

Matthew 9, Mark 5, Luke 9 – Ep 193: CFM

Luke 8.43-48; Matt. 9.20-22; Mark 5.25-34: The Woman with the Issue of Blood

“Whatever Jesus lays his hands upon lives. If Jesus lays his hands upon a marriage, it lives. If he is allowed to lay his hands on the family, it lives.”¹

Matt. 9.20 Greek: Καὶ ἰδοῦ, γυνὴ αἰμορροοῦσα δώδεκα ἔτη προσελθοῦσα ὀπισθεν ἤψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ “And see a woman being afflicted with a blood flow for twelve years approaching *Jesus* from behind *him*, touched the fringe of his tallit” (my translation).

Mark 5.30 JST: And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

Mark 5.30 Greek: καὶ εὐθέως ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐπιγνοὺς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ **δύναμιν ἐξελθοῦσαν** ἐπιστραφεὶς ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ἔλεγεν Τίς μου ἤψατο τῶν ἱματίων “And Jesus, having known in himself immediately that **power had gone out of him**, turned around to the crowd *of people* and he said, “Who touched my clothing?” (my translation)

As to the power leaving Jesus, Joseph Smith shared the following: “The virtue here referred to, is the spirit of life, and a man who exercises great faith in administering to the sick, blessing little children, or confirming, is liable to become weakened.”²

This woman’s sickness was reckoned as if she had a menstrual period all month long; it made her continually unclean under the law (Lev 15:19-33)—a social and religious problem in addition to the physical one. If she touched anyone or anyone’s clothes, she rendered that person ceremonially unclean for the rest of the day (cf. Lev 15:26-27). Because she rendered unclean anyone she touched, she should not have even been in this heavy crowd. Many teachers avoided touching women altogether, lest they become accidentally contaminated. Thus she could not touch or be touched, she had probably never married or was now divorced, and she was marginal to Jewish society. Leviticus forbade intercourse with a menstruating woman, and Jewish tradition mandated divorce when marriages did not yield children. In an act of scandalous faith, she touches Jesus’ garment’s “fringe”—no doubt one of the tassels (*zizith*) worn by Jewish men, in obedience to Numbers 15:38-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12, on the four corners of their outer garment, and later on the prayer shawl (*tallith*). The tassels were made of blue and white cords woven together.³

Genesis 3 and Mark 5

The story of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5 and the story of the fall of Adam and Eve both involve a person seeking healing and restoration. In the story of the woman with the issue of blood, she has been suffering for 12 years and is seeking physical healing. In the story of Adam and Eve, they have

¹ Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 65.

² Joseph Smith, [14 March, 1843, Tuesday, The Joseph Smith Papers](#). Joseph taught this after a situation where he became “pale and (lost) strength” after performing a healing, which suggests that physical exhaustion can be the result of exercising spiritual power. Perhaps Jesus’ awareness that power had gone out of him was tied to an awareness of his own physical depletion. See Julie Smith’s commentary in *The Gospel According to Mark*, BYU Studies, 2018, p. 343-345.

³ Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary](#), IVP Academic, 2014, p. 69.

been cast out of the Garden of Eden and are seeking spiritual healing. Both stories also involve a sense of faith and a willingness to reach out to a higher power for help. Additionally, both stories illustrate the idea that it is through our struggles and hardships that we come to a greater understanding of ourselves and our relationship to God. Julie Smith's commentary on this story as it relates to Mother Eve is noteworthy here.

There are significant parallels between the story of the hemorrhaging woman and the Fall (Genesis 3). The stories share a dozen terms, and the same theme, if not the same wording⁴, found in several other instances. Both passages refer to clothing, hiding, walking, becoming aware, seeing/looking, and children/daughters.

1. There are several ways in which the bleeding woman is associated with Eve. First, her condition of ceaseless menstrual bleeding is a magnification of the normal female condition. In some strains of Jewish thought, menstruation was associated with Eve's sin, and it was thought that it would not occur in the age to come.⁵ Menstruation was also associated with sin in general (Lam. 1.17; Ezek. 36.17-18). All of these associations serve to make the bleeding woman in the story the ideal narrative re-creation of Eve in her fallen state.
2. In both stories, the thought process behind the woman's decision-making is preserved; the audience knows what the woman is thinking as she takes the initiative to act in a difficult situation. This is even more significant given how rare records of women's thinking are in scripture.
3. Both stories feature a transgressive touch: Eve is not supposed to touch the fruit; the woman is not supposed to touch Jesus. Just as Eve's touch leads ultimately to death, the bleeding woman's touch leads to death by causing a delay that permits the girl that Jesus is going to heal to die. Mark's story highlights the fact that the woman's touch was unique- distinct from all of the other touches of the crowd- and thus worthy of comment from Jesus. It parallels Eve's touch, which led to unique consequences and similarly ushered in death. Because the bleeding woman is most likely standing, it is possible that she touches Jesus' side, or ribs. While speculative, this would be another point of contact with the Genesis text and suggest her role as Eve- in this case, reestablishing contact with the source of her creation. In both stories, the transgressive touch changes the nature of the women's bodies. The touching/eating in the garden passed along the contagion of sin and death to Adam. In this story, the woman should convey impurity to Jesus, but that is precisely the opposite of what happens.
4. In the garden, as recorded in the Genesis text, Adam is passive. In the bleeding woman's story, Jesus is also passive. Mark's audience assumes that Jesus will be filling the role of Adam when the stories are compared because Jesus' otherwise puzzling passivity emphasizes the association. However, when Jesus becomes the interlocutor and the pronouncer of a blessing (instead of the expected curse), it becomes clear that he is no longer filling the role of Adam but rather the role of God since in the garden it is God who asks the questions and pronounces curses...

