

Introduction: This week we will continue our topic on: **“All generations will call me blessed” Lk 1:48.** Mary is blessed because she chose to listen and obey the word of God in her life, even in the midst of suffering. Let us learn from Mary to experience being blessed like her by putting into practise every word that Jesus speaks to us in prayer and let us also encourage those around us to do the same.

Day 1 Luke 8:15 **“...As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance...”**

There were many people who kept coming to Jesus from different towns. They might have heard about Jesus’ teachings and miracles and perhaps they needed to be healed, forgiven, or to hear his teachings in order to have their hope restored. Jesus, aware of their different dispositions and motivations, started telling them about the Parable of the Sower. Jesus sows the seed of the Word of God for it to bear fruit in their lives. Only the seed that falls in good soil bears fruits that lasts. It stands for people like Mary who hear the Word, keep it and obey it.

We are called to make the Word of God bear fruit in our lives. We can ask ourselves in this time of prayer: what is my motivation for approaching Jesus in prayer? Do I just want to receive a blessing from him for myself? Am I just wanting answers for my own problems and difficulties? Or do I come to him so that I can be guided by his word for the good of all, to learn to love, forgive, understand etc? Am I like the good soil that welcomes his Word and obeys it regardless of the cost to my discomfort or popularity?

Day 2 Luke 8: 19-21 **“...His mother and his brothers came looking for him, but they could not get to him because of the crowd. He was told, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to see you.' But he said in answer, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice.'...”**

After Jesus had spoken to the crowd about the Parable of the Sower, his mother and brothers came to him but could not see him because of the crowd. People told Jesus about this but instead of immediately letting his relatives see him, he uses this opportunity to teach the crowd: **“My mother and brothers are those who listen and obey the Word of God.”** This points us to see Mary as more than just Jesus’ physical mother – she is also the exemplar of the good soil. Mary listened and obeyed God. She was totally available to his plan. She could say yes to God’s plan because she trusted in Him.

Jesus gave us Mary as our mother so that we could learn from her how to listen and do his will. Perhaps many of the people who came to Jesus were just expecting some miracles for their temporary life. But Mary’s heart was set on eternity. She teaches us to not only go to Jesus for the things related to our temporary existence but to open our hearts to help him fulfil his plan for the salvation of all. Prayer is to be united with what God wills and plans for us even though it means dying to our own temporary wants. Let us ask God for the grace to listen and obey his plans for us today.

Day 3 Matthew 21:28-32 **“...‘What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go," but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir," but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?' They said, 'The first.'...”**

The second son represents the so-called “righteous” chief priests and the elders who were shown the right path by John the Baptist but would not believe him nor follow his advice. On the other hand, the first son, who represents the sinners, was humble and eventually accepted the truth, repented and obeyed. With whom do we identify ourselves? Is it the first or the second son? Are we like the chief priests who were shown the right path but did not believe nor obey? Is it because

the path we have been shown is too difficult and challenging? Do we prefer to follow our own ways rather than the ways of God?

In prayer, let us ask Mary our mother to help us accept the right path that Jesus has shown us. Let us ask her, the mediatrix of all grace, to open our minds to obey him even though we may have initially said no to his plans for our life.

Day 4 Matthew 17:5 **“...This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased, listen to him...”**

God the Father presented Jesus to us as his own dear Son. He calls us to listen to him because through listening to him we can enter into his thoughts, feelings and intentions. Every time we pray it is an invitation to listen to his Words and to what he says to us personally in our hearts. It is in the silence that he indicates the way we can love, forgive, and understand etc. However, sometimes we come to him in prayer with so many worries and preoccupations in our mind, and noises inside of us that we can hardly listen to what he wants to say. If we choose to remain distracted and preoccupied with our own thoughts then we cannot listen to what he wants to say through his Word.

In prayer, allow Mary to encourage you to make up your mind to not worry ahead of time about anything and to close the door to everything other than God’s loving presence. Let God remind you of what is essential: to love him and to love your neighbor as yourself. If we practice listening to his voice in prayer then we will be more likely to listen to him during the day and be able to handle the situations that arise in the way that Jesus indicates to us.

Day 5 John 3:34 **“...‘My food,’ Jesus said to them, ‘is to obey the will of the one who sent me and to finish the work he gave me to do’...”**

Jesus is the true son of God whose constant desire is to do the will of his Father, and not his own. Jesus, in this passage, says it very clearly: **“My food is to obey the will of the one who sent me...”** For him, the most essential in life is to please his Father by obeying what the Father tells him to do. What is the will of the Father in the life of Jesus? It is the work of love, i.e. to manifest the loving face of his Father to everyone and to bring people to come to know and love him authentically, not just with empty words of love and empty acts of sacrifice.

In prayer, let us spend a moment with Mary, asking her to help us see Jesus as the true son of God. Allow Mary to remind you of how she nurtured Jesus, not only physically but with encouragement to always love according to God's criterias. Do you let Jesus determine how you love others? Or do you treat others according to your feelings or human preferences? Ask Mary to help you do God's will today and to love everyone just like her son without compromising on any of God's criterias.

Day 6 John 8: 48-59 **“...If I were to honor myself, that honor would be worth nothing. The one who honors me is my Father - the very one you say is your God. You have never known him, but I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I obey his word...”**

Jesus knows that by doing the will of his Father, he will not be well liked nor well received by certain people because the ways of God and the values of God are not like the world's. To love like the Father is not only to love with compassion and kindness but it is also to love with a love that dares to confront people with the truth about themselves and a love that pushes them to also work for justice instead of prestige and the glory of the world. He knows the consequences of his working for love, i.e. he will receive persecutions, misunderstandings, and rejections yet he willingly accepts all this out of love for his Father.

Today, let us stay with Jesus throughout each moment of the day. Even though we are busy with all our work and

our relationships with others, etc. Let us ask Mary to not miss out on Jesus' presence in our lives and who encourages us to do the will of God at all costs for the sake of true justice which is for everyone to be saved and to come to full knowledge of the truth.

Day 7 John 13: 15-17 **“...I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you. I am telling you the truth: no slave is greater than his master, and no messenger is greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know this truth, how happy you will be if you put it into practice...”**

Jesus was born, lived, died and later resurrected. However, perhaps the question that we really need to ask is: *DO I LIVE THE GOSPEL STORY IN MY OWN LIFE?* It is not enough only to know the facts and details about the life of Jesus. More importantly, we need to make the way of Jesus our own way. We need to put what he says and what he lives concretely into practice. Otherwise, our faith will always remain at a theoretical level and not lead us to know Jesus intimately in our daily life.

In prayer, allow Jesus to tell you personally: **“I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you.”** Perhaps we can ask Jesus: What example have you set for me? And what example did Mary set for you? Both Mary and Jesus prayed and obeyed whatever God asked them regardless of the inconveniences, discomforts, sufferings, loss of reputation, etc. Let us look at our own lives and ask ourselves: What prevents me from following the example of Jesus and Mary? Why is prayer and obedience to God's Word so difficult sometimes? Do I want to follow the way of Jesus? Let Jesus remind you: **“How happy you will be if you put it into practice!”**

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School of the Word

Weekly Readings

“All generations will call me blessed”

(Luke 1:48)

Week 4: Listening and obeying the Word of God



'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice.'

(Lk 8:59)