

Quinquagesima 2025  
Luke 18:31-43 (ESV)

“And Jesus stopped and commanded [the man] to be brought to him. And when he came near, [Jesus] asked him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’”

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A blessed Quinquagesima to all of you, dear ones. We are now about 50 days away from Easter Sunday, and as you know, that means we are now about to begin our journey through the season of Lent.

This week, starting with Ash Wednesday, we will once again begin making our liturgical pilgrimage to the cross on Good Friday and to the empty tomb on Easter morning.

And, of course, for many of us, this is a *familiar* journey; it’s one we’ve made many times, and Lord-willing, it’s one we’ll make again many more times in the years to come.

But despite how accustomed with it we may be, dear ones, despite how intimately we may know the biblical texts we’ll meet and the hymns we’ll sing and everything else we’ll encounter along the way, there’s always still more for us to see, more blessings for us to lay hold of in faith as we do.

The journey set before us is rich beyond measure. And that’s because God’s mercy towards us in Jesus Christ, our Lord, His Son—*that* is rich beyond measure. And no matter how familiar, no matter how well-acquainted you may be, no one can ever exhaust or reach the end of all the blessings found in Him.

Dear ones, there are always still more good, true, and beautiful things for us to see and lay hold of through faith in our Savior, Jesus.

That’s what the disciples came to see in our Gospel text appointed for today.

By the time we reach this point in chapter 18 of St. Luke’s Gospel, Jesus is deep in His ministry, nearing the very end, in fact.

Already He’s set His face like flint to go to Jerusalem, and already the disciples had witnessed in His preaching and teaching and in His many miracles the most extraordinary things since the time when the world began.

To some extent, I’m sure they’d gotten used to expecting the unexpected with Jesus and seeing from Him what they never thought they would—Him confounding the Pharisees with His divine wisdom time and again, Him casting out demons, walking on water, healing the sick, and even raising the dead.

By this point in Luke’s Gospel, they saw very clearly that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. But our text today tells us what they could not yet see; here’s what they couldn’t yet grasp or perceive no matter how hard they tried. And these, of course, are things we’re all so familiar with in light of God’s Word, it’s hard for *us* not to see them.

Taking the twelve, “[Jesus] said to them, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished...He will be handed over...and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day He will rise.’”

Again, despite how familiar they were with Christ and with what the Holy Scriptures say He would do, our text goes on to tell us they understood none of what Jesus said to them. The things spoken by our Lord were hidden from them, and they could not grasp what was said.

The Greek word used here is a form of the verb *krypto*, from which we get the English word, *encrypt*. Like looking at an encrypted file on a computer or reading some message written in code, the disciples simply could not make sense of what was right in front of them.

How could Jesus—this divine man in Whom they’d seen the brilliance and majesty of God Himself—how could He have such things happen to Him in fulfillment of the sacred Scriptures? How could these things be?

What seems so clear and obvious to us, they simply could not see.

But now, let me ask you, do you see the connection between what Jesus says will soon happen and what He then does immediately afterwards for the poor blind man in Jericho, when our Lord heals him?

You may have read and heard this text a thousand times, but do you see the bigger picture and how these things fit together or is all of this hidden from you like the disciples?

As Christ is passing by, the blind man cries out to Him. And although the man is physically blind, the eyes of his faith see very well not only the royal status and lineage of Jesus, but also that He’s the promised Messiah and the very salvation of God.

“Jesus, Son of David,” he says, “have mercy on me!”

And Christ stops. He commands the man to be brought to Him. And then, our Savior, Jesus, the Incarnate Lord of heaven and earth, at Whose Word the holy angels tremble, Whom even the winds and the waves obey, before Whom the demons cower in fear—He responds to this cry of faith He hears with gentleness.

And then in all His divine wisdom and humility, He puts Himself at the service of this blind beggar set before Him.

Jesus asks the poor man, “What do you want me to do for you?”

And dear ones, with this and the healing that follows, as He gives the man his sight, we once again see the heart of our Lord so beautifully on display.

Above all, we see the heart of Christ as the most holy Servant of the Lord, the Suffering Servant, Who is pleased to make Himself intimately familiar and well-acquainted with our griefs, bearing our burdens and carrying our sorrows. He’s even gone so far as to take up a cross and die so that by His stripes, we would be healed.

And that's exactly what we need because when you look at Jesus' response to this blind beggar, we have to be honest and ask ourselves if we see how unlike our Lord we've been towards those set before us, how inattentive and indifferent our hearts have been when we see the help that others truly need from us physically and spiritually, and we then turn a blind eye and in one way or another say, "No."

Surely you do see and know how far short you've fallen from being the faithful and holy servants that we're called to be, and how great our own need is to have Jesus, the Son of David and the Son of God, to have mercy on us as well.

And really, it's *only* when you see the great need we have, only then can you begin to see the truly great salvation we have in Jesus, the Suffering Servant and the Savior of the world.

Dear ones, look at how everything fits together in our Gospel lesson today.

Jesus speaks of His holy Passion, death, and resurrection, and then He puts Himself at the service of a blind beggar so that we would see and understand that the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

And like the blind man we all receive healing and forgiveness and all the blessings of salvation in Christ by faith, and by faith alone.

Together with the blind man, we are those who've known the supreme honor of being served by Christ, even here—especially here in the Divine Service—Him serving us by washing our sins away in holy Baptism, Him absolving us and nourishing our souls through the preaching of His Word and by preparing a table before us, where He gives us His own body and blood for us to eat and drink unto salvation.

What an honor we have bestowed on us by Him and His service for us. And what an honor it is then for us to take after His example and serve others in like manner, in the humility and holiness of true faith.

I pray these things are all very clear in your mind's eye, dear ones—very clear.

And no matter how familiar and intimately acquainted with them you may be, I pray that all the goodness, truth, and beauty you *see* in Him and all the blessings we receive *by faith* in Him will refresh you and appear ever new and wonderful to you, and that the season of Lent now upon us will take you ever more deeply, ever more fully into the riches of our common salvation in Him.

To Christ be all the glory forever and ever. Amen.