⁴ Shared vocabulary between Mark 5 and the LXX of Genesis includes the words: woman, all, heard, know/realize, knowing, touch, see, done, fear, told, and said. See: Smith, *The Gospel According to Mark*, BYU Studies, 2019, p. 348.

⁵ One tradition held that being near a menstruating woman could be fatal. See: Babylonian Talmud, Seder Mo'ed II, Pesahim 111a.

5. In both stories, after the transgressive touch, the woman hides from the divine presence until summoned by a question.
6. In both stories, the woman is questioned about her behavior. In the garden, God asks whether Eve has eaten; here, Jesus asks who has touched him.
7. In the Fall, when Adam is questioned, he blames Eve; when Eve is questioned, she blames the serpent. There is a pattern of avoiding responsibility by blaming others. In contrast, the bleeding woman told the whole truth when she was questioned. This difference between the two texts is significant because it shows that this time, "Eve" (in the role of the bleeding woman) took complete responsibility for her own actions, and this is what, in terms of the narrative, results in Jesus claiming her as a daughter.
8. The story of the Fall ends with serious consequences and curses; Mark's story ends with a blessing "go in peace"... This time, the story is set to rights, largely through the person of Jesus. The curse was menstruation as a symbol of identification with Eve and with sin, but it is now gone. Peace is the inversion of the enmity with Satan.
9. In both stories, the focus of the passage is on the consequences of the woman's actions. But whereas Eve's choice to touch resulted in her separation from God, the bleeding woman's choice to touch resulted in her communion with Jesus and acceptance as his daughter... one of the things redeemed in this story is the woman's initiative.
10. In Mark, the wording suggests that the woman came back when questioned, implying that she had already moved on. She had left Jesus' presence, analogous to leaving the garden and the presence of God. In other words, Jesus invited the now-healed woman back into his presence. This is in contrast to the story of Eve, where she is cast out from the presence of the Lord for her action.
11. Because of the association of menstruation with sin (and thus a fallen state), the bleeding woman is redeemed from her fallen state by Jesus' actions. When Jesus says that her faith has cured/saved her, this symbolizes being saved from the effects of the Fall. One of the consequences of the Fall is that Adam's body will eventually return to dust (Gen. 3.19). Jesus is the first person to whom this does not apply. In other words, Adam's curse ends with him.
12. One of the consequences of the Fall is that Adam will have power over Eve (Gen 3.16). In this story, that dynamic is reversed as the passive and unknowing "Adam's" power flows out of him and into "Eve" as a result of her decision to access that power. This is another way in which the story of the Fall is redeemed in Mark's text.
13. Just as the fear is that Adam and Eve will become "like the Gods," it is literally the case that this woman is like Jesus, something clearly illustrated by all the parallels between the two of them. Because the woman's body foreshadows Jesus' suffering, the story powerfully affirms the idea that all human bodies are made in God's image.
14. The story of the Fall ends with Eve's desire for her husband; the story of the bleeding woman begins with her desire for Jesus (who is in the role of Adam). The story ends with the woman assuming the role not of wife but of daughter; this is because Jesus' role in the story has shifted from Adam to God.
15. One of the consequences of the Fall for Eve is that her births- and her pain- will be multiplied. Mark's story is a variation on this theme: the healing of the woman means that there is potential for her births to be multiplied (which creates another allusion to the story of the Fall, which

refers to Eve's seed), but through her encounter with Jesus, pain is removed from her – not added.⁶

Luke 8.49-56; Matt. 9.23-26; Mark 5.35-43: Jairus' Daughter is Raised from the Dead

It is God's nature to bless us

Elder Holland taught:

