other. Notice in this miracle, that Jesus takes only His privileged disciples, and that, as always, Peter is mentioned first. Also, notice the tenderness of Jesus in telling the mother to give the child something to eat.

## III. THE APOSTLES TRAINING (Luke 9:1-60 and Matthew 10)

**A. The Apostles sent on Mission (Luke 9:1-6).** The Apostles were not only the Church that Jesus was forming; they were the authorities appointed by Him. He has carefully built up their belief and trust in Him, and has taught them the truths He has come to bring. But there is more to do, He sends them out now to proclaim the good news. Then He shares His power and gives them a vision of His glory; but He makes it clear that His mission on earth involves suffering and humiliation. He asks them to live poor, as He does.

**B. The Return of the Twelve (Luke 9:10-17).** The Apostles related their accomplishments with elation. Jesus, knowing their tendency to grandeur, retired to a small town and area, to be alone with them. But by now, both He and they were known too well; crowds swarmed out to Bethsaida, the home town of Andrew, Peter, and Philip, where Jesus had gone. Jesus immediately received them warmly, preached, and “healed all in need of it.”

Then He could not send them away hungry, and asked the apostles to give them something to eat. In this great miracle told by all the evangelists, the apostles had to admit they had “only” five loaves and two fish; then Jesus gave directions for seating the huge crowd, gave the blessing, and sent the apostles out with the five loaves and fishes. What a demand He made of their faith here! As the bread multiplied in their hands (a foreshadowing of the Eucharist through the ages) both they and the crowd exulted at the power of Jesus; His compassion; His shepherding of the flock (See Numbers 27:17, 1 Kings 22:17).

The language used in Luke 9:16 is liturgical, Eucharistic. Compare with Mark 6:41, and John 6:11. Including the apostles in the distribution is a foreshadowing of the future Church, and the number twelve stands for all Israel, twelve tribes, twelve baskets, twelve apostles. Luke uses twelve a significant number of times. Another foreshadowing is that the people are no longer without a shepherd. Jesus feeds, and gives His disciples the

instruction to feed others. The small groups suggest the future church, one, yet in small groups in the world.

Luke at this point does not continue following Mark as he has up to here. He skips from Mark 6:45 to Mark 8:26. Scholars call this the Great Omission.

Here Luke continues with an important event about the Church and its foundation.

**C. Peter’s Profession of Faith (Luke 9:18-22).** This is a turning point in the earthly career of Jesus. Peter speaks for all the group, to whom Jesus had asked the blunt question. The great acknowledgment revealed to Peter here, has an important addition in Matthew’s account (See Matthew 16:16-19). A new name is given to the chief spokesman, the chief apostle. The Greek word for “rock” (petra or petros) and the office it implies, is called “the primacy of Peter” and is continued by his successors in the Rome Diocese, the Bishop of Rome. That is why we call our universal Church The Roman Catholic Church; the place name stands for the Bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter, the head appointed by Jesus and martyred there. “Catholic” stands for “all over the world”.

**D. The Conditions for Discipleship (Luke 9:23-27).** These conditions are addressed for all the followers of Jesus: deny self; do not put first your self and personal interests; rather have in mind the Master and His aims and interest. (He put His own behind Him to consider ours.) Take up your cross; patiently bear trials. (Jesus’ statement originally pertained to martyrdom.) “Follow me”: accepting Jesus’ way of life. Reflect today on your following Jesus in such ways. The expression, “save one’s soul,” in the Aramaic meaning, is “save your own person.” All this is the opposite of gaining the whole world. All these terms of Jesus seem to reflect a business world: gain, lose, profit, loss.

**E. The Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36).**

The purpose of this mountain scene is to show that Jesus' Passion is in God's plan; also, to corroborate Peter's profession of faith in who Jesus is, and to strengthen the disciples for the road ahead. Moses and Elijah come to bear witness of the Old Testament Law and Prophets to Jesus. Peter's strange request shows he was overwrought by sleep and awed by the glory of Jesus; he was overcome by desire to prolong the moment. The cloud overshadowed all four of them. Jesus is called, "My Son, my chosen One" which recalls Moses' words foretelling "a prophet like myself; ...listen to him" (Deuteronomy 18:15). This revelation of Jesus' real identity is called the "messianic secret," and Mary of Nazareth—the first Christian—knew it first.

**F. The Cure of an Epileptic and Rebuke of the Apostles (Luke 9:37-43; Mark 9:14-29).** Luke shortens the account of Mark but adds "only son," and the crowd's "astonishment at the majesty of God." Jesus rebukes the apostles for lack of faith and the father of the child for allowing his confidence to be shaken. This is a lesson for us in what Jesus expects of us: believe that he will, not only that He can. Another point is that Jesus was aware of the urgency of His time and is frustrated by His disciples' slowness in being ready to assume His mission.

Then He adds what we might call a "bombshell." "Pay close attention to what I tell you," and He foretold to them His Passion. They did not understand, and were afraid to ask for an explanation. Probably they did not want to know; it was so hard to know...

Jesus began to warn them about their human ambition to be the greatest among them. After so many years with Jesus, we too aren't humble! The kingdom, Jesus says, has no place for degrees of greatness; all, even a child, are great. Remember, "even the least born into the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist." An office in the Church is a service. Be a lackey; be a child; neither of them are bearers of power. The Papal proper title is: Servant of the Servants of God.

In a turnabout play, the apostles come to Jesus criticizing a man whom they saw casting out demons in the name of Jesus, giving as their reason, "He is not one of us"! Jesus seems appreciative of anyone who is not an enemy! The apostles had just failed to expel a demon for lack of trust... Yet they became saints. Hope on.

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- c. Do these instructions apply to earnest Christians today? Explain.

Day 4 Read Luke 10:25-37, Leviticus 19:18, and Deuteronomy 6:5.

- a. In Jesus' parable, how is the "hero" different from what the Jews would expect?

- b. What is the lesson here?

Day 5

- a. In the U. S, even now, who would the good Samaritan be? The Jew?

- b. In your opinion, what progress has been made?

Day 6 Read Luke 10:38-42.

- a. What does Jesus wish Martha to change?

- b. This story could be about two aspects in each of us. What could its lesson be for us?

- c. What one person could fit Jesus' praise in both passages?