

## Sermon for Quinquagesima Sunday - Luke 18:31-43

In the Name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

In today's Gospel, our Lord makes a prediction to His twelve disciples that He will be delivered over to the Gentiles, be mocked, shamefully treated, spit upon, flogged, killed, but on the third day rise again. This is what was prophesied. For Jesus' disciples at this point in time, what He said made no sense to them. They didn't understand or grasp what He said. But for us who can see these events on the other side of history, they are joy and life.

Paul Gerhardt, who wrote the hymn found in the bulletin insert for this morning, knew this joy of Christ's suffering for us as well. Let's read together the first stanza again: "Thousand times by me be greeted/Jesus, who has cherished me,/And Thyself to death submitted/For my treason against Thee./Oh, how happy do I feel,/When before Thee low I kneel,/See Thee on the cross expiring,/My salvation there acquiring!"

It's the Lord who has cherished us. So much so, that He submitted to death for our treason against Him. Now treason is a serious charge. Someone who has committed treason has betrayed his country. He has done or said something that has given the enemy an advantage and put his own homeland in serious danger. And this is a strong way to talk about our sin. It is treason. We have betrayed heaven, our true homeland, by what we have done, by what we have said. To our shame, we have been traitors to Jesus. Nonetheless, by death on the cross, as he's dying, Jesus acquires salvation for us.

This was His goal. This was His mission. His strongest desire was our salvation alone. His thirst for our release from sin, death, and Satan is unmeasurable. His love for us drove Him to His death.

This truth is also seen in the other story of today's Gospel. At this point in time, Jesus is pressing toward Jerusalem with His disciples for the Passover. This will be the last Passover, because Jesus will be the Passover Lamb to take away the sins of the world. So it's interesting the stops He makes on His way on this sacred journey.

Jesus went through Jericho. Jericho: the picture of the inconsistency of the world in which we live. The story of Joshua and Israel's multitude marching around the great walls of that city comes to mind. One day the mighty walls stood strong protecting Jericho; the next day they were in shambles. So also, what is happy and healthy today in this world, tomorrow is sick and dead.

In the vicinity of Jericho, a crowd was gathered there. In the midst of the crowd was a blind beggar. This blind man called out to the Son of David for mercy. He wanted to see again. But in the most important sense, the man could already see. With the inward

eyes of his heart, this blind man saw inside of Christ more than all the other crowd with their outward eyes. He knew this man to be the Savior. As Jesus said elsewhere, "The blind receive their sight, and the seeing become blind." Jesus grants the blind man's request by saying the word so that the man is healed and recovers his sight.

When Jesus comes to our Jericho, He comes to our aid in our sorrow and misery. He shares His goodness and mercy with us. He enlightens us poor blind beggars with His Word. Simply by saying a word, Jesus heals us, He takes away our sin.

Let's read together stanza 3 of our hymn insert:

"Heal me, O my soul's Physician,/Wheresoe'er I'm sick or sad;/All the woes of my condition/By Thy balm be now allayed./Heal the hurts which Adam wrought,/Or which on myself I've brought;/If Thy blood but touch me solely,/My distress will vanish wholly."

Jesus said only those who are sick have need of a physician. We are not righteous of ourselves, but need the righteousness that Jesus gives. We have inherited original sin through Adam, but also we have brought sin's damages upon ourselves by what we have done and said. Lying, theft, and gossip all have their consequences and leave us hurting others and ourselves. Only Jesus' blood can take away entirely the guilt, the shame, and the distress. By His suffering, death, and resurrection, Christ restored what was lost in Adam, overthrew the devil, put death to death, destroyed hell, blotted out sin, opened heaven, and restored life again for us.

Through the mocking, spitting, cursing, Christ endured. Through the beating, flogging, whipping, our Savior endured. Through the nails, the crown of thorns, the cross, our Lord endured. His death was the beginning of life eternal for us. It is the end of loneliness, the beginning of joy and fellowship.

The prayer, then, of Jesus's disciples, the prayer of the blind beggar, and the prayer of us today is that of the Lord giving us new life in His cross and suffering. We cry out for the aid and help that only Christ can supply. Let us read together now the final stanza of the hymn insert, stanza 5:

"With the deepest adoration/Humbly at Thy feet I lie,/And with fervent supplication/Unto Thee for succor cry./My petition kindly hear,/Say in answer to my pray'r,/"I will change thy grief and sadness/Into comfort, joy, and gladness." Amen.

The Peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. ✠BJF✠