"The Lord has probably spoken enough...comforting words to supply the whole universe, it would seem, and yet we see all around us unhappy Latter-day Saints, worried Latter-day Saints, and gloomy Latter-day Saints into whose troubled hearts not one of these innumerable consoling words seems to be allowed to enter. In fact, I think some of us must have that remnant of Puritan heritage still with us that says it is somehow wrong to be comforted or helped, that we are supposed to be miserable about something. Consider, for example, the Savior's benediction upon his disciples even as he moved toward the pain and agony of Gethsemane and Calvary. On that very night, the night of the greatest suffering that has ever taken place in the world or that ever will take place, the Savior said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). I submit to you, that may be one of the Savior's commandments that is, even in the hearts of otherwise faithful Latter-day Saints, almost universally disobeyed; and yet I wonder whether our resistance to this invitation could be any more grievous to the Lord's merciful heart. I can tell you this as a parent: as concerned as I would be if somewhere in their lives one of my children were seriously troubled or unhappy or disobedient, nevertheless I would be infinitely more devastated if I felt that at such a time that child could not trust me to help or thought his or her interest was unimportant to me or unsafe in my care. In that same spirit, I am convinced that none of us can appreciate how deeply it wounds the loving heart of the Savior of the world when he finds that his people do not feel confident in his care or secure in his hands or trust in his commandments. Just because God is God, just because Christ is Christ, they cannot do other than care for us and bless us and help us if we will but come unto them, approaching their throne of grace in meekness and lowliness of heart. They can't help but bless us. They have to. It is their nature...There is not a single loophole or curveball or open trench to fall into for the man or woman who walks the path that Christ walks. When he says, "Come, follow me," he means that he knows where the quicksand is and where the thorns are and the best way to handle the slippery slope near the summit of our personal mountains. He knows it all, and he knows the way. He is the way."⁷

Jesus "saw the minstrels and the people making noise" (Matt. 9.23).⁸

⁶ Julie Smith, [The Gospel According to Mark](#), BYU Studies, 2019, p. 348-351.

⁷ Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "'Come unto Me'," *Ensign*, Apr 1998, 19.

⁸ Flute players were there to lead the crowd in mourning. Tradition preserved in the rabbis insisted on several professional women mourners for the funeral of even the poorest person; the funeral of a member of a prominent family like this one would have many mourners. The cathartic release of mourning included shrieking and beating of breasts. Because bodies decomposed rapidly in Palestine, mourners were to be assembled, if possible, immediately upon someone's death. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary](#), IVP Academic, 2014, p. 69.

Jesus may have been seen as ritually impure after having raised Jairus' daughter.⁹

He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, "Talitha cumi," which is, being interpreted, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise!" (Mark 5.41).¹⁰

Luke 9.1-6; Matt. 9.35-38, 10.1, 5-42, 11.1; Mark 6.6-13: Jesus Sends out the Twelve Apostles

1. Jesus gives the 12 Apostles the authority over all devils (Luke 9.1).
2. Preach the kingdom of God, heal the sick, take nothing with you (Luke 9.2-3).
3. Names of the 12 listed (Matt. 10.2-4).
 - a. Israel had twelve tribes, and groups that chose twelve leaders (as in the Dead Sea Scrolls) did so because they believed that their own group was the true, obedient remnant of Israel. Ancient sources often include lists of names, including of disciples. Some of the names here are among the most common in ancient Judea and Galilee: Simon, James, Judas, and the like ("Mary" was most common among women). The lists in Luke and Acts replace Mark and Matthew's "Thaddeus" with "Judas son of James" (cf. also Jn 14:22). Ancient documents show that it was common for people to go by more than one name, so the different lists of apostles probably do refer to the same people. Nicknames were common, appearing even on tomb inscriptions. "Cananaean" is Aramaic for "zealot" (Lk 6:15); thus some translations simply read "Simon the Zealot" here. In Jesus' day, this word could just mean "zealous one," but it may mean that he had been involved in revolutionary activity before becoming Jesus' follower, as it would probably mean when the Gospels were written. "Apostles" means "sent ones," or commissioned representatives. The analogous Hebrew term was used for business agents, although the general concept is broader than that; a "sent one" acted on the full authority of the sender to the extent that one accurately represented the sender's mission. Commissioning narratives appear in the Old Testament, as when Moses commissions Joshua to carry on Moses' work and take the Promised Land (Deut 31:23). Teachers often allowed their advanced students to practice teaching while they were still students, to prepare them for their own future work.¹¹
 - b. **Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him** (Matt. 10.4). Judas's betrayal of Jesus will be fully narrated later (26:14-16, 21-25, 47-50; 27:3-10); here it is mentioned only because it is the one thing about him every Christian would remember. He comes, appropriately, at the end of all the gospel lists (just as Peter comes first in all of them)—and is of course absent from the list in Acts 1:13. His second name, "Iscariot," is usually included, partly

⁹ The most defiling kind of ritual uncleanness one could contract in Jewish law came from touching a corpse, generating seven days' impurity (Num 19:11-22). Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, IVP Academic, 2014, p. 70.

