

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 6:36-42
June 27th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Can the Blind Lead the Blind?

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O God, Whose favor is life, and in Whose presence there is fulness of peace and joy, vouchsafe unto us, we beseech Thee, such an abiding sense of reality and glory of those things which Thou hast prepared for those that love Thee as may serve to raise us above the vanity of this present world, both in its pleasure and in its necessary trials and pains, that under Thy guidance and help all things here shall work together for our everlasting salvation; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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 Gospel reading for today from the Evangelist St. Luke is often used as an excuse for license to commit sin. Many abominable sins are promoted because of the erroneous teaching that pointing out sin and sinfulness is somehow judging. The point that our Lord + Jesus is making is not to ignore sin. The One Who gave us His Law on Mount Sinai is not telling us that His Law does not matter. He is not telling us that everyone has a license to sin freely; to do whatever their heart desires for them to do. Such teaching leads to ever increasing debauchery, as we clearly see from the licentiousness proudly paraded in front our eyes every day in our society.

Our Lord is not teaching us that we should ignore sin and sinfulness, when He teaches, "Judge not." What our Lord is teaching, however, is that we should not consider our sins to be greater than our neighbor's sins. All sin is punishable by death. The wage of all sins is death. The consequence of all sins is death. Since all have sinned all will die. We have all sinned in thought, word, and in deed. The reward for this is death. We can know whether or not someone is a sinner by their death. Therefore, since we all die, or will die, it can be certain that we are all sinners. We are all in need of the Lord God's grace and mercy found only in the works and merits of His One and Only Beloved Son, our Lord + Jesus Christ.

And that really is the point. It is certain that we are all sinners. We are all liars. For we daily want to diminish the magnitude of our sins; we want to ignore the sinfulness that dwells within us. We want to paint ourselves in a good light. We want our friends and neighbors and relatives to view us as "good people." We do not want to be considered "bad people." So, we are often tempted to diminish or ignore the sins that we think, do and say every day of our lives. This is easier for us if we compare ourselves to everyone else. You see, everyone else always appears more wicked than we are. In the same way that we judge ourselves according to a virtuous light, we find ourselves painting everyone else around us in a bad light. It makes sense for us to do this, for if everyone else is worse of a sinner than we are, it is easier for us to make ourselves out to be better people than we want to admit.

This is what our Lord + Jesus is teaching us in the parable. Do not think that we are a better people than our neighbor. We are just as much of a sinner as he is. He is just as much of a sinner as we are. We are all sinners in need of the Lord God's grace. The difference, of course, is that there are some who refuse to acknowledge their sinfulness. They want to continue to dwell in their sinfulness. They want to continue to go on committing their vile prideful acts. They do not want to repent of their sin, and live lives worthy of repentance. They do not want to amend their sinful ways. They want to continue to live with a plank in their eye.

Because they have a plank in their eye, they are blind leaders of the blind. That is how impenitent sinners operate. They want to bring other people in to join them in their sinfulness. Misery loves company as the adage goes. When blind leaders lead blind followers, they both end up in the ditch. They are no longer on the path of righteousness. But since they are impenitent, they are too blind to see their error and their sin. The plank must first be removed from their eye in order for them to see properly. This is why that Lord God gave us His Commandments to show us our sins, to curb our gross outbursts of sin, which the Old Adam in us desires to commit, and to act as a guide to keep us on the right path, so that we do not fall into the ditch.

In order to be led on the path and to continue on the path and not fall into the ditch of impenitence. The Law is continually preached into our ears. The Law is preached so that we realize that we have a huge plank in our eyes that needs to be removed in order that we will be able to see clearly how much of a sinner we are, and how much we are in need of the Lord God's grace and mercy. When we have realized that we have a huge plank of sinfulness in our eye, we realize that this can only be removed by the working of our Lord + Jesus. He is the One Who plucks the plank out of our eye. He is the One Who restores our sight. Through contrition, that is sorrow over our sins, we realize that we have a huge plank in our eye—the plank of sinfulness. But on account of faith in our Lord + Jesus and His works and merits, that plank is removed. He has removed the plank from our eye and caused us to see clearly that He is the only means of salvation in this fallen and sinful world.

