

## **The Blind See Luke 18:31-43**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus took the twelve aside after telling them the parable of the owner of the vineyard, after his encounter with the rich young man, and He said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

Why didn't they understand? Jesus had already predicted this same thing to them twice before. This is not some new thing He is telling them, this is old news. Peter had been rebuked for telling Him it wouldn't happen the first time He informed them of this. Now this is the third time. What was the problem?

From Matthew's account of these events, it is evident that Jesus' disciples were so wrapped up in their false hopes of an earthly messianic kingdom that these words went right over their heads. They did not understand because they were looking for God's kingdom in earthly terms, considering it as a place of earthly glory. Transfiguration is past, and three of the disciples were there. They saw it, they heard the voice, they knew the discussion, but they did not get it.

At this point, the disciples are blind. They are not understanding God's whole plan. The entire purpose of the eternal Word of God, becoming the Son of Man is lost to them. They have a hard time grasping that God would come and die for them.

Why would Jesus tell this to them if they do not understand it?

Jesus proclaims to them this message so that when it does happen, they will know that it happened by His foreknowledge and will. All that will happen, will happen because Jesus' desire is that it happen. He is going to gladly endure all that He proclaims He will endure, out of love for those He has created. He explains this so that His disciples will understand that it was not some random happenstance, but by the foreordained will of God that Jesus suffered what He endured.

Drawing near to Jericho, Jesus comes across a blind man sitting by the roadside begging. Finding out that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by, the blind man cries out, "Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me." Some told him to be quiet, but he cried out even more, "Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me." And the mercy He wants from Jesus is to recover his sight.

Jesus speaks, "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well." Immediately he saw and followed Jesus, glorifying God.

God wrought faith in him, that God could give him back his sight. Jesus spoke, and delivered the promise to him, and his faith grasped the promise and made it his own. His sight was recovered and He gave glory to God and followed Jesus. Jesus commends the man's faith. It is like a parent who gives a child a gift of money which the child uses to buy the parent a gift – and the parent thanks the child for that which was already theirs.

Dear friends these things are tied intimately together, for the blind man sees, and in seeing, follows Christ and gives God glory for having had mercy on Him. Isn't that exactly what Jesus was explaining to His disciples? What He is going to Jerusalem to do, is how God has mercy upon mankind. What Jesus is approaching Jerusalem to accomplish by allowing Himself to suffer and die, is how God forgives sin and grants life eternal – it is how he opens eyes closed by love of the world so they might see eternal salvation.

How many of us are blind? Seriously! How many of us have the same problem that Peter had when he first heard Jesus prophecy His coming suffering, death, and resurrection? Here Jesus has told them a third time, and they still have a problem. How many of us are like them?

Consider it this way.

Do you like to see a bare cross, or a cross with Jesus body on it?

Have you ever thought that you would rather not hear about Jesus suffering and death on some other day – like maybe Christmas and Easter?

Did you ever wish that Jesus suffering and death were not preached every Sunday?

Do you feel that the people who killed Jesus were bad people?

Ever think that you wouldn't have hollered crucify Him?

Have you ever felt sorry for Jesus, and what He endured?

Do you ever wish it would not have happened? That it could have been done some other way?

Dear friends, all these things make us just like the disciples in our text. Do you truly understand what Jesus was saying? Do you truly understand what Jesus was going into Jerusalem to accomplish?

Dear friends, it was not His being mocked, nor spit upon, nor crowned with thorns, nor struck in the face, nor the flogging that brought Him the greatest pain; it was not the nails in His hands and feet, nor the hours of anguish upon the cross that brought the greatest pain and sorrow to the soul of our Lord. No, it was the curse that was upon us, the curse of God upon sinful humanity that grieved Him most.

So it was that Jesus bore that curse against sins for us, so that we might be freed from the curse. It was His love for us that moved Him to suffer the punishment we deserve. It was His will! Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith – for the joy set before Him – endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. So we should consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebr. 12:2-3)

In what He endures on the cross, Jesus answers the blind man's prayer for mercy. In His suffering and death, Christ answers your weekly prayers for mercy, begged of Him in the Divine Service.

Our cry for mercy is near the beginning of our service and spread throughout it again and again – even when do not truly see our need for it. Our liturgy confesses our need for mercy, even when our fleshly eyes do not see our need. When we sing and speak the kyrie – Lord, have mercy – we are the blind beggar at the side of life's road asking God for His mercy.

We have been blinded by the cares and pleasures of this world, blinded by what we want, so that we do not always see what we need. Have we loved as our epistle states that we should? Or, have we been impatient, cruel, envious, boastful, arrogant, rude, irritable, and resentful? We have sinned against our neighbors at every turn, if not in our actions, in our attitudes toward them.

We love to sing our praises to God! We celebrate His goodness to us every day. But here is where we come week after week to bemoan our loss and beg for His mercy as we confess our sins. Our greatest need is for the mercy that only the Son of Man can provide.

He was delivered over to the Gentiles, was mocked, shamefully treated, spit upon, flogged, and crucified. But He did not remain in the grave, but rose again on the third day. It is this same Jesus who is here with us every time we gather together in His name.

As He did to the blind man, so Jesus delivers to you. His mercy flows from his open wounds to heal you of sin and bring healing to souls distressed by guilt, granting eternal life and salvation.

Jesus went on to Jerusalem that He might deliver His love to you. As you gather to eat and to drink at the table He sets before you, His love fills you with life, and love and hope unto eternal salvation.

So we gather as blind beggars, and each week Christ comes to us and answers our pleas for mercy. Christ visits us and grants us our sight, opening our eyes to see our salvation in the gifts God gives us. In the gifts Christ purchased upon the cross, He delivers and confirms our faith to life everlasting. Amen.