¹⁰ In that culture, at the age of twelve the girl was a virgin probably soon to be married (with very rare exceptions, women were not able to continue in education as they do today). Young girls usually looked forward eagerly to their wedding day as the most joyous event in their life, and to die unmarried—especially just short of it—was lamented as a particularly great tragedy. Jewish interpreters sometimes linked texts by a common word; that this girl had lived the same number of years as the woman with the flow of blood had been ill (5:25) provides a useful literary connection. Whereas contact with the bleeding woman would render Jesus unclean for a day in the eyes of others (Lev 15:19-33), touching a corpse led to seven days of uncleanness (Num 19:11-22, esp. 19:11). Jesus spoke to her in Aramaic, perhaps her first language, although Greek was widely spoken in Palestine. Keener, p. 141.

¹¹ Craig S. Keener, p. 70.

to distinguish him from the other Judas of John 14:22, but also because his notoriety made his full name familiar. Many derivations of “Iscariot” have been proposed, including the suggestion that it is a corruption of *sicarios*, a member of the most notorious of the revolutionary groups (which would make for an interesting collocation with Simon the “zealot”), but perhaps more likely is the traditional notion that it derives from ’išqerîyôt, “man of Kerioth”; if so, this raises the interesting possibility that Judas was the one non-Galilean among the Twelve, since the only two towns called Kerioth that we know of are in Moab and in southern Judea. But that, too, is speculation, and since Hebrew qiryâ (“town”) occurs in several other place names, it cannot be relied on.¹²

4. Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, nor the Samaritans (Matt. 10.5).
 - a. “Way of the Gentiles” probably means a road leading only to one of the pagan, Greek cities in Palestine; many Jewish people avoided roads that led into such cities anyway. Galilee was surrounded by Gentile regions except in the south, where it shared borders with Samaria.¹³
 - b. This is the only mention of Samaria and Samaritans in Matthew’s gospel. Its negative tone suggests a more conventionally Jewish perspective than the openness to Samaritans in Luke (9:52-55; 10:30-37; 17:11-19) and John (4:4- 42), though in all those passages the acceptability of Samaritans in the kingdom of God is noted as a matter of surprise. For Matthew they simply represent, together with the Gentiles, the wider world outside “the house of Israel” which for now remains outside the disciples’ jurisdiction, but there is no reason to believe that Matthew would have had any difficulty in recognizing Samaritans as included in “all nations” who are ultimately to be summoned to discipleship.¹⁴
5. Preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10.6).
6. Provide neither gold, nor silver... nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats (Matt. 10.9-12).
 - a. They are to travel light, like some other groups: (1) peasants, who often had only one cloak (cf. 5:40); (2) some traveling philosophers, called Cynics (not present in Jewish Galilee, though probably represented as nearby as Tyre and the Decapolis, Gentile cities surrounding Galilee), who ideally had only a cloak, staff, cup, and, for begging, a bag; (3) some prophets, like Elijah and John the Baptist (see e.g., 1 Kings 18:13; 2 Kings 4:38; 5:15-19; 6:1; Mt 3:4). They are to be totally committed to their mission, not tied down with worldly concerns. A traveler could use a staff to fend off animals or robbers, or to keep one’s balance when walking; though homeless, even Cynics used staffs. The prohibited “bag” could have been used for begging (so the Cynics used it), different from depending on hospitality in 10:11; on “money belts,” see comment on Luke 6:38. It is said that Essenes received such hospitality from fellow Essenes in various cities that they did not need to take provisions when they traveled.¹⁵

¹² R.T. France, [The Gospel of Matthew](#), Eerdmans, 2007, p. 370-371 electronic version.

¹³ Keener, p. 70.

¹⁴ R.T. France, [The Gospel of Matthew](#), Eerdmans, 2007, p. 374 electronic version.

¹⁵ Keener, p. 70-71.

7. Shake the dust off your feet (Matt. 10.14-15).¹⁶
8. Take no thought what you shall speak (Matt. 10.19).
9. You will be persecuted (Matt. 10.21-33).
10. I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword (Matt. 10.34).
 - a. This is meant to be a shocking statement.¹⁷
 - b. David O. McKay spoke of war being the antithesis of peace and that it is vain to reconcile war with true Christianity.¹⁸
11. A man's foes shall be they of his own household (Matt. 10.35-37).
 - a. "There is a pathetic irony in the Savior's words. Surely no one wants families to be forever, joined and united, more than Jesus. No one wants father and mother, brother and sister, parents and children-families-to be close and at peace more than the Christ. And yet the Lord here highlights a less than pleasant point-that gospel living costs

