

Quinquagesima
15 February 2026
Luke 18:31-43

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—Amen

The text for this morning's sermon is the Holy Gospel appointed for today from the Holy Gospel According to St. Luke, the eighteenth chapter.

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit—Amen

There are lots of different kinds of blindness. There is the most obvious: physical blindness with a biological cause—something wrong with the sensory anatomy of the eye or with the nervous system which transmits the optical information to the brain.

But then there's that old expression: "a blind rage." It refers to someone being so angry that he cannot perceive reality properly. And as we live in a culture addicted to "outrage," fueled by social media, we seem to have a new variation of "blind rage" where people on different sides of an issue actually seem to see different things, as well as not seeing the other's different things.

People can be blinded by emotion. Yesterday was St. Valentine's Day, so we might remember the old saying that "love is blind."

People can also be blinded by fear—being in denial about something which frightens them. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can also inhibit a person from seeing things as they truly are.

As He was leading the disciples to Jerusalem in the third year of His ministry, our Lord Jesus Christ repeatedly told the disciples what was going to happen when they got there: "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.”

Jesus could not have been clearer or more direct about the events which would unfold on the coming Passover, the Passover to end all Passovers, when He would be sacrificed as the “Lamb of God that takest away the sin of the world.” He did not use figurative language. He spoke plainly. And He did so several times.

But the disciples “understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.” How, dear friends, could they not see the coming sacrifice of the Son of Man? They were blinded. Perhaps they were blinded by fear. Perhaps they were blinded by their preconceived notions about the Messiah and His kingdom. But for whatever reason, they were blinded to the reality of the coming passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus—that which had been foretold by the prophets and bluntly explained by Jesus Himself.

St. Luke, the disciple of Jesus who was also a medical doctor, immediately follows up the narrative of this temporary blindness of the disciples with the narrative of a miracle which Jesus did on the way to Jerusalem, as He and the disciples “drew near to Jericho.”

They encountered a blind man who was begging for his living. When he heard that Jesus was near, the blind man prayed for sight: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” And even when he was scolded for his prayer, he prayed all the more: “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

This man was physically blind, but he saw Jesus spiritually, with the eyes of faith which were illuminated by the Scriptures. Despite his physical blindness, He recognized Jesus as the “Son of David.” He knew that Jesus is indeed the King, the Messiah, the Lord who has the power over light and darkness, over sickness and health—and he also knew that it was a good and salutary thing to pray to Jesus seeking His mercy.

How different than the disciples, who in their spiritual blindness, did not pray to Jesus for illumination, but remained in their blindness (though their physical eyes were healthy) until they saw His passion, death, and resurrection with their own eyes. Only then did they truly see Jesus, and only then did they fully grasp what it means that He is merciful.

Our Lord answers the prayer of the blind man—who sees Jesus even in his physical darkness. “What do you want Me to do for you?” He asks. “Lord, let me recover my sight,” he prays.

And the Lord Jesus answers his prayer. He recovered his sight. But note what our Lord says made this miracle possible: “Recover your sight, your faith has made you well.” Faith believed the promise—the promise of the coming Messiah in the prophets, but also the coming of the Messiah in flesh and blood, in space and time. The blind beggar begs for mercy, and Jesus restores his sight. He saw Jesus, in spite of his physical infirmity.

And while the disciples continue to struggle with their spiritual blindness—these men whom our Lord often chided for their “little faith”—the formerly blind beggar who prayed for his sight, who sought the mercy of the Lord, also became a disciple: “He recovered his sight and followed Him.”

He followed Jesus, dear friends. For he saw something more than a miraculous healing. He saw that Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures. He saw that Jesus is indeed the one with the power to answer prayers, in His mercy, by His illuminating light, and in accordance with His ministry to seek and save the lost, to bring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead.

There were many who saw Jesus perform miracle after miracle, and yet did not see that He is the Son of Man, and the Son of God. There were indeed those who saw His magnificent works of love and mercy and divine power, and for whatever reason: jealousy, greed, the desire

for power—whatever their motivation, they were blinded by their rage, their fear, and their lack of love. For though love is at times blind, hatred and rage are blinding.

And it is this kind of blindness, dear friends, which is truly dangerous. One can learn to live in physical darkness, but when one is in spiritual darkness, he is in eternal peril.

And the only cure to that darkness, dear brothers and sisters, is Jesus: “God of God, light of light, very God of very God,”—the one who “breaks the darkness with a liberating light... turning blindness into sight.”

Let us join this formerly blind man who became a disciple, who saw Jesus as the liberating light of the world, by joining in His prayer: “Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.”

Let there be light. “Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.” You are forgiven for all your sins.

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit—Amen

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

Sermon based on one by the Rev. Larry Beane