

Quinquagesima (Esto mihi)
St. Luke 18:31-43
February 23rd, 2020
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

We Are Going Up to Jerusalem

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who didst manifest Thyself, with the Holy Ghost, in the fullness of grace at the baptism of Thy dear Son, and with Thy voice didst direct us to Him Who hath borne our sins, that we might receive grace and the remission of sins: Keep us, we beseech Thee, in the true faith; and inasmuch as we have been baptized in accordance with Thy command, and the example of Thy dear Son, we pray Thee to strengthen our faith by Thy Holy Spirit, and lead us to everlasting life and salvation, through Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

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

The blessed Apostle St. Paul instructs us on what love is in the Epistle reading. Having heard all about love, we then hear the words of the Evangelist St. Luke in the Gospel reading which tells us that our Lord + Jesus took His disciples aside and began to tell them that they were going to be heading to Jerusalem. There the Son of Man would endure all the things that the holy Prophets wrote concerning Him. The Son of Man—our Lord + Jesus Christ—would be betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles—into Pilate's and the Romans soldiers' hands—and He will be mocked, insulted and spit upon. Then they will scourge Him and kill Him. All these things He will passively endure. He will suffer in this way for mankind. He will suffer these things for us.

St. Paul describes love in his First Epistle to the Church at Corinth. Our Lord + Jesus gives us a picture of what love truly looks like. Love involves sacrificing your will and way for the benefit of the other person. As St. Paul says, "it suffers long." That our Lord + Jesus endures these things for us is truly amazing. It truly shows the love He has for mankind. What is even more amazing is that He does this for a mankind that disregards Him and even hates Him. He was despised and rejected of man, a man of sorrows and full of grief, because of our rebellion; the rebellion that is on display whenever we sin, which is pretty much all the time. Even if we were able to stop committing the daily sins that plague us, or stopped forgetting to show the love required of us toward God and our neighbor, we would still be plagued by original sin; the sin of Adam that corrupts our very nature.

This is the type of person for whom our Lord + Jesus suffers and dies. He makes atonement for a mankind that is full of rebellion and hate towards Him. This is what love truly is. It is certainly easy for us to love those who love us, but to love those who persecute and hate us, is not something at which we excel.

But this is why our Lord + Jesus is going up to Jerusalem, because He knows we are unable to save ourselves. Our works are soiled with sin. Our love falters. We are not always kind, or patient. We are often rude, and full of pride, jealousy and anger. We are usually striving to satisfy our own will, to

the neglect of the will of those whom we profess to love. Sometimes the truth hurts and we run away from it. We have a hard time enduring hardship, trial and pain. We shun the cross and seek after good days and vain glory. In short, we are blind beggars, who need our Lord + Jesus to restore our sight. We are at times spiritually blind, floundering around in the dark with no answers and no direction. Our Lord + Jesus comes to us with His Word and opens our blind eyes so that we may see that our salvation is found in Him and in Him alone.

Our Lord + Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to heal our infirmities of sin. He goes up to Jerusalem to suffer at the hands of the Gentiles, so that we might have forgiveness of our sins, and wherever forgiveness is, there also are eternal life and salvation. Our Lord + Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to suffer and die on the tree of the holy cross so that He might atone for the sins of the whole world, and so that all those who cling to Him in faith may have their blind eyes opened to see their salvation in Him and Him alone.

It is no wonder then that our Lord + Jesus encounters a blind man on His way to Jerusalem. According to another Gospel (St. Matthew) our Lord meets in fact two blind men. This is why the bulletin cover depicts two blind men instead of one meeting our Lord. Also, in another Gospel (St. Mark), we are told that this man's name is Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. When the Holy Scriptures give names, it reveals to us a few things, one, that these are actual people, not just symbolic representations of someone. And two, that if one needs to confirm the story, one need only go to the source. In this case, one can go to Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus and ask him if this is true. One can also probably go to his friends and family and confirm that this man was actually blind, and was healed. Scripture also uses names to show us that these people were not just cured and then had nothing to do with the Lord + Jesus, but that they were still active in the Church.

And this is how the pericope ends, with the healed blind man following our Lord + Jesus and glorifying Him. His faith is expressed in love for the Lord + Jesus; love that desires to follow Him anywhere. This is what faith does, it creates hope in us, which in turn creates love in us; love for the Lord God, love for our neighbor. Faith opens blind eyes. Faith is gifted to us by the Holy Ghost Who works through the means of grace to create and sustain in us this saving faith; faith that clings in love to the Lord + Jesus Christ.

In the Collect for the Gospel which we prayed prior to the sermon, which was written in the 16th century by Veit Dietrich, we prayed about Holy Baptism. It is quite astute of Veit Dietrich to associate the receiving of sight with Holy Baptism. For in Holy Baptism the stain of sin is washed away from us; the scales of sin that blind our eyes is washed away from us. We are made clean and pure—a new creation—all through the work of the Holy Ghost. This is why it is to our benefit that we daily live in our Holy Baptism.

What does it mean to live in our Holy Baptism? Well, first it means to remember that we are baptized on a daily basis, and remember what all that entails. We are children of the heavenly Father, and brothers our Lord + Jesus, and co-heirs of the gifts of Heaven. He claimed us as His own, and placed His holy Name upon us; the Name we proclaim at the beginning of the Divine Service when we make the sign of the holy cross upon our foreheads at the words “In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”

But living in our Holy Baptism daily does not just mean remember who we are and Whose we are, it also means, as we learn in the explanation of Holy Baptism from Luther's Small Catechism, that this washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost signifies that the Old Adam in us is daily drowned and killed so that a new creation may rise and live before the Lord God forever. In other words, daily do we confess our sins and trespasses, that is, drown and kill our Old Adam, and rejoice that our sins are forgiven for the sake of our Lord + Jesus Christ and His merits. The works and merits that He

accomplished by going up to Jerusalem. It is into His death in which we are baptized. In the waters of Holy Baptism, we are washed in the Blood of the Lamb of God. We are washed in the blood that He shed on the tree of the holy cross.

My dear children, as we prepare to enter into the season of Lent, the season where we reflect upon the Ten Commandments and how little we observe them and how much we break them, let us focus our faith on the One in Whom we have forgiveness for our sins. Let us fix our eyes, that have been restored with spiritual sight through the waters of Holy Baptism, upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's suffering and death on our behalf. We are going up to Jerusalem. We are headed toward Good Friday and our Lord's cross. There on the cross He showed His love for mankind; He showed His love for you and me. He gave His life up, so that we might have life with Him. Let us fix our eyes on Him and give Him praise and glory for His great gift of forgiveness, life and salvation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who through Thy Son Jesus Christ didst mercifully open the blind man's eyes, restoring his sight, we beseech Thee, with Thy Word so enlighten our hearts that, knowing Thee through Christ, Thy Son and our Redeemer, we may in all temptations and afflictions look only to Thy mercy, and at all times find comfort and deliverance; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!