¹⁶ To ceremonially shake the dust from one's feet as a testimony against another was understood by the Jews to symbolize a cessation of fellowship and a renunciation of all responsibility for consequences that might follow. It became an ordinance of accusation and testimony by the Lord's instructions to His apostles as cited in the text. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 490. Another commentator adds, "Pious Jewish people returning to holy ground would not want even the dust of pagan territory clinging to their sandals; Jesus' representatives here treat unresponsive regions as unholy or pagan. Sodom is set forth as the epitome of sinfulness both in the prophets and in subsequent Jewish tradition; the point here is probably that they rejected God's messengers, albeit lesser ones than Jesus (Gen 19). Earlier Scripture often used Sodom as the archetypical site of judgment (Is 13:19; Jer 50:40; Zeph 2:9) and applied the image to Israel (Deut 32:32; Is 1:10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; Lam 4:6; Ezek 16:46-49)." Keener, p. 71. France adds the following: "Not everyone will welcome Jesus' representatives, and some will actively oppose them. So they are now prepared for what they must do if hospitality is refused. **Shaking off the dust from one's feet is an obvious symbol of dissociation; they want nothing more to do with the place** (Luke 10:11 spells it out more fully). This dissociation may be from an individual household, but it is also possible that a whole town or village will turn against them, as Jesus will accuse Chorazin, Bethsaida, and even Capernaum of turning against him in 11:20-24." France, p. 378, emphasis added.

¹⁷ **The "mission statement" here is meant to shock. Not only is peace a basic human aspiration, but it was understood to be the purpose of the Messiah's coming** (e.g., Isa 9:6-7; Zech 9:10) **and the defining characteristic of God's eschatological rule** (e.g., Isa 11:6-9). Matthew will draw attention in 21:4-5 to how Jesus presented himself as the messianic king who brings peace, and his nonconfrontational style will be ... demonstrated in Matthew chapters 26-27 in the story of his quiet acceptance of unjust accusation and condemnation. **His coming was proclaimed as the dawn of "peace on earth"** (Luke 2:14), **and it is "peace" which the disciples are being sent out to offer** (v. 13). Peacemaking is an essential part of the good life (5:9). **But the way to peace is not the way of avoidance of conflict, and Jesus will be continuously engaged in robust controversy** especially in chapters 21-23, while his whole experience will be the opposite of a "peaceful" way of life. His followers can expect no less, and their mission to establish God's peaceful rule can be accomplished only by sharing his experience of conflict. The "sword" can hardly be understood literally, as the literal use of the sword is explicitly forbidden in 26:51-52; it is a metaphor for conflict and suffering, as in Luke 2:35. Cf. the saying about Jesus coming to "throw fire on the earth" in Luke 12:49, which is followed by a parallel to the present saying in Luke 12:51 but with "division" in place of the metaphor of the "sword." R.T. France, p. 395-396 emphasis added.

¹⁸ "The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of peace. War is its antithesis, and produces hate. It is vain to attempt to reconcile war with true Christianity....They who would quote this saying (Matt 10:34) as indicating that Jesus approves of war surely put a strained interpretation on its true meaning, which refers most clearly to the incompatibility between truth and error. It refers to the necessity of a choice, which has been made by thousands, between accepting the gospel or continuing in ease and comfort with relatives. There is not in that quotation any justification for one Christian nation's declaring war upon another." David O. McKay, *Pathways to Happiness*, Bookcraft, 1964, p. 364.

something, even occasionally the loss of family and friends. It may well result in division and variance."¹⁹

12. Take up your cross and follow me (Matt. 10.38-39).

- a. **He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.** President Hinckley related the following: "In 1933 when I left for my mission, I traveled through Chicago. The Great Depression was on. As we passed what I think was the Chicago Board of Trade Building, a woman said to the bus driver, 'What building is that?' He replied, 'That's the Board of Trade Building. Nearly every day, some man whose stock has gone down jumps out of one of those windows.' "The bus driver may have exaggerated, but some people were jumping from windows in those days as they saw their fortunes dwindle. Their lives were wrapped up in themselves and their money, and they felt there was nothing worth living for when their money was gone. "I think it was Phillips Brooks who said, 'How carefully most men creep into nameless graves, while now and again one or two forget themselves into immortality.'"²⁰
- b. "Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life (Matt. 10:39)."²¹

13. Receiving a prophet's reward (Matt. 10.40-42).

Luke 9.7-9; Matt. 14.1-2; Mark 6.14-16: Herod fears John is Risen from the Dead

Mark calls Herod "king" in Mark 6.14.²² Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and Malthace, a Samaritan (Josephus, *Jewish War* 1.562), was technically tetrarch (with Matthew and Luke), not "king"; Mark may use the latter term loosely or possibly even ironically: it was precisely Herod's appeal for the title "king" under Herodias's influence that ended his tetrarchy and led to his banishment in AD 39 (cf. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.250-255).²³

Reincarnation is not in view in this passage. Some Greeks (and Jews influenced by them) did believe in reincarnation; but John's return is said instead to be a "rising from the dead" (as a few persons had been raised through Old Testament prophets); Elijah had never died, and many Jewish people anticipated his eschatological return (Mal 4:5).²⁴

Luke 9.11-17; Matt. 14.14-23; Mark 6.34-46; John 6.3-15: Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

Luke 9.18-21; Matt. 16.13-20; Mark 8.27-30: Peter testifies that Jesus is the Christ

Luke 9.22-27; Matt. 16.21-28; Mark 8.31-38, 9.1: Jesus Speaks of his Death and Resurrection

¹⁹ Robert L. Millet, *An Eye Single to the Glory of God: Reflections on the Cost of Discipleship*, Deseret Book, 1991, 87.

