

## **Sermon Luke 18:31-43**

*May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.*



**Christmas and Epiphany seasons have passed, and with the ashes next Wednesday, we begin the journey toward the preordained crucifixion of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our liturgy is becoming more meditative, as we contemplate the sufferings of Christ – the sufferings he endured for us. We need to understand the message we heard in today’s Gospel reading from Luke.**

**The message that Jesus came to heal us, to open our eyes, to help us to see...That was His mission... that was His journey, a Journey of Mercy...**

**In our Gospel today, who really is blind? ... The man beside the road? Or the disciples regarding prophecy?**

**It is hard to believe that it is simply a coincidence that Luke would write the paragraph that begins Lent, and follow that up with a story about blindness being healed.**

**As Jesus tells them of what awaits them in Jerusalem, the disciples are even more blind than the man on the side of the road. And I quote verse 34 of today's Gospel:**

**“And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”**

**In front of them, was His journey toward the whipping, the scourging, the torture, and the death on a cross which Jesus proclaimed clearly, yet they were blind – more blind than the man who couldn't see. Luke emphasized the healing of the man who could not see, because it reflected the reality of the apostles' failure to see what Jesus was telling them.**

**Perhaps it was the joy of the moment. After all, they were walking with Jesus! They had seen miracles, they had heard the great teaching, they were fed, along with thousands. Things were good, even if the ministry was pretty simple as they travelled from town to town. If they truly knew what Jesus was telling them, would they have abandoned Jesus? Would they have tried to stop Him?**

**They were completely blind.**

**Oh yes, they were blind. What downside could there be to the ministry, walking along with the one they KNEW was the Son of God? Life was good.**

**Sometimes it seems that we, today, may fall into the same kind of pattern as the disciples. Ministry may not always be perfect, the church may be challenged, but we realize that when we walk with God, all will be set right. We like the cross, because it shows us the hope of the future. But sometimes people struggle with crucifixes, those picturing Jesus Christ nailed to the cross, tormented by the pain and agony, being spit upon. Perhaps we might prefer to forget what happened there. We might like to forget why he hung there in agony. ....  
Idolatry... Murder... Hatred... Lust... Gossip... Slander... Envy... Jealousy... and on and on.**

**These sins which were written in the old testament by the Prophets... The disciples knew them...sort of.**

**The disciples were truly blind.**

**And as they are continuing toward the cross, not thinking of the events that await them in Jerusalem, and the meaning of those events, they come across a man, who, although he was blind, sees far better than they.**

**The poor blind man, was seeking help, any help. So many Sabbaths, when the Old Testament prophets were read in the synagogue, the man would hear the promises about the Messiah. Promises where sight would be given to the blind, among all the healings, among all the things restored.**

**Once the crowd told the blind man who was coming and causing such a stir, there was no way that Jesus would not hear his cries.**

**Even though blind to light, the man realized that his only hope was that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. And using a messianic title, the man cries out with a desperation – SON OF DAVID – have MERCY on ME...**

**Son of David....have MERCY on me..**

**How could Jesus not show ultimate mercy, How could He not stop and fulfill the prophecies? The very compassion that drives Him to the cross, drives him to help this man see... but not just see... The word translated as “recover my sight” is that incredible word that means to see and perceive and know. The word that describes when Jesus looked at Peter after Peter betrayed Him three times. The word for the intuition, the compassion, the understanding.**

**The healing was far more than just physical – it touched every aspect of this blind man. This man trusted in God’s promise of a Messiah, and what the Messiah would do – and it was done, far more than he could ever have imagined. He saw a hope in the Messiah, not just for the present situation, but to change his life completely...**

**It was an act of compassion, an act of love, an act of mercy...  
Of Charity...The Mercy to be delivered.**

**Unfortunately, the true meaning of our Epistle today is lost in modern translations, but those translations seem appropriate for St. Valentine's Day, with its talk of love, because it sounds so...so beautiful and wise. The last verse is:**

**And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

**This Epistle is used in wedding ceremonies but it has changed in this modern translation. Do you remember what word is used in the KJV instead of love?**

**Charity...Yes... Charity... hear the last verse of the reading again... the original way as we heard in today's Epistle ...**

**And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**

**In the Greek word Agape, and the Hebrew word chesed, one of the words for love, they are also translated as mercy. Or in this case, Charity...**

**To truly love, is to be charitable toward the one you care for – it is to be quick to care. This mercy is characterized by Jesus completely in the healing of the blind man, and made even more clear, as he journeyed to accomplish what the prophets**

**proclaimed – that he would be handed over to be mocked, mistreated, tortured, spit upon and whipped.**

**For our good, He was sacrificed, killed by Roman centurions with the Jewish priests calling for his death on a cross. A death that He knowingly embraced, even as He set out on the last leg of His journey to Jerusalem.**

**It would profit us nothing, if Christ were not to demonstrate and prove His love, His Charity, and His Mercy as He endured and suffered for us. In so doing, He healed us, He restored our sight. He completed His journey of mercy, and recovered for us, our ability to see ... to see God, to know His love, His charity, His mercy. And comprehending it, we are able to begin to grasp the depth, the width, and the breadth of God's love, of His charity and His mercy. We find ourselves at peace.**

**Not just the peace of the world, but the incredible peace of God our Father, which passes all understanding. The peace which keeps our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of our savior, Jesus Christ.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Amen.**

