

SON OF MAN, SON OF DAVID

Luke 18:31-43

Key Verse: 18:31

Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled."

In this passage, Jesus again predicts his suffering, death and resurrection. The Son of Man would become the Messiah by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. He prepared his disciples to be ready for the upcoming events in Jerusalem. Jesus also heals a blind man. The man shouted, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" It was his earnest prayer. We can learn the faith that moves the Messiah's heart, and how to pray with clear prayer topics. May the Lord open our spiritual eyes to know personally the Son of Man who is the Son of David!

I. WE ARE GOING UP TO JERUSALEM (31-34)

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem (Lk 9:51). He and his disciples were getting closer to the city of Jerusalem. But the disciples had not accepted God's will for Jesus—his suffering, death and resurrection. What did Jesus do? Look at verse 31. *Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled."* Jesus once again tried to prepare his disciples by repeating the prediction. Jesus was aware that these upcoming events in Jerusalem were terrifying for them to think about, but he assured them that everything was based on God's plan. "Everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled," he told them. Why did Jesus call himself the Son of Man? Jesus was the Son of Man in the sense that he was a human being, born to the Virgin Mary. More importantly, however, the Son of Man was a title given to the Messiah by the Prophet Daniel (Da 7:13-14). By calling himself the Son of Man, Jesus declared that he came to save the sinful humanity as the Messiah who had been promised by God a long time ago.

How would the Son of Man save the sinful humanity? Look at verses 32-33. *"He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."* Just as the Prophet Isaiah said, Jesus the Messiah would take up our infirmities and carry our sorrow. He would be pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. By his wounds, we are healed (Isa 53:4-5). As St. Peter later said, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1Pe 2:24). Jesus would suffer and die to take away our sins according to the Scriptures. He would be raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. That was what the Son of Man would do by going up to Jerusalem.

We can only imagine what was going through Jesus' mind, even as he ministered to the needy people on his way to Jerusalem. He wanted support from his disciples. More importantly, he wanted them to be prepared for his suffering, death and resurrection. But

they were not willing. “The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about” (34). Still, Jesus did not give up on them. He repeatedly taught them about his suffering, death and resurrection. He had hope for them to remember his words, even though, for the time being, they would not open their hearts to his teaching. Whenever Jesus talked about the cross, they closed their ears. On the mountain of transfiguration, even God commanded them to pay attention to Jesus. The voice from the cloud said, “Listen to him” (9:35). I believe God also tells us to listen to Jesus. Like the disciples, we don’t like to hear about sufferings. We don’t want to suffer. Jesus told all of us to deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow him (Mk 8:34). We hear this when we study the Bible. Still, our life often shows that we didn’t hear him. But we must accept the word of Christ. Not only that, we should teach it to our students. Why? Because it is the way of salvation. Also it is a prerequisite to the glorious resurrection.

II. SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME (35-43)

Look at verse 35. *As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.* The city of Jericho is located about 15 miles east of Jerusalem, with about 3,400 feet lower in elevation. Jericho is spread out on the west side of the Jordan River. It was called the “city of palms.” In Jesus’ time, it was a vacation spot for the Romans.

As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. What can we say about this man? He was a blind beggar. God gave us two eyes to see the beautiful things of the world. We tend to take this blessing for granted. How blessed are we to be able to see beautiful mountains with vivid colors in fall and white snow in winter! How nice it is to look into the eyes of people we love! I just read an essay written by Helen Keller entitled, “If I had three days to see.” She described how blessed she would be to be able to see the people whose kindness and companionship made her life worth living, like her teacher Mrs. Sullivan. She wanted to take a long walk in the woods and intoxicate her eyes on the beauties of nature. She also wanted to visit a theater and see a movie. She wanted to see stars in the sky. So many things she wanted to see! But she and this blind man could not see all these beautiful things. His eyes seemed to be there only for many tears.

One day, as usual, he was sitting by the roadside in Jericho, begging. He pleaded with the passersby, “Alms for the blind! Alms for the blind!” until his voice became hoarse. But no one put coins into his can. People hurried their ways as if they didn’t hear him. The blind man cried sorrowfully, thinking about his hopeless future. At that moment, he heard a commotion nearby. He stopped crying and asked, “What’s going on?” They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” Suddenly a ray of hope was beaming into his dark heart. The name Jesus evoked an excitement in him. His cold heart began to warm up. It began to beat fast. Why? This blind man had heard what Jesus was doing in Galilee. He heard that the blind received sight, the lame walked, those who had leprosy were cured, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, and the good news was preached to the poor (7:22). This same Jesus was coming his way. The man

realized that it was the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for him to meet the Messiah. So what did he decide to do? Look at verse 38. *He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" This was his prayer. He repeated this prayer. It was a simple prayer but it was coming from his heart and soul. It also showed who he was and what he believed. First, he knew who Jesus was. He called him "Son of David," that is, the Messiah. He probably studied the Bible to have known this. In 2 Samuel 7, God promised King David that he would send the Messiah through his line. God said, "I will raise up your offspring ... and I will establish his kingdom. ... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (2Sa 7:12-16). This man was blind and he was a beggar, but he had spiritual eyes to see Jesus as the Messiah. He was better than many people around him with a 20/20 vision. Even the Pharisees who knew so much about the Bible did not know who Jesus was, because they were spiritual blind (Jn 9:39-41). Secondly, this man had faith in Jesus that the Lord could and would heal him. His urgent plea showed that he had no doubt Jesus could heal his blindness. Finally, this man was humble. He asked for the Messiah's mercy. He did not demand healing from Jesus. He was not arrogant; he humbly asked for mercy.