²⁰ Gordon B. Hinckley, "Pillars of Truth," *Ensign*, Jan. 1994.

²¹ Ezra Taft Benson, "Jesus Christ-Gifts and Expectations," *Ensign*, December 1988, p. 4. See also: [BYU Speeches, December 10, 1974](#).

²² ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης – Mark 6.14.

²³ Keener, p. 142. I see this as Mark thumbing his nose at Herod.

²⁴ Keener, p.142-143.

1. The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected (Luke 9.22).
2. He will be slain and be raised the third day (Luke 9.22).
3. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (Luke 9.23).
4. Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it (Luke 9.24).
5. Some standing here shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God (Luke 9.27).
 - a. This is probably a reference to John.²⁵ It may also refer to others that we do not know of ([D&C 49.8](#)). It could also refer to the idea that Jesus came in his glory as king of kings in his transfiguration, an event experienced by “some,” meaning Peter, James, and John.²⁶ There was also a teaching in the early Christian Church that the coming of the Messiah was imminent, that Jesus would return soon ([1 Thes. 4.15](#)). This may also be reflected here as well.²⁷

Luke 9.28-36; Matt. 17.1-13; Mark 9.2-13: The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ

Luke 9.37-43; Matt. 17.14-21; Mark 9.14-29: A Demonic Boy is Healed

It might be relevant that, like Moses, Jesus must deal with the failure of those he left in charge once he comes down from the mountain (Ex 24:14; 32:1-8, 21-25, 35), though Jesus has not been absent as long. In some cases of spirit possession noted by anthropologists, persons become violently out of control and

²⁵ For special purposes a few persons who have lived in the Christian Era have been translated. ***Our Lord said on one occasion, 'There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.'*** (Matt. 16.28; Mark 9.1; Luke 9.27.) The Lord may have had reference to these or other translated persons when he said in March, 1831, 'All are under sin, except those which ***I have reserved unto myself holy men that ye know not of.***' (D&C. 49.8.) ...In any event John was translated. (John 21.20-23; Rev. 10; D&C. 7; 77.14.) And on the American continent, among the Nephites, three of the Twelve were also given power over death so that they could continue their ministry until the Second Coming. (3 Ne. 28.) ***There are no other known instances of translation during the Christian Era***, and unless there is some special reason which has not so far been revealed. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 806, emphasis added.

²⁶ R.T. France proposes this option. See: R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 585-586 electronic version.

²⁷ Bart Ehrman discusses this further: “What most of the millions of people who believe that Jesus is coming back soon, in our lifetime, don’t realize is that there have always been Christians who thought this about their own lifetimes. This was a prominent view among conservative Christians in the early twentieth century, in the late nineteenth century, in the eighteenth century, in the twelfth century, in the second century, in the first century—in fact, in just about every century. The one thing that all those who have ever thought this have had in common is that every one of them has been demonstrably and irrefutably wrong. ***Paul himself thought the end was coming in his lifetime.*** Nowhere is this more clear than in one of the letters we are sure he wrote, 1 Thessalonians. Paul wrote the Christians in Thessalonica, because some of them had become disturbed over the death of a number of their fellow believers. When he converted these people, Paul had taught them that the end of the age was imminent, that they were soon to enter the kingdom when Jesus returned. But members of the congregation had died before it happened. Had they lost out on their heavenly reward? Paul writes to assure the survivors that, no, even those who have died will be brought into the kingdom. In fact, when Jesus returns in glory on the clouds of heaven, “the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air” (4:17). Read the verse carefully: Paul expects to be one of the ones who will still be alive when it happens. Bart Ehrman, [Forged: Writing in the Name of God, Why the Bible’s Authors are Not who we Think They Are](#), HarperOne, 2011, p. 121 electronic version, emphasis added.

risk injury to themselves, as here. Although some compare symptoms here with epilepsy, Matthew does not always associate that affliction with demons (Mt 4:24).²⁸

Why could we not cast him out? (Matt. 17.19) Because of your unbelief... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you! (Matt. 17.20)

Faith

Joseph Smith taught: "We ask, then, what are we to understand by a man's working by faith? We answer-we understand that when a man works by faith he works by mental exertion instead of physical force. It is by words, instead of exerting his physical powers, with which every being works when he works by faith."²⁹

