



**This week meditations on liturgical texts
from **Skynia Magazine****

**August 1 - 7
The Julian calendar**

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Stages of meditation

Please find below some schematic prompts for each stage of the meditation on the Word of God. [Read more.](#)

1. Reading

- Read the text
- What does it tell by itself?
- Clear up the context
- Look up the comments
- Find the key-phrase

2. Meditation

- What is my here and now?
- What does the Word tell me?
- Use your imagination
- "Digest" the text
- The Word and my life

3. Prayer

- What will I say in response?
- Recognition and request
- Gratitude and glorifying
- Prayer in the Word
- My participation in the Divine Liturgy

4. Contemplation

- A call to conversion
- Now I am silent
- Staying in the presence of God
- Now He is guiding me

Biblical readings and meditations

August 1

Sunday 6

Romans 12: 6-14

Matthew 9: 1-8

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Prayer](#)
- [Contemplation](#)

Romans 12: 6-14

Brethren, we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

Matthew 9: 1-8

And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town.

And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” Then some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.” And he stood up and went to his home. 8 When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

Meditation

Jesus forgives the sins of the paralyzed man and heals him from his illness. Obviously, this man had sins and he was ill. Probably these two aspects were interrelated. Sins can result into an illness, but any illness can also lead a person to a sin: complaints, despair, envy of healthy people, etc. Both healthy and sick people sin. Both the righteous and the sinners get ill. But neither sin nor illness is in accordance with God’s will. Jesus desires to forgive sins and heal diseases.

People usually see the external things only, the limitations and sufferings that accompany an illness. Where Jesus preached, the

sick were brought and Jesus was asked to heal them. Forgiveness of sins was rarely discussed. And in today's world it is generally not customarily to talk about sins. It is everyone's own business. Sin is something internal and invisible, its harm to the soul and human life is not traced. However, when there are some problems, or something is wrong with our health, relationships, or deeds, it is worth looking for a reason in this aspect of our life – start with the purification of your soul, with the confession of sins and reconciliation with God. As Jesus did, He forgave sins and only then healed the man.

Often the problem is not in sins or diseases, but in the way a person perceives and experiences these aspects. One can feel shame and guilt about his/her sins and trust God's mercy, repent and get rid of them. As for illnesses, one can perceive them as a punishment, as an injustice to oneself, as an insurmountable problem, or as an opportunity to trust God, to ask for His help. Believe and give God the opportunity to help. Illness and sin can distance us from God, or they can bring us closer to Him. To him who trusts in God, everything works for good. Jesus has the power to forgive sins and to heal. After His resurrection, He has power over everything, and therefore it is easy for Him to forgive sins and to heal mental and physical wounds. He does not look at the scribes who are against this, who do not believe and do not accept such an action of God.

August 2

Monday

**The Holy and Glorious
Prophet Elijah (Elias)**

James 5: 10-20

Luke 4: 22-30

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Prayer](#)
- [Contemplation](#)

James 5: 10-20

Brethren, as an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Above all, my beloved, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “Yes” be yes and your “No” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess

your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Luke 4: 22-30

All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill

on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Meditation

It is interesting to see how quickly people move from the admiration for Jesus to His rejection. According to Luke, this happened to Jesus at the beginning of His work of liberation on this earth, in the midst of His own people. The whole life of Jesus is filled with strong rejection. And it's not about simple discussions around different points of view. The rejection culminates in Jerusalem, where Jesus is crucified and killed by his opponents. Why is Jesus rejected? The first reason is the Incarnation – Jesus is one of them (*Is not this Joseph's son?*). The people expected a stellar Messiah capable of performing miracles and tricks. It seemed implausible to them that God would work through an unremarkable man whose origins everyone knew. Here the saying *Doctor, cure yourself!* means: He is poor, without any social program, unable to free even his family from oppression and poverty.

The second reason is the search for miracles: *Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.* Jesus refuses to make signs for His own benefit, He refuses to be an idol of abundance, prestige, power and wealth (look at the temptations of Jesus: Luke 4:1-12). These two reasons prevent the great liberation of *Today* to come to the people of Nazareth. In addition, the situation of Jesus is similar to the situations of the Old Testament prophets rejected by their own countrymen.

We must ask ourselves whether today we, the Christian community, are capable of a prophecy, whether we allow God to reveal Himself through our actions. The world has not yet reached its end, much remains to be done. Should we wait for other Elijahs or Jesuses to shake the dust off their sandals and go and preach the Kingdom to other nations and cultures that are not from this flock?

Prophecy, charisma, consistency, and testimony will never find peace as long as wealth, power, prestige, and riches of individuals or nations rule the world. A society without prophets has lost its direction and is becoming shallow. A society that persecutes and kills its prophets will always be a slave to the illusion of its own self-sufficiency.

August 3

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 6:20 - 7:12

Matthew 14: 1-13

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
- [Prayer](#)
- [Contemplation](#)

1 Corinthians 6:20 - 7:12

Brethren, for you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. This I say by way of concession, not of command. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind.

