

Pastor T.C. Arnold  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity  
Luke 6:39  
July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014

I had a friend when I was younger who was blind. He was not shy about taking an arm of someone who could see so that they could lead him to wherever he needed go. One day I was standing outside talking to someone when I saw my friend across the way standing next to a road. He was trying to cross the road, but he felt as if he couldn't. The reason: there was a car sitting on the side of the road, with its motor running, yet there was no one in the car. My friend, of course, could only hear the car, he couldn't see that there was no one in the car and just sitting there idling. He was waiting for the car to pass so that he would know that it is safe to cross the road. My friend did the right thing. He stayed put until he knew it was safe. When I noticed what was going on, I yelled out to my friend, "The car is just sitting there idling. There is no one in it. It is safe to cross the road." My friend, then, hurried to the other side.

My blind friend could not see to know that it was safe. He either had to wait until the car went away or he had to trust someone else to tell him it was safe to cross. He could not see. This was no fault of his own. But whose fault would it have been if I were to tell him it was safe to cross the road and it wasn't safe at all and rather than make it to the other side, he gets hit by that car? Whose fault is that? It would have been my fault. But make no mistake about it, my friend would have felt the grave mistake that I made. He would have been the one who got injured because of my misguiding words.

In the text for today, Jesus asks this question, "*Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit?*" Jesus begins this parable in the Gospel text for today because He knows what the Pharisees are doing. The Pharisees considered themselves spiritual guides. They desired for the people to take them by the hand as they would lead the people through all sorts of ritual and prayer and sacrifice to make well with God. But they had a problem, and this is what Jesus is saying here in the text. The Pharisees were blind. They were blind to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They led their lives, and the lives of others, through the workings of the law, through the idea that one can earn points with God by keeping the law in its strictest form. Jesus, however, says that if you follow the ways of these "so-called" religious men, you will, like they, fall into the pit – because they are not showing you the way.

John Hus once said, "A subject, in obeying his teacher in that which is evil is not excused from sin." In other words, if we follow false teachers and their ways and their practices, God does not excuse us because we are simply ignorant of what is right. The reason: we are not to trust man at his word but rather put that word up next to that of God and see how it holds up. If a man is preaching his own doctrine, has his own unique teachings, tells you of a different way that the way of Jesus, take heed and turn away from what you hear. If I were to tell my blind friend that it was okay to cross the road, and it wasn't okay, then he would have been hurt badly – and I would be guilty of leading him astray. Both of us would feel the effects of that sin. So it is with any of us who follow false gods, listen to their wisdom, above that of the Lord. Even if we listen and follow in ignorance, we are not exempt from God's judgment. That doesn't seem fair, I know. But it is the truth. So it is with life in this fallen world.

But many times we do know and understand what we follow. And, at times, we have no problem taking the path that leads in a different direction than the way the Lord leads. That little voice in our head that convinces us that no harm will come if I put what truly should be priority number one on the back burner for a while. In other words, I can't tell you how many times I have heard people say they will come back to church, be more active in their church, after they get things settled down in their own lives. They say, "Pastor, I'm just too busy right now. I have a lot of stress at work or at home. I have to work on my personal life first before I work on my life at church. When I have the

time I will come to church.” These and many other excuses seem like good reasons not to come to church – all the while forgetting that the Lord has provided this place to come along side of you in times of anxiousness and suffering. The Lord has provided this place for healing, comfort, strength for your week. And we, at times, ignore how our Lord leads us and provides for us during the most difficult times of our lives.

In times of busyness and difficulty, don’t find a different path or make one up on your own. The most beneficial way for your day today and life ahead, is the way the Lord has already provided for you. It’s the way for the sufferer. It’s the way for the busy man or woman. It’s the way the Lord shows you, walks with you... even carries the cross of burden for you. It’s the way of refuge. Beloved, walk that path that begins here with His gifts for you. Don’t walk away from it or on a different path.

Most people don’t know it, and Dr. Uwe Siemon-Netto calls it the most underreported phenomena in the mainstream media. What is this phenomena? It’s the accelerating rate at which immigrants from countries such as Iran and Afghanistan are turning their backs on Islam and giving their life to Christ in Germany. Pastor Gottfried Martens greets hundreds of worshippers filing out of the Lutheran Dreieinigkeitskirche (Trinity Church) in Berlin, Germany – a vast majority of these people are dark-skinned refugees from the middle-east. Rev. Martens baptized 300 former Muslims in the last three years and these immigrants who have turned to Christ and are no longer welcomed in their Muslim countries outnumber the German membership by more than two to one.<sup>1</sup> These brave men and women leave their homeland and their families in order to follow the path that Jesus has made for them. They have turned away from the blind leader who will for sure lead them into the pit of despair – to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus – and they will go to any length, even leaving home and family, to do so. Instead of finding the comfortable and easy path – like we so often seek after – these brave immigrants take the path that leads to righteousness. And I promise, beloved in the Lord, they have not taken this one path for granted, like we can so easily do.

Beloved in the Lord, follow not your hearts that lead away from the path of righteousness. Follow not your feelings that tell you that comfort in relationships or life must come before your time in this place. Follow not the words of false teachers or false preachers. Follow not a man or a woman – even if that is your pastor – who is not preaching the truth in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Follow, instead, Jesus above all things.

There is no one with “clearer vision” than Jesus. There is no one who has the path of righteousness already laid out for you – no one except Jesus. He made that path to heaven for you. He leads you on that path. He leads you, guides you and directs you during all the stuff you have to deal with each and every day. The blood of Jesus is our strength and help – our forgiveness – that goes with and before the troubles, stresses and busyness of life – not after those things.

The sighted leads the blind. The Lord in His wisdom and strength reminds us Christians that He is with us always... and we are with Him – on the path of righteousness. “Oh That the Lord would Guide My Ways,” as we sung for the opening hymn. He is our leader and He is our guide. May God richly bless you and keep you on the path of righteousness, in faith, and assurance, that His way is the one way – for you. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Information taken from June/July issue of The Lutheran Witness, pg. 28-29.