

Sermon Notes on Lk. 18:31-43, Sunday before Lent

1. The situation of our text is the week before Holy Week. Jesus had just ended His tour through Perea and had crossed the Jordan River on His way to Jerusalem.
2. Jesus predicted His rejection, suffering, crucifixion and resurrection three times. All three Synoptic Gospels record all three. In Mt. we have 16:21-22; 17:12,22; 20:17-19. In Mk. we have 8:31-32; 9:30-32; 10:32-34. And in Lk. 9:22; 9:43-45; 18:31-33. The disciples were shocked and did not understand. That does not mean that they did not believe. They were still thinking of an earthly King and Kingdom. Evidently they had forgotten Pss. 22 and 69 and Is. 53 which speak of the suffering Messiah. Even on the day of Ascension (Acts 1:6) the disciples had wrong ideas about the Kingdom. Pentecost removed those false ideas. We must be patient with weak believers. We must do as Jesus did.
3. In all three predictions Jesus speaks of Himself as the Son of Man. Jesus found this title of Himself at Ps. 8:4 and Dan. 7:13. He refers to this title at Mt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27; Mt. 26:64. Jesus foresaw His suffering, death and resurrection even before Judas and the Jewish authorities had planned it. He is true God. But His suffering and death show that He was a true human being. Always stress these two facts: Jesus is true God from eternity. He is also true man born of the Virgin Mary.
4. In all three predictions Jesus spoke plainly about His resurrection. He plainly foretold that He would conquer sin, death and hell.
5. Read all three predictions in all three Gospels. Notice how the predictions become clearer. In this third prediction in our text Jesus begins with the word "Behold." He speaks of His betrayal. He says that what the prophets have written about Him would come to pass. For the first time He mentions the Gentiles. For a Jew to be delivered to the Gentiles was an awful thought. By the way, no one caught Jesus off guard. He knew exactly what would happen to Him. But He did not shrink. In all three accounts He mentions Jerusalem. One would not have expected this to happen in the religious capital. That was the center of worship, of Scripture, of the Sanhedrin. His own people and the Gentiles would crucify Him. He went to this willingly for you and for me. "He was despised and rejected of men." Is. 53.
6. The healing of the blind man, Bartimaeus, at Jericho is found in all three Synoptic Gospels: Mt. 20:29-34; Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43. Everyone agrees that the three accounts describe the same story. But there are difficulties in harmonizing them. However, that does not mean that the Bible contradicts itself. The four accounts of Easter morning in the four Gospels present problems of harmonization. But that does not mean that the Bible contradicts itself. Bible scholars have suggested three explanations for harmonizing the account of blind Bartimaeus: a) Lk. records a healing on the way into Jericho. Mk. has another healing as Jesus leaves Jericho. Mt. combines both. b) There were two Jerichos, one ancient, one modern. Mk. records a healing when Jesus was leaving ancient Jericho, Lk. records one when Jesus enters modern Jericho. c) Lk.'s account anticipates the Zacchaeus account but actually follows it. Lk. 18:35 will allow this. If the reader wishes more material let him read Ylvisaker, Fahling, Arndt or Lenski.
7. Evidently blindness caused these men to be beggars. Evidently they had already heard of Jesus and believed in Him. They call Him "Lord" and "Son of David." They did not ask for riches but for sight. From this and similar accounts we say in church "Lord, have mercy on us." All three accounts say that these men followed Jesus, very likely to Jerusalem. This text reminds us of Ps. 50:15. The people wanted these men to be quiet but Jesus welcomed their cries. That is important. He is the Savior of both soul and body.

Sermon Outline on Lk. 18:31-43, Sunday before Lent

Theme: YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU.

Introduction: There are false ideas among people about what faith is. Some say it is a decision. That is false. It is a gift of God. Eph. 2:8. It is a work of God in man. Jn. 6:39. It comes by hearing God's Word. Rom. 10:17. It is the opposite of working for something. Rom. 4:4-5. It means to acknowledge that God alone is the giver and the doer, not mere man.

I-THE DISCIPLES HAD MUCH TO LEARN

- A-Their reaction at Jesus' first prediction. Read Mt. 16:21-26. This happened when Jesus was still in Galilee. He predicted His suffering death and resurrection but Peter proved to be a stumbling block to Jesus. Jesus told Peter that he was a tool of Satan. Peter meant well but what he did was not by faith. Then Jesus said: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." He was saying to Peter: "You mean well but your thoughts are opposed to the Gospel. You are not believing."
- B-Their reaction at Jesus' second prediction. Read Lk. 9:43-45. This happened at the time of the close of Jesus' Galilean Ministry. Read also Mk. 9:30-32. Lk. 9:45 does not mean that Jesus did not want them to understand because Jesus had just said: "Let these words sin into your ears." Vs. 45 means that their flesh, their sinful mind, could not comprehend the meaning of Jesus' Words. On the same occasion Mt. (17:22-23) says that the disciples were deeply grieved. That is not faith. Faith in Christ does not make a person sad or full of grief.
- C-Their reaction at Jesus' third prediction. Read Lk. 18:31-34. This happened several months later in Perea, east of the Jordan River. It was the clearest of the three predictions. But note the reaction of the disciples in vs. 34. Did Jesus want them to believe? Yes. Why were the disciples reacting this way? Because faith comes only by the grace of God in Christ. This is a lesson for us.

II-BLIND BARTIMAEUS TEACHES US THE RIGHT WAY

- A-His attitude toward Jesus. When we read the three accounts in Mt., Mk. and Lk. we learn that this blind man called Jesus "Lord, Jesus, and Son of David." He truly knew who Jesus was. Even when the crowd told him not to make so much noise he kept on crying: "Lord, Jesus, Son of David." He knew Him. He believed in Him. How this man came to faith is not known. But we do know that he believed.
- B-His attitude toward himself. All three accounts tell us that he said "Have mercy on me." Mercy is the quality which helps a helpless and wretched person. Blindness truly makes a person wretched. Such a person is truly helpless. And when Jesus said: "What do you want me to do for you?" he answered: "Lord I want to regain my sight." His faith caused him to speak to the Lord forthrightly. He did not say: "I don't need to pray because the Lord knows everything. He knows I am in great need." No. He tells the Lord just as the Lord directs us in Ps. 50:15: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." Faith in Jesus causes a person to pray to the Lord and to trust that He will help. He answers every prayer just as He answered every prayer of Jesus. Jn. 11:42.

Conclusion: What have we learned today? We learned that Jesus spoke very clearly to His disciples about salvation. We learned that the disciples at times were slow to hear but that the Lord was merciful to them. And we learned that blind Bartimaeus put the disciples to shame. He knew the Lord. He believed in Him. He prayed to Him. And Jesus said: "Your faith has saved you." What a lesson for us!