



CHAPTER 5: 1-39

The Gospel of
Luke

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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Luke's gospel is a compilation of various interviews with eye-witnesses and close followers of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). The author, Luke, probably did not become a Christian until several years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is first mentioned (implicitly) in Acts 16:10 (Acts is another book of the New Testament which Luke wrote). He did not, therefore, meet Jesus in the flesh and he himself was not an eye-witness.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Luke 5: 1-39

Douay Rheims Version

*The miraculous draught of fishes. The cure of the leper
and of the paralytic. The call of Matthew.*

1. And it came to pass, that when the multitudes pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth,
2. And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets.
3. And going into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting, he taught the multitudes out of the ship.
4. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.

5. And Simon answering said to him: Master, we have laboured all the night and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net.

6. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes: and their net broke.

7. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking.

8. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken.

10. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him.

12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy who, seeing Jesus and falling on his face, besought him saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13. And stretching forth his hand, he touched him, saying: I will. Be thou cleansed. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14. And he charged him that he should tell no man, but: Go, shew thyself to the priest and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.

15. But the fame of him went abroad the more: and great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16. And he retired into the desert; and prayed.

17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he sat teaching, that there were also Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, that were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was to heal them.

18. And behold, men brought in a bed a man who had the palsy: and they sought means to bring him in and to lay him before him.

19. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof and let him down through the tiles with his bed into the midst before Jesus.

20. Whose faith when he saw, he said: Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21. And the scribes and Pharisees began to think, saying: Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22. And when Jesus knew their thoughts, answering he said to them: What is it you think in your hearts?

23. Which is easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise and walk?

24. But that you may know that the Son of man hath the power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say to thee to: Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house.

25. And immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed on which he lay: and he went away to his own house, glorifying God.

26. And all were astonished: and they glorified God. And they were filled with fear, saying: We have seen wonderful things to-day.

27. And after these things, he went forth and saw a publican named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said to him: Follow me.

28. And leaving all things, he rose up and followed him.

29. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: And there was a great company of publicans and of others that were at table with them.

30. But the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying to his disciples: Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31. And Jesus answering, said to them: They that are whole need not the physician: but they that are sick.

32. I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance.

33. And they said to him: Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees in like manner; but thine eat and drink?

34. To whom he said: Can you make the children of the bridegroom fast whilst the bridegroom is with them?

35. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them: then shall they fast in those days.

36. And he spoke also a similitude to them: That no man putteth a piece from a new garment upon an old garment: otherwise he both rendeth the new, and the piece taken from the new agreeth not with the old.

37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: otherwise the new wine will break the bottles; and it will be spilled and the bottles will be lost.

38. But new wine must be put into new bottles: and both are preserved.

39. And no man drinking old hath presently a mind to new: for he saith: The old is better.

Ver. 6.—*They inclosed a great multitude of fishes*—for Peter had said, “At Thy word I will let down the net.” “Behold here the fruit and reward of obedience. Jesus did this—1. In order that by providing them with food, He might prepare them for their vocation and ministry. I have chosen you to be My disciples, make not excuse that ye must work for your livelihood as fishermen. Behold this miraculous draft of fishes, and believe that I am able to provide you with all things necessary for life more easily and more abundantly than ye are able to provide them yourselves. 2. To teach from this miracle, that they were soon to become successful fishers of men.

Ver. 7.—*And they beckoned unto their partners*—because from joy and wondering astonishment they were unable to speak.

Ver. 10.—*Fear not* (be not lost in astonishment, from henceforth you are to be fishermen in a higher sense of the word), from henceforth thou shalt catch men. ζωγζῶν from ζωγζέω, which means—

First, to hunt or catch some living thing, hence the Arabic translates it, from henceforth thou shalt be a fisherman, for thou shalt fish for and take men. Thou, Peter, shalt catch men, not by wounding and disabling them, as wild animals are taken; but as fish which are unhurt by the net, so thou shalt catch men not by violence or force, but through the power and operation of the spirit.

Secondly (if we derive the word from ζῶν and ἐγζομαι or ἐγείζω, to quicken, or recall to life. Hence S. Ambrose (Hexam., lib. v. cap. vi.) “Thou shalt be a life-giver to men;” and the Syriac, “Thou shalt be a fisher of men, to recall them to life.” Fishermen, indeed, catch fish to provide themselves with food, but thou, O Peter, art to become a fisher of men, not to destroy them, but to give them life by raising them from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, for like as fish taken from the water die, so men caught by thee become dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, and, in a sense, as fish are assimilated by those who feed on them, so do those who are inclosed in the Gospel net, become in very truth members of Christ. Figuratively, the ship of Peter is the Church, the head of which is Peter and his successors. The Pope is therefore the chief fisherman to whom the words of Christ apply, “Thou shalt catch men.” It is the duty, therefore, of the Roman Pontiff directly and by means of others to convert the heathen, as the early occupants of the see of Rome converted the Roman people and sent apostolic men to preach the word of life to heathen lands. Thus S. Gregory sent Augustine to convert the English people.

S. Ambrose observes, that some men, *e.g.*, the martyrs, like fish, are taken by the hook; others, *i.e.*, the body of the faithful, by the net, and adds, “Nets are the means whereby the Apostles catch men, for nets do not destroy but preserve what they take, and bring to the surface that which is floating below.”

Nets are called in Latin “retia,” because they are retentive “retinentia,” of that which they have taken.—Gloss.

Ver. 32.—*I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance i.e.*, to call them by means of repentance to grace and future glory. Hence as S. Ambrose acutely remarks, “If grace flows from repentance, he who thinks little of repentance forfeits grace.”