

Quinquagesima (Esto mihi)
St. Luke 18:31-43
February 27th, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

This Saying Was Hidden from Them

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Merciful God and Father, Who dost require of us fervent love of Thee and our neighbor, we humbly beseech Thee, graciously govern us by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may never offend against love, nor devote Thy gifts to our own glory and profit, but according to Thy good pleasure and for our neighbor's welfare, growing continually in true faith and love unfeigned; 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.

After the Israelites crossed over the Jordan River they camped in Gilgal. There they prepared to do what the Lord God had commanded them to do—utterly destroy the rebellious and impenitent Canaanites. The false worship, idolatry and unbelief of the Canaanites was the reason that they were to be destroyed completely. The Lord God had been patient with them through the sojourning of the Patriarchs through this land, throughout the centuries that the Israelites lived in bondage to slavery in the land of Egypt, and also during the forty years that Israel wandered in the wilderness. The Canaanites were given plenty of opportunity to turn from their unbelief, but they did not. Judgment comes eventually for all unbelievers; utter destruction awaits all those who choose to remain blind.

The Israelites who were to utterly destroy the Canaanites so that they could live in a land free of false worship did not utterly destroy all the Canaanites, however. There were many people who continued to live among the Israelites, and they adopted the false religions of the peoples around them. They became just as blind to the Lord God as the Canaanites, and were eventually exiled from the land that was promised to them; first the Northern Kingdom into Assyria, and then the Southern Kingdom into Babylon.

At the beginning of the conquest of the land of Canaan, however, they camped in Gilgal, and prepared to destroy Jericho. The impregnable walls of Jericho were brought down simply by the Israelites walking around the city a few days in a row and blowing trumpets after their final cycle of the city. Jericho was completely destroyed. It was never to be built again. The penalty that was prophesied was the death of the persons two eldest sons. The fact that our Lord + Jesus is approaching Jericho in our Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke tells us that the prophecy was not heeded and someone rebuilt the city. This is told to us in the histories of the kings of Israel. They remained blind to the Lord God's warnings.

It seems that everybody is blind. The Canaanites were blind. The Israelites were blind. The kings

of Israel were blind. And as our Lord + Jesus approaches Jericho, on His way to Jerusalem, He pulls His Apostles aside and tells them that He is going to Jerusalem to suffer and die for them, just as it was prophesied about the Son of Man. They were blind to His words, for St. Luke tells us that they understood none of what the Lord + Jesus had told them; the saying was hidden from them. In fact, the Evangelist St. Luke tells of the Apostles' ignorance in three different ways: "they understood none of these things," the "saying was hidden from them," and "they did not know the things which were spoken."

It was necessary for the Son of Man—our Lord + Jesus—to suffer and die for mankind, because without the perfect fulfilling of the Law by Him, and His suffering and death in our place on the tree of the holy cross, there could be no redemption from sin, death and the power of the devil. Mankind is incapable of rooting out all evil, both in this world, and especially within himself. The Israelites and Canaanites are an example of that. The Canaanites never wanted to rid themselves of evil. The Israelites attempted to rid their land of the unbelieving Canaanites, but never fully accomplished it. Even in the height of the glory days of Israel—in the time of Kings David and Solomon—there were still some of the old people of the land dwelling among the Jews, even if they were subjected to paying tribute, and were servants of the Israelites.

There were even those who embraced the false worship of the Canaanites, and even rebuilt the city of Jericho contrary to the command of the Lord. No, mankind, as evidenced by the Israelites, is incapable of rooting out evil among and in himself. They continue to remain willfully and unwittingly blind. This is why it was necessary for our Lord + Jesus to come into this world, so that He might accomplish all that we are unable to do. This is why our Lord + Jesus pulls His Apostles aside near the same place that the Israelites camped before conquering Jericho. Our Lord + Jesus also is before Jericho on His way to Jerusalem to suffer and die for us poor, miserable sinners. But these sayings remained hidden from the Apostles until after the Lord's death and resurrection.

On His way to pay the ransom for our redemption—on the way to His death—our Lord meets a blind man. This man's eyes of faith see clearly in Whom he is to find his salvation and rescue. He cries out for the Lord + Jesus to have mercy on him. When the crowds try to silence him, he cries out all the more. He knew the Lord + Jesus could restore his sight, and he was not going to miss his opportunity. This Man was the Son of David, the promised Messiah. He was the Savior Who was promised since the very beginning of man's fall into sin. This blind man no longer had to wait in blindness any longer. Here was his Savior; his rock of refuge; his fortress of defense to save him. This was the Man Who would free him from the bonds of sin; Who would redeem him from the powers of the devil, and restore his sight.

His eyes of faith saw clearly, but his physical eyes need some help. The Lord healed his sight so that he could see just as clearly with his physical eyes as he could with his eyes of faith. The Lord + Jesus desires to do the same for us, and all mankind. It is the reason that He came into this world. This is what He told His Apostles at the beginning of our Gospel pericope. He came into this world, because we continued to remain in darkness; we continued to live in blindness. Mankind continued to embrace false worship, idolatry and unbelief. It was all they knew. They did not have knowledge of a Savior, so they grasped at whatever false idols they could to provide some form of hope for their miserable lives.

There is now no need for anyone to worship anyone or anything other than the One, True Lord God, for the Son of Man—the Son of David, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ—has come into the world to redeem us from sin, death and the power of the devil. He went from Jericho into the city of Jerusalem to be delivered to the Gentiles, and be mocked, insulted, and spit upon. He was scourged and killed on the tree of the holy cross. And on the third day He rose again from the dead. Our Lord + Jesus entered into this world in our flesh to defeat our enemies of darkness once and for all. He entered into Jericho on His way to Jerusalem to conquer the once and for all the evils that plague mankind. Unlike mankind

who is continuously conquered by our own efforts to root out evil. Our Lord + Jesus was victorious. He suffered and died, but He arose triumphant on the third day to assure us that the sacrifice He made for us has been accepted by the heavenly Father.

We are now free from sin, death and the power of the devil. And through the means of grace—through the work of the Holy Ghost—He continues to give sight to our eyes of faith, so that we can see clearly Who our Savior and Redeemer is. We can see clearly that He is our rock of refuge; our fortress of defense to save us. He has freed us from the bonds of sin, and has redeemed—bought us back—from our enemies. Therefore, my dear friends, let us declare His good deeds continually among us, so that our eyes of faith may never be dimmed by false belief and despair. For we have a Redeemer and Savior Who loves us so much that He has come to offer up His life as a ransom for ours. Now we no longer see Him in a mirror dimly, but we see Him face to face. Through faith we now know Him, even as we are known by Him, and loved by Him. Thanks be to God! 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 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, 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!