Look at verse 39. *Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"* People rebuked him and told him to be quiet. They thought the blind beggar was presumptuous to demand Jesus' attention. They considered him a nuisance. But he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" He was not intimidated by the people. He was not discouraged. He firmly believed that Jesus the Son of David was merciful to even a blind beggar like him. He overcame many obstacles within and without in order to come to Jesus.

People usually support those who look promising, but despise those who don't. When Jesus was born in an animal barn and laid in a manger, people despised him and rejected him. When Jesus' ministry did not look glamorous but humble, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law thought they could do away with him. Likewise, this blind man was only a target of people's cruel jokes and sarcasm. But he did not give up. He began to cry out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" The people rebuked him. "Hey, blind man. Keep it down!" But the man cried out all the more. He could easily have succumbed to their pressure. But he overcame it by faith. Where there is God's work, there is always Satan's hindrance. When the blind man tried to overcome his fatalism by faith and come to Jesus, Satan tried to hinder him. But he did not give up. He shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Likewise, we must overcome all our obstacles by faith in order to come to the Messiah.

Now let us look at verse 40a. *Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him.* God's mercy was on him. Jesus stopped at the crying voice of the blind man. This blind man was ignored and despised by people. But Jesus did not ignore him or his prayer. Jesus saw the man as a precious person who was created in the image of God. Only the image had been marred by his sins and fatalism caused by his blindness. People only saw the blind beggar in him. They were even entertained by his misery. But

Jesus was compassionate toward him. Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. And thus, a meeting between the holy God and a miserable blind man took place on the street of Jericho.

Let us look at verses 40b-42. *When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you."* When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. As a blind beggar, his immediate need was some money or a warm jacket. But what did he say? He replied, "Lord, I want to see." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Jesus did not see his outward appearance as a blind beggar. Jesus saw his faith and gave him his sight. Jesus also complimented him, "Your faith has healed you." Jesus saw the blind man's faith in the Lord and answered his earnest prayer, "Son of David, have mercy on me."

From this blind man we learn an important spiritual lesson. Not only did he overcome his fatalism, but also he knew what he wanted. When Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" he answered, "Lord, I want to see!" Jesus wanted to help him. So he asked him the question: "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus' question sounds easy to answer. But sinful people are inclined to follow their sinful desires, instead of what their souls really need. They want to have so many things. But they don't know what they really need from God. I often ask my students about their goal in life. Most of them would say, "I want to make a lot of money and be happy." Their idea is that money will make them happy. They don't know what they really want.

God loved David so much that he was willing to bless his son Solomon. At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." When Solomon asked for wisdom to help people, the Lord was very pleased. God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life" (1Ki 3:1-15).

We have many things that we want God to do for us. Personally, we want good health, good grades, good job, money, good car, and so on. Nationally, we want solutions for such social issues as crimes, opiates addiction that kills more people than car accidents, racial tension, declining morality, and so on. Indeed, we have a long list of things that we want from God. But what can we answer when God asks us at this moment, "What do you want me to do for you?" To answer this question, we must first know God. We must know what God wants us to do. We must have spiritual eyes to see what we really need.

The apostle Paul knew what he needed from God. He was an ambitious man by nature. But he did not say, "I want to conquer the whole world with the gospel." Instead, he humbly said, "I want to know Christ ..." (Php 3:10) I have many things to ask Jesus to do for me. I want all our Bible students to grow to be committed disciples of Jesus. I want each of them to love Jesus and his work of salvation more than anyone or anything else. I want our children to be great men and women of faith. I know these are noble prayer topics. But I learn from the blind man, I must answer Jesus, "Lord, I want to see." Only Jesus can heal our spiritual blindness. Only Jesus, the true light, can shine our ways in this dark world.

What happened to the blind man and how did he respond to the grace of Jesus? Look at verse 43. *Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.* This man must have had many things he wanted to do, now that he could see. He could have said, "Now that I can see, I am going to Disney World." But he did not follow his sinful desires. He didn't just say Hallelujah and went on his way to follow his own ideas. He made a decision to follow Jesus as his disciple. He decided to follow the way of the cross. He wanted to follow Jesus who saved him. He committed his life to Jesus. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

A famous violinist was scheduled to perform in a city and the media was excited to report the event. But the focus of their reporting was more about his violin than the musician, because he owned a Stradivarius (one was recently sold at \$45 million). On the day of his performance, the city newspaper printed a big photo of the violin. And his performance that night did not disappoint the audience. He had standing ovation. Then the violinist did something strange. He held up his violin and smashed it onto a chair, with its pieces flying everywhere. To the shocked audience, he said, "I read on the newspaper this morning how much you adore my violin. So I went to a pawn shop this morning and bought this violin at \$10. I only had to change the strings. You see, it wasn't a Stradivarius I played this evening." His point was that a good musician can make beautiful music on a so-so instrument. Think about this. God is our musician and we are the so-so instruments. But when we come to Jesus, he can use us to make beautiful music. Do you want to be used as God's instrument? Jesus is asking you, "What do you want me to do for you?"

We learned today that Jesus took care of a blind man, even as he was on his way to Jerusalem with a heavy heart. Jesus is the Messiah who can open the eyes of a blind man. Jesus can open our spiritual eyes so that we can see God! May God help each of us to hear Jesus' voice, "What do you want me to do for you?" May God help us to answer, "Lord, I want to see!"