A Mustard Seed

"The wild mustard, which in the temperate zone seldom attains a height of more than three or four feet, reaches in semitropical lands the height of a horse and its rider (Thompson, *The Land and the Book*, ii, 100). Those who heard the parable evidently understood the contrast between size of seed and that of the fully developed plant. Arnot (*The Parables*, p. 102), aptly says: 'This plant obviously was chosen by the Lord, not on account of its absolute magnitude, but because it was, and was recognized to be, a striking instance of increase from very small to very great. It seems to have been in Palestine, at that time, the smallest seed from which so large a plant was known to grow.'"³⁰

Prayer and Fasting

"I believe in our people's sense of service. I have been in the missions of the Church where we have some 49,000 missionaries. They are there at their own expense and at the expense of their families. They give to the Lord one and a half to two years of their lives. Their days are long, their weeks crowded and arduous. They speak with a persuasive conviction. They bear testimony of the living Christ and of the virtues of His marvelous work.

May I read from a letter received from one of them: "The most effective technique we have found in our work is fasting and prayer. We saw how this worked a few weeks ago with an investigator of the Church. He had a number of questions and problems to overcome, and we just didn't seem to get anywhere when we met with him to discuss them. So we would go home to our apartment and ask the Lord to bless him and help him understand what we had explained to him. We felt it was very important that he be baptized, so we asked the Lord to bless him with a desire for baptism. Even up through the sixth lesson he was wavering, so we fasted the day before his baptism, and he has been a faithful member ever since."

"One thinks of the words of the Lord to his disciples who complained they could not perform miracles. Said he: ' . . . this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' (Matt. 17:21.)"³¹

²⁸ Keener, p. 88.

²⁹ *Lectures on Faith*, 7:3.

³⁰ James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, Deseret Book, 1986, p. 478.

³¹ Gordon B. Hinckley, "[Be not afraid, only believe,](#)" *First Presidency Message, Ensign, May 1996*.

Luke 9.44-45; Matt. 17.22-23; Mark 9.30-32: Jesus' Death and Resurrection again Taught

Jesus predicts what would have been obvious to the disciples had they known that he planned to drive the moneychangers from the temple courts without either flight or resistance: he would die (cf. Mt 18:31; 19:22; 26:22). Because the disciples understand his resurrection to mean the general resurrection at the end of the age (17:9-10), they miss his point. In ancient parlance, "after the third day" could mean parts of three days.³²

The Savior Taught of a Physical Resurrection

"This account (Mark 9:31-32) suggests that the disciples heard the doctrine but chose not to inquire into it, while Matthew's version suggests there was at least limited understanding: 'Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: 'And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry' (Matt. 17:22-23; emphasis added; see also Matt. 16:21-22). "The Gospel narratives agree that before the Lord's resurrection, the disciples did not comprehend the doctrine. They understood that he would go to Jerusalem and there die, but they do not seem to have grasped what would happen after that. Yet after they had received an outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the Apostles were able to view the Resurrection with new eyes."³³

Luke 9.46-50; Matt. 18.1-35; Mark 9.33-50: Jesus' Teachings on Humility, Service, and Forgiveness

Competition for honor was important in many ancient societies. Those with capital could advance economically, but most people in ancient society lacked sufficient capital for advancement and were thus locked into roles determined by birth. Even those who improved economically could not break into the aristocracy. In other circles, rank was assigned by noble birth, by age, by being the academically most advanced pupils in a school, or by advancement in the law; thus, for example, the Qumran sect annually reevaluated each member's rank, which determined their seating and speaking order. Most groups seated people according to social rank. By whatever means it was determined, rank was a critical issue in ancient life (cf. comment on 1 Cor 14:27). Many Jewish people hoped for a new status in the world to come, based not on noble birth but on faithfulness to God's covenant.³⁴

"The principle of not aspiring to positions in the mission field is taught well in Mark 9:34-35 and Matthew 23:11-12. Missionaries should be taught that it doesn't matter where they serve, but how. Position doesn't save anyone, but faithfulness does. Aspiring to positions of responsibility can destroy the spirit of the mission as well as the spirit of a missionary."³⁵

Luke 9.51-56; John 7.2-10: Jesus Secretly Attends the Feast of Tabernacles

Pious Jewish men who lived as near as Galilee were supposed to go to the feast. It would be normal for Jesus to travel with his extended family (Josephus spoke of whole towns going). *The issue is not that he will not go, but that he will only go "secretly" at first, so as not to hasten the appropriate time of his execution* (cf. 7:6 with 2:4). Although Jesus' "not yet" prevents his statement from qualifying as

³² Keener, p. 89.

³³ Richard D. Draper, ["The Reality of the Resurrection," *Ensign*, April 1994.](#)

³⁴ Keener, p. 151.

