

Do You See?
Luke 18:31-43

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

In our Gospel lesson, God shows us through Luke's pen that there are two kinds of blindness. After Jesus explains His Passion, His coming suffering, death, and resurrection to His disciples, our text says, "But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

And then, he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant."

Jesus's disciples were spiritually blind, they did not understand the Gospel. While the beggar on the side of the road, was physically unable to see. Which is worse?

Do you see? Do you see Jesus as true God and true man? Jesus shows His humanity in telling the disciples of His coming suffering and death, for only as truly human can He endure temptation as a man, suffer as a man, die as a man.

Jesus also shows His divinity in healing the blind man. Furthermore, as True God, when He dies, His death is then the sacrificial atonement suitable as payment for the sins of all mankind.

Jesus's disciples were blind, they did not understand the Scriptures. Jesus was trying to open their eyes. And taking the twelve, Jesus 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.

Yes, all the things that Jesus was about to endure were written by the prophets. That is, they were written and foretold in what we call the Old Testament. Jesus's disciples were blind, they did not see the connection.

Jesus is trying to open their eyes so that they are not surprised when all these things happen. He is trying to open their eyes to lead them to understand that He is not there to begin a new worldly empire of Israel in Jerusalem, but to establish a spiritual kingdom that has eternal, resurrection promises. He is also telling them who it is that will persecute Him.

Above all else, He is proclaiming the Gospel to them. He is proclaiming the very message that they will proclaim which delivers forgiveness and life. But they do not see.

On the other hand, the blind beggar sees some things more clearly. He sees in Jesus His heavenly physician, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." He sees with the eyes of faith, and cries out, confessing that Jesus is both, true God and true man, His salvation.

Do you see?

Is the Scripture about your life? Is it about what you do? Or, is it about Christ and Him crucified?

Many do not see Christ today, for to clearly see Christ is to see Him as the crucified One. Many church leaders are running away from the Scriptures. Some even deny the Scriptures outright in an effort to bring people into their church. Wanting to appease the masses, many have sacrificed the truth of the Scripture to teach falsehoods which match the world's ideologies. They do this, for they are blind.

Such people are blind because they do not see Christ at the center of Scripture. Instead, they only know a God of judgement. They believe that, in order to keep God's wrath at bay, they must fulfill the Law and keep God happy. How do they do that? Deny that God's law as recorded in the Scripture is as demanding as it is! Soften the law! Make it attainable!

Why make the Law attainable? Simply put, if people can accomplish the Law, then there is no need for Christ crucified.

What is at stake is that they trust in their own works and goodness. They do not believe that there has to be any sort of perfection or holiness. They certainly do not have faith in God, for they believe they have no need for God. Let me rephrase that, they have no need of the God of Scripture – the God who dies to grant them forgiveness. They are good enough, they do not need someone to pay for their sins. That means that they certainly do not need someone to DIE to save them. They have concocted a god of their own imagination. They are their own gods, though they would not admit that. But it is all about the great "me." Christ crucified is an offense, a stumbling block. This should not surprise us, for Scripture warns of such.

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD." (1 Corinth. 1:18-31)

Do you see? Do you see yourself as a sinner in need of repentance for the forgiveness of sins? In other words, do you see and understand what the disciples did not see at the time of the events in our text, that Christ must be killed and on the third day rise? Do you see, as did the blind beggar, your need for Jesus, the Son of David, to have mercy on you?

You and I are blind men, we are in need of God to enlighten us with His Word and Spirit. We are in need of God to come with vengeance, with the recompense of God, to save us – to save us from ourselves, and pridefulness. To save us from the temptations of the world which would seduce into false belief, despair, and delusions of our own self-importance and lead us away from Christ crucified.

We should ask, "Jesus, what do you see?"

In our text, we are made aware of exactly what Jesus sees. He sees His coming suffering and death. He sees it in all clarity, and plans to continue His journey there. Jesus sees very clearly, for it is all His plan. John's Gospel

reveals that Jesus declares that no one takes his life from Him, He lays it down of His own accord. We know that He does this for the joy set before Him.

What is the joy set before Him? Being beaten? Whipped? Stripped naked and nailed to cross? In a way, yes. The joy set before Him is you! He sees you! He sees your sin and goes to the cross because He sees in His suffering and death, your forgiveness. He sees in His resurrection, your resurrection to live a new life now, and an eternal life in glorified flesh. He sees your salvation in His passion.

Do you see? God created us all, even knowing full well that we would be disobedient children. He knew of our sinfulness before He formed us in the womb, and brought us forth anyway. He did it so that He might love us.

See God's love for you, that even before the fall in the garden, He knew you – He saw you – He was acquainted with everything about you, AND, He planned to send His Son to do what He knew you could not do for yourself.

Let us pray that we are cured of our blindness, that we see the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ as the greatest gift, and the best part of our lives.

By the time of the events in our text, the disciples did not have the same knowledge that we *now* have. They had not yet witnessed Christ's death, and certainly not His resurrection. That still lay before them. Ultimately, they did see it all with their own eyes and they recorded it for us in the Gospels. They went on to proclaim the same message as Christ did to them in our text – Christ crucified and resurrected. That is the only Gospel, the only good news that brings hope and life.

Dear friends, all we have is what is recorded for us in Scripture. We, like the disciples at the time of our text, have not seen what finally they saw. We have what they did finally see recorded for us. We have the prophets foretelling what Christ would do, the Gospels which declare Christ has indeed done it, and the Epistles declaring what that all means for us.

Do you see?

Christ crucified is believed and trusted by the eyes of faith. Faith is not our work, but the work of the Holy Spirit accomplished in us by Word and Sacrament. It is why we gather together each week, to have that faith strengthened and nourished.

It is the Spirit who grants sight to us. It is He who opens our eyes of faith to see and believe so that each of us might boldly proclaim, "Christ is my Savior. It is Christ who has accomplished all for me! His suffering, death, and resurrection – His Passion – is my salvation! His Spirit comes to work faith in me, that things might not be hidden from my eyes, so that I would know and believe. All this Christ did for me! That I might be His own and live in His kingdom in everlasting righteousness, blessed for all eternity. Thanks be to the crucified and resurrected one, thanks be to Christ – my God and Savior." Amen.