He removed this plank from our eye, by allowing Himself to be nailed to another plank—the plank of the holy cross. He removes the plank of sinfulness from our eye by suffering our punishment on the plank of the holy cross and dying on our behalf. He atoned for our sins and the sins of the whole world by hanging on the plank of the tree of the holy cross. The plank of sinfulness is removed from our eye when in contrition we cling in faith to the plank of the holy cross. We find forgiveness in that plank upon which our Lord + Jesus hung for the sins of the whole world.

When we realized how much of a poor, miserable sinner we are, and believe that only through the Christ we can have forgiveness, life and salvation, we have no need to think of ourselves as better than other people, for we realize that we are just as much of a sinner in need of the Lord God's grace as everyone else. It is in this spirit—the knowledge that all mankind is full of sin and cannot save themselves by their own keeping of the Law—that we point out the speck in other people's eyes. It is motivated by love for our fellow man. For we know the burden that sin casts upon all people. We desire, on account of love, to remove the speck from our neighbor's eye so that he too can be sorry for his sin and cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus and receive forgiveness for his sins.

This is what our Lord + Jesus means by His parable today from the Evangelist St. Luke. Remove the plank of your own self-righteousness from your eye by realizing your sin, and clinging in faith to the plank upon which our Lord + Jesus hung for the redemption of all of mankind from sin, death and the power of the devil. Can the blind lead the blind? Certainly, many blind leaders gather many blind followers, who all end up in the ditch of unrepentant sinfulness. But if we truly desire to have the plank of sin removed from our eye, we must have our sight restored through the working of the Holy Ghost. He removes the plank from our eye by opening our ears to hear the Gospel of our Lord + Jesus Christ; He opens our eyes to see that the suffering and death of our Lord + Jesus Christ on the plank of the

holy cross atoned for our sin and the sin of all mankind, so that all those who believe on Him are justified by the heavenly Father.

Sadly, many people in this world want to cling shamelessly to their sinfulness like an old and dirty security blanket. No matter how much the sin is pointed out as sin, they will dig further into their pride and hubris. Because they have a plank in their eye, they do not see that they have fallen into a ditch. When their sin is pointed out and taught to them that they are sinful, they cry against us that we have judged them, and use this Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke as a license to pridefully continue in their sinfulness. The plank can only be removed by the work of the Holy Ghost, Who shows us all our sin; Who convicts us of our sin, and shows us that we have no righteousness in us. The Holy Ghost teaches us that the only righteous One is the Lord + Jesus Christ. Any righteousness that we have is because we have cast off our garment of sin, and put on the garment of our Lord's righteousness.

This is why we cling in faith to His wonderful work that He performed for us in the waters of Holy Baptism. He washed away all of our sin, and clothed us with His righteousness. He killed the Old Adam that desired to continue to lead us into the ditch of impenitence, so that we can walk with Him on the path of righteousness. On this path He leads us to His holy Supper, where we eat with Him and share with Him His true and substantial Body and Blood given in bread and wine. This meal sustains us on the pathway to Heaven. In this life surrounded by sin and death—our sin and our death—we are taken care of by our loving Lord and Savior, Who removed the plank of sin from us, by washing and cleansing us in Holy Baptism, and then clothing us with His righteousness. We can see clearly now that we are indeed poor, miserable sinners in need of His grace. He leads us on the path of righteousness, feeding us and giving us to drink of His Body and Blood, until He leads us at the very last into our eternal home in Heaven.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not use our freedom from sin as a license to continue on in sinfulness. Rather, let us throw off the plank of sin by trusting in the sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus for us upon the plank of the holy cross, and cling in faith to our Holy Baptism, in which we are clothed with His righteousness so that we can see clearly to remove the speck from each other's eyes. Let us bear with each other's burdens of sin, and together as poor sinners in need of the Lord God's grace, come to this altar and kneel in sorrow over our sins, and receive the forgiveness of our sins upon our lips and tongues through our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine in true Christian fellowship. Let us gather together as fellow sinners and have the specks removed from our eyes here at this altar as we share in our Lord's meal. Then let us go from this altar and continue to remove the specks of sin from each other's eyes by offering to each other the forgiveness that we ourselves have received from the Lord at this altar. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Merciful God and Father, Who makest Thy sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and art kind unto the unthankful, teach us by Thy Holy Spirit, we beseech Thee, to have compassion on all men, covering our neighbor's frailties and faults, being always ready to forgive, and showing forth everywhere the fruits of faith; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, 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!