³⁵ Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, Bookcraft, 1988, 202.

deception per se, Scripture's general demand for truth was qualified in particular cases, most often for saving life (e.g., Ex 1:19; 1 Sam 16:2-3; 2 Kings 8:10).³⁶

"His face was as though he would go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9.53)

Galilean pilgrims to the Passover feast in Jerusalem often took the short route through Samaria, although some took a longer route around it. But this verse suggests that Jesus sought accommodations there, which would have offended many pious Pharisees and most Jewish nationalists. Even before John Hyrcanus, a Jewish king, had destroyed the Samaritan temple in the second century BC, Samaritans and Jews had detested one another's holy sites. The extant version of the Samaritan Pentateuch specifies the proper site of worship as Mount Gerizim. Samaritans later tried to defile the Jerusalem temple (avenging a Jewish king having destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim in the second century BC). They were also known to heckle pilgrims to Jerusalem, a practice that occasionally led to violence.³⁷

James and John want to call down fire on the Samaritans (Luke 9.54-56)

James and John want to call down fire from heaven as Elijah had done on the altar on Mount Carmel and when two companies of troops came against him (1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10, 12). Elijah did this under much severer circumstances than Jesus faces here; all three cases were life-threatening, and his opponents at Carmel had been responsible for the martyrdom of most of his disciples. Jesus uses the model of Elijah elsewhere even in this context (e.g., Lk 9:61-62), but not in this respect. Ancient audiences (even those that hated Samaritans) did appreciate those who exercised their power with mercy. Ancient Jewish hearers could view Jesus' merciful restraint as pious (1 Sam 11:13; 2 Sam 19:22), even if they hated the Samaritans.³⁸

Luke 9.57-62; Matt. 8.19-22: Sacrifice is Required for Discipleship, Let the Dead bury the Dead

1. A man approached Jesus and said, "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go!" (Luke 9.57).
2. Foxes have holds, birds have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head (Luke 9.58).
 - a. Brigham Young likened this statement to the state of the temple in Jerusalem.³⁹
 - b. Thomas S. Monson likened this to making room for Christ in our lives.⁴⁰
3. Let me bury my father... let the dead bury the dead (Luke 9.59-62).

³⁶ Keener, p. 269.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 205.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 205.

³⁹ "Because the house which the Father had commanded to be built for his reception, although completed, had become polluted, and hence the saying: 'My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.' ... Although he drove out the money-changers, ... that did not purify the house, so that he could not sleep in it, for an holy thing dwelleth not in an unholy temple. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, Deseret Book, 1954, p. 414.

⁴⁰ "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' (Matt. 8:20.) ...As I drive through the many parts of this land, as I see the homes of America, I note that most homes have a room for Mary, a room for John-bedrooms, eating rooms, playrooms, sewing rooms-but I ask the fundamental question, 'Is there room for Christ?' Is there room for the Son of Almighty God, our Savior, and our Redeemer? The invitation of the Lord is directed to each of us: 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, . . .' (Rev. 3:20.) Oh, my young brothers and sisters, make room for the Lord in your homes and in your hearts, and He will be a welcome companion. He will be by your side. He will teach you the way of truth." Thomas S. Monson, May 11, 1965, *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1965, p. 9.

One of an eldest son's most basic responsibilities (in both Greek and Jewish cultures) was his father's burial; failure to meet this obligation could make one a social outcast in one's village. The initial burial took place shortly after a person's decease, however, and family members would not be outside talking with rabbis during the reclusive mourning period immediately following the death. Thus some argue that what is in view here instead is the secondary burial: a year after the first burial, after the flesh had rotted off the bones, the son would return to rebury the bones in a special box in a slot in the tomb's wall. The son in this narrative could thus be asking for as much as a year's delay. Others note that in some Semitic languages, "wait until I bury my father" is a way of asking for delay until one may complete one's filial obligations, even if the father is not yet dead.⁴¹

Even on these interpretations, however, Jesus' demand that the son place him above the greatest responsibility a son had toward his father would have horrified hearers: in Jewish tradition, honoring father and mother was one of the greatest commandments (see, e.g., Josephus, *Apion* 2.206), and to follow Jesus at the expense of not burying one's father would have been viewed as dishonoring one's father (on the need to bury parents, cf. Tobit 4:3-4; 6:15; 4 Maccabees 16:11). While some sages demanded greater honor than parents, only God could take precedence over them to this degree (cf. Deut 13:6).⁴²

⁴¹ This seems to be how R.T. France interprets this passage. He writes, "If the father had just died, the son could hardly be out at the roadside with Jesus; his place was to be keeping vigil and preparing for the funeral. Rather, **to "bury one's father" is standard idiom for fulfilling one's filial responsibilities for the remainder of the father's lifetime, with no prospect of his imminent death.** This would then be a request for indefinite postponement of discipleship, likely to be for years rather than days. In that case Jesus' reply would be less immediately shocking—the man's proposed "discipleship" was apparently not very serious." R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Eerdmans, 2007, electronic version, p. 331, emphasis added.

⁴² Keener, p. 66.