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

To the rest I say—I and not the Lord—that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her.

Matthew 14: 1-13

At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus; and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him.” For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, because John had been telling him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” Though Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet. But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.” The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he

commanded it to be given; he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother. His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

Meditation

Today's reading of the Word of God focuses on family and marital fidelity. In the reading from the First Epistle of Paul the apostle to the Corinthians we find his response to the community about sexuality. Apparently, this issue is also very acute nowadays. We don't feel comfortable when we are asked about this either during the confession or in private, but this is an issue that will touch each of us sooner or later.

Paul expresses great respect for marriage, arguing that it is important to have a husband and wife without any desire to touch someone else's husband or wife. He sees marriage as a means to prevent *being aflame with passion*, that is, impurity. He encourages not to get married, but to be the way he is, but adds *that it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion*.

The Gospel passage from Matthew tells us about John the Baptist and his condemnation of king Herod's impurity. Herod hears about Jesus and wonders if it is not John, whose head was brought on the platter during the celebration. John strongly opposed the fact that

Herod married the wife of his brother Philip. In the passage we read that Herod wanted to put him to death, but *he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet*. The fear of the crowd was the factor that had prevented the murder, but the promise given to the daughter of Herodias became a stumbling block and doubt. The promise *on oath to grant her whatever she might ask* became a factor that, although caused doubt and sadness, forced Herod to assassinate John. He did this only for his words not to be considered empty and unreliable, and therefore him to be respected.

When Jesus heard of it, *he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself*. These passages that we read today encourage two things: to cultivate respect for marriage and stand up for truth. Marriage requires an inner respect, as Paul the apostle says. The second aspect encourages us not to follow people's words and deeds, but the truth. Herod accepts a different reality – a life of disrespect for marriage and the choice of lies and deceit. Let us pray that our marriage may be a place of truth and sincere love, and that the example of John may inspire us not to be afraid to call sin by its name.

August 4

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 7: 12-24

Matthew 14:35 - 15:11

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1 Corinthians 7: 12-24

Brethren, to the rest I say—I and not the Lord—that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.

However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you. This is my rule in all the churches. Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying

the commandments of God is everything. Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called.

Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters. In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.

Matthew 14:35 -15:11

After the people of that place recognized him, they sent word throughout the region and brought all who were sick to him, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands before they eat." He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' But you say that whoever tells father or mother, 'Whatever support you might have had from me is given to God,' then that person need not honor the father. So, for the sake of your tradition, you make void the word of God. You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their

hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.”

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.”

Meditation

Why? – We usually ask this questions when something does not correspond to our views on life. The Pharisees were also asking this question. They were waiting for an occasion to find something unworthy in the behavior of Jesus. They vainly followed Him everywhere, waiting and waiting. So, they decided to take the opportunity to at least rebuke Him for the behavior of His disciples. They were preparing for the debate on the importance of the tradition of the elders, but were rebuked for their slyness.

Very often we behave like those Pharisees! When our conscience upbraids us, we become restless and irritable. For the most part, what irritates us in the behavior of others is actually our own vice. We do not want to change ourselves, so we loose our temper with those who are around us. It is easier to give advice to others and demand changes from them than to admit one’s own imperfections.

As long as our condemnation and malice remain in our mind, we have power over them. It depends on our consent whether they will disappear without any trace, or maybe they will be verbalised and we will lose control over them. Let’s recall how unpleasant it was for

us when our words were distorted by others. Probably we also have an experience of being slandered.

Understand, - Jesus warns, - *it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles*. And what should be done if everything that is inside is poisoned? Isn't this defilement one of our diseases? Are we able to see something good in our neighbor? Is it so pleasing to constantly criticize and complain about others?

We need the help of a Physician both in the case of bodily sickness and sins. We must admit that we are sick and seek salvation. We read in today's Gospel passage that one touch is enough for this Physician to heal us. So let's not be the Pharisees who watch over others, but forget about their souls. Let us come to Christ, touch the fringe of His cloak believing that He will heal and purify our soul!

August 5

Thursday

1 Corinthians 7: 24-35

Matthew 15: 12-21

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
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- [Contemplation](#)

1 Corinthians 7: 24-35

In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.

Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin. Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life, and I would spare you that. I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.

Matthew 15: 12-21

Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

Meditation

Jesus conflicted the most and was the hardest on the Pharisees. He was fighting untrue piety and hypocrisy. His words were radical, sharp, and uncompromising. Reading such extracts, we always think: it's good that we are not Pharisees. But is that really so?

Let us take, for instance, our prayer. How often do some ideas dawn on us during the prayer when we become not focused, and then we start to focus, make ourselves pray well, and it goes circle wise – from distraction to tension. Instead, we don't see that the reason for such distraction is the fact that we are not praying for what we really want. We pray for peace in the whole world, for children in Africa, for an aunt we have not seen for long, we are trying to be "sweet" and "right". We are just trying to impress God with our "righteousness" with this "goody-goody prayer" and with how much we think about the heavenly things, we are trying to impress Him with our nice words and a lot of other things. But we don't dare tell ourselves that, in fact, I don't need peace in Africa, what I need is, for example, a new car. We are afraid of confessing about the needs we really care about to God, and that is also an act of pharisaism. Since our prayers are full of it, it is present in our soul due to the fear not to be liked by God, while we, ordinary people, have ordinary needs.

