

Sermon Transcript for Quinquagesima, February 14, 2021

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

All right, so we have three lessons that seem to be very disparate and separated from each other. I'm going to try and weave a narrative that connects the three of them together, at least in some way, shape or form. But ultimately, the thing that we're going to focus upon is the fact that this is the last miracle that Jesus does before He enters into Jerusalem and enters His passion, and the people just before this, raise up, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And yet, here He is stopping to pay attention to a blind beggar who is calling for Him. Now, the people who heard him calling might've thought he was just a beggar asking for alms. And mercy is another way of asking for alms. And so, the people around him might've said, "Oh, come on. He's not here for money. He's the teacher. He's the rabbi." In fact, that's kind of what is said when they say Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. It's interesting, in the Greek, the word is not typically what we would call the Nazareth. The word actually has more connection to the branch, like the branch of Jesse. It's a slightly different spelling. It's meant to connect you with Nazareth, but when you see it, the spelling is off. And so, as you read into it, you realize that this is the Greek word, which is connected to the Hebrew word, which means the branch will grow from the roots, Nazar. And so, that's kind of what Luke is implying here and getting to. This is the branch from Jesse's seed, and here we have in the Old Testament the story of Jesse and his sons.

Now, why is Jesse important and why He is the branch of the shoot of Jesse important? Because first off comes David, the first, well, not the first King of Israel, but the King of Israel that was chosen specifically by God, that God raised up. See, when the people wanted a king, they didn't ask God to protect them and to guard them and to guide them to a king. They just said, we want a king like all the other nations. So, God gave them a king like all the other nations, Saul. And Saul did not serve God and chose to disobey the Word of God and did not repent of it. And that's really the key difference between David and Saul, that the people wanted Saul, and they wanted a king like everybody else. And when Saul was caught in disobedience to God, he did not repent, but he got sullen and angry. Whereas David was the king that God had chosen for Himself and David was a man after God's own heart. He loved God, although he was not perfect and he did indeed also sin and rebel against God with the whole affair with Bathsheba and Uriah, her husband. But when he was confronted with his sin, he repented. He did not try and justify himself. He did not try and prove that he was truly sorry for his sins. He just said, "You're right," and admitted it and went to God for the hope of the forgiveness of sins. So, the difference being that David was the one that God did raise up for Himself and the one that went to God when he had sinned and sought repentance from the source and was truly sorry for his sin, whereas Saul was not.

So, you see the connection there between those two, that this blind man is probably now, "Son of David have mercy on me." So, it's very clear that he understands that this man, Jesus, is the one who is called. He, though he is blind, can see more than those who have sight. It made it very clear in the beginning that the disciples had no clue what was going on. They didn't understand the words of Jesus. Now, this blind man did not hear the words of Jesus, but he had faith in the Messiah, in the Son of David. So he cried out for mercy and he had confidence that the Son of David could do what he asked and he asked that he might recover his sight. And Jesus said, "Recovered your sight. Your faith has made you well." And, there's more to it than just his physical sight. He has spiritual insight. It has been revealed to him that this is the Messiah, so much so that he becomes a disciple in essence,

and immediately follows after Jesus and glorifies God the whole time. So even though he was blind, he saw, and a lot of people who were not blind, they had sight, [but] were blind because they could not see that this indeed was the Son of David, the one who was chosen, the root of Jesse who would redeem the world and that's what they were all looking for.

Now, Jesus has compassion on the people. Jesus has compassion on us. Why did Jesus go to the cross and die? What drove Him to sacrifice Himself willingly for the sake of fallen, poor, miserable sinners that we all are? And, what drove Him was love. He loves us so much that He gave His only begotten Son and Jesus Christ loves us so much that He gave Himself up for us. And so, we have this 1st Corinthians passage that speaks of love and encourages us in our own efforts to act out of love. It doesn't matter even if I'm a good preacher but if I don't have love, I'm like a clanging gong, and there's no point to it. It doesn't serve God that I do these things if I do not have love. Why? Why is it so important to have love? Well, let's face it, God is love. Therefore, when we talk about all this love is patient and kind, does not envy or boast, it's not arrogant or rude, does not insist on its own ways, not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. Now, if you just replace the word [love] with God, it still works. Everything there is about God as well. And you might say, well, God does insist on His own way. Well, He insists on the righteous way, the righteous and holy and just way, which just so happens to also be His way. It's not that He insists upon His way in a selfish way. He insists upon the way because that is the right and only way, and that's what it's saying when a love does not insist on its own way. It's not like, well, I'm going to do what I want and I want you to follow me because I want it, as opposed to follow the right path because it is the right path and that's what God does for us. And so, we are called, no matter what we do, no matter how we serve our God, whether we're a pastor or laity, whether we're missionary or whether we're just a neighbor or a friend or co-worker, we are called to do everything that we have, everything that we do towards one another out of love, love for our neighbor and love for God.

And so, here when Jesus was walking towards Jerusalem, He has love and compassion upon this poor, blind beggar and it's to remind us of the same things that we talked about all the way back in Advent when we heard about John the Baptist asking the question of Jesus, "Are you the Messiah or should we be looking for somebody else?" And, Jesus' answer comes from Isaiah that "the lame will walk and the deaf will hear and the blind will receive their sight and good news will be preached to everyone." Jesus says that, and here we're connected back again. Why did Jesus come? He came that He might have compassion on us, that He might heal the blind, not just the physical blindness, but our spiritual blindness and not just spiritual blindness, but spiritual death, that He might bring the dead back to life, and that is what He has done for us. In our baptisms, our old Adam was buried in the crucifixion of Christ, was buried in the waters, was buried in the blood of Christ, and through the water, bringing up out of the waters is a new creation, a new life, a child of God adopted by Him and with His name implanted upon him, marked by Christ as one redeemed by Christ. That is the love that He has for us, that He takes poor, miserable sinners and adopts us and accepts us as His very own and gives us sight to see and hope of life after death and life everlasting with Him.

May His grace and mercy and peace be and abide with you always, now and forevermore, unto life everlasting. Amen.