Jesus tells that we need to stay in truth, asking for the things we really want. He does not like our "baby talk" or our trying to show ourselves as better and as having some "unearthly" opinions and requests. Jesus encourages us to be ourselves in prayer.

Our prayers will acquire a different power when we start asking about the things we are really striving for, and gradually we will come to understand that God has invested His perfect plan into our strivings, and this plan can be opened up for ourselves only when we are not afraid of telling the truth.

August 6

Friday

**The Holy Martyrs Borys and
Hlib**

Romans 8: 28-39

John 15:17 - 16:2

- [Reading](#)
- [Meditation](#)
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Romans 8: 28-39

Brethren, we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 15:17 - 16:2

And the Lord said: “I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

“If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘Servants are not greater than their master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

“I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God.”

Meditation

The topic of this Gospel is the world’s hatred (the people resisting Christ in general are meant in this context) and the disciples that are going to fall victim to this hatred. Here not a probability, but certain and undeniable reality is meant – the disciples of Christ engender hatred. The Greek word *miseo* used by John to denote hatred refers in this case not just to the feelings but to specific behaviour as well – destructive violence. The cross of Jesus is the hatred that has acquired a specific form. Jesus does not offer any consolation to His disciples to face the world’s hostility. Instead He offers *knowledge* (*recall the word*). That knowledge will enable the disciples to see the theological dimension of persecution. What happened to the Teacher is the criterion for understanding of what will happen. In his conflict relationship with the world a disciple may read the events of his own life, interpret the hatred directed at him as an opportunity for uniting his fate with Christ's fate. This would not have happened if the disciples shared the values of the world since the world would love you as its own, that is it would love everything what is similar to it. But the foundation for the disciples’ existence is

not the world, but Christ. It is Him who wrest them out of the world limitations with the word of His Revelation. The disciples are not separated from the world, they are hated not because they are different or better. The world revolts against them since they keep staying in it, though being wrest out of its power. The hatred of the world is guided at Christ, and hence, against those whom He has taken away from the world. That is why Jesus asks His disciples to remember that He is a sample for understanding their life situation and of what they will have to face. In spite of the difference in roles and positions, they are called to become actors in His fate. They have to always realize that not that much their actions or deeds will make them the target for the world as the deed of Revelation made by Christ. The disciples are staying with Him, while the world has rejected Him.

August 7

Saturday

**The Dormition of Saint Anna,
Mother of the Most Holy
God-bearer (Theotokos)**

- [Reading](#)
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- [Contemplation](#)

Galatians 4: 22-31

Luke 8: 16-21

Galatians 4: 22-31

Brethren, for it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman. One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh; the other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, you childless one, you who bear no children, burst into song and shout, you who endure no birth pangs; for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than the children of the one who is married."

Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac. But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the scripture say? “Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman.” So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman.

Luke 8: 16-21

And the Lord said: "No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light. Then pay attention to how you listen; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away."

Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.” But he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

Meditation

The excerpt from today’s Gospel provides three short statements made by Jesus. These fragments of statements are collected together by Luke here, after the parable of the sower (see Luke 8: 4-8) and its interpretation for the disciples (see Luke 8: 9-15). The

literary context into which Luke builds these three statements helps to see how Jesus wanted people to understand them.

The first statement refers to a lamp. That is a short parable. Jesus does not explain it since everybody knows what it's about. It was related to daily life. There was no electricity back then. Let us imagine this. A family has gathered at home. Daylight is failing. Someone gets up, takes the lamp, covers it with a jar and puts under the bed. What would the others tell him? Everybody would shout: *You, stupid! Put the lamp on the table!* That is as if Jesus said: don't apply the words you have just heard (the parable of the sower) to yourself, but elaborately demand this from others. A Christian should not be afraid of giving some testimony and relating the Good News.

The second statement refers to the fact that there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed. It also refers to the teachings Jesus gave only to His disciples (see Luke 8: 9-10). The disciples may not keep them for themselves, they have to disseminate them, since that is a part of the Good News Jesus has brought.

And finally the third statement urges us to be attentive to warnings. In those times there were a lot of prejudices in relation to the Messiah, that prevented people from correct understanding of what Jesus meant. He asks the disciples to be conscious of the biases they have while listening to His teachings. If I consider that the Messiah must be a glorious king, I don't want to hear anything about the science of the cross, about sufferings, persecutions, and my personal effort. In that way I will lose even the things I consider to be the ones that I possess. If we link this third statement to the first

one, we may draw a conclusion: those who keep the things they have received for themselves, without sharing them with others, lose the things they possess since these things spoil.

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