

Everything Prophesied of the Son of Man will be Fulfilled

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 really wanted to help his disciples see him and his ministry clearly, so they could follow him. He foretold his suffering, death and resurrection once again. But they responded poorly. Then Jesus healed a blind man. This plants hope in Jesus for his struggling disciples; Jesus heals the blind, both physically and spiritually. We all have blind spots, or needs of some kind. Let's ask Jesus to heal us as we listen to his words.

I. Jesus predicts his death and resurrection, as the prophets foretold (31-34)

As we studied last time, Jesus' disciples had just witnessed the sad departure of the rich young ruler. When they first saw him, they might have envied him. However, as Jesus exposed his root problem of greed and paralysis, the disciples began to feel good about themselves; they had left everything to follow Jesus. This was God's amazing grace to them, and his work in their hearts. It had been costly for them to follow Jesus in that way, but Jesus assured them that they would receive abundant blessing in the present age, and in the age to come, eternal life. Jesus' disciples felt like winners. They were happy that they followed Jesus. Their futures looked bright, and their hearts were opened.

At that very time, **“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’”** (31). Jesus taught his open-hearted disciples what he really wanted them to accept; he did not miss the chance. He predicted once again his suffering, death and resurrection. This had been a repeated teaching of Jesus from the time Peter confessed him to be the Christ (9:22; 9:44; 17:25). Obviously, it was important to Jesus. In fact, it was the central message he wanted to plant in his disciples. Yet whenever he told them about it, they rejected it. In this regard, they were at an impasse.

Jesus did not stop teaching his disciples about his suffering and death, even though they did not like it. But Jesus did take a new approach. This time Jesus prefaced his prediction by saying, **“...everything that is written by the prophets**

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about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.” Jesus wanted them to know that his suffering and death were prophesied by God, and these prophesies would be fulfilled in Jerusalem. Therefore, what he was predicting was not just a human plan; it was God’s plan. God is Almighty God. God’s word has almighty power. God’s word never fails. What Jesus was telling them would surely happen, and they needed to accept it.

It is significant that Jesus used the word **“everything.”** There were many prophesies about the Son of Man in the Old Testament: He would be born of a woman and crush the serpent’s head (Gen 3:15); he would carry the government on his shoulders (Isa 9:7); and he would be given authority, glory and sovereign power over an everlasting kingdom (Dan 7:13-14). It is not hard to hope that these prophesied Messianic victories would be fulfilled. Yet these kinds of prophesies were just part of the Christ’s ministry. The prophets also foretold that he would suffer and die. Isaiah prophesied that the Christ would be so disfigured by unjust treatment that people would be appalled at him (Isa 52:14), and that he would die for the sins of many (Isa 53:10). These prophesies were misunderstood or ignored by many of Israel’s teachers, but not by Jesus. Jesus said that **“everything”** must be fulfilled.

In order to help his disciples accept the hard truths of prophecy, Jesus emphasized his suffering and death in verse 32. Verse 32a says, **“He will be handed over to the Gentiles.”** Gentiles were lawless and known to be brutal. Anyone who was handed over to them could expect the most inhumane treatment. It would be similar to a contemporary Christian being handed over to Muslim extremists or anti-Christians in North Korea. This was far different than what people of the time expected. They wanted a Messiah who would destroy their oppressors. Yet Jesus was telling them that the Christ must lose a human battle and endure humiliating defeat. Until now, Jesus had seemed invincible. He had exercised tremendous power--at his one command, demons fled; at one word, he had calmed a storm at sea; he had even raised the dead. To his disciples, it was unimaginable that Jesus would look defeated. Yet Jesus predicted just this, based on the Scriptures.

What would the Gentiles do? Jesus said, **“They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him”** (32b). According to the TNIV, mocking, insulting and spitting are grouped together, and flogging and killing are grouped together. In fact, the TNIV places verse number 33 in a different location than the NIV to make this point. Perhaps Luke was grouping the mistreatment of Christ into

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two categories. The first had to do with his dignity and character; the second was related more to his physical suffering.

Mocking is to attack, treating with ridicule, often by mimicking. This is usually the response of the rebellious toward authority. For example, high school students may mock their teacher by mimicking his words and manner when they don't want to submit to his authority. Christ is in very nature God. He revealed his authority and power frequently in the course of healing the sick and driving out demons. With his authority he had come to destroy the devil. So the devil hated Christ's power and wanted to suppress the truth. During his passion, when Christ was vulnerable, the devil taunted him through the mockery of Roman soldiers, passersby and even a criminal. This psychological torment was painful. Brother Yun, who wrote, "The Heavenly Man," has testified that the psychological persecution he received in the West was more difficult to bear than brutal bodily torture in a prison cell.

Jesus would also be insulted. In truth, Jesus had lived the most holy and pure life. Not only was Jesus sinless, he also exhibited the love of God to the full measure, divine compassion, and great generosity to many people. Everything Jesus did was excellent and worthy of praise. Yet Jesus was falsely arrested, tried and crucified. During that process, he was insulted viciously. Evil men tried to assassinate his character. It was the expression of Satan's hatred for the holy God. Jesus also predicted that the Christ would be spit on. This is indeed a remarkable detail, foretold in Isaiah 50:6. Its inclusion reveals how precisely Jesus knew the Scriptures and had accepted the prophecies about the Christ. Jesus was ready to fulfill every prophecy in detail without missing one. Jesus did not pick and choose; Jesus would fulfill them all. To do so, Jesus would be subjected to severe emotional and psychological trauma. Then he would be flogged and killed on the cross in the most brutal manner. This was the prophesied will of God for the Christ.

Why? Why did this have to happen? John 3:16 says, **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."** Out of his love, the Lord God Almighty made his Son to be a sin offering for mankind. Isaiah said he would bear the sin of many, and make intercession for transgressors (Isa 53:10,12). On the cross, Jesus bore the pain, shame, torment, and death that our sins deserve. Jesus died in our places for our sins. Sin is so terrible that it required the death of Christ. This was the only way that God could justify sinners, and at the same time satisfy his own justice (Ro

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3:25-26). Paul later wrote, **“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”** (2 Cor 5:21). In solving our sin problem, Christ also gave us victory over the devil. Hebrews 2:14b-15 says, **“...so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”** Because Christ paid the full price of our sins, we receive forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. We become victors over all the work of the devil. All we have to do is receive Christ's sacrifice by faith.

Yet Jesus' death would not be the end. Look at verse 33. **“On the third day he will rise again.”** As Jesus foretold, God raised him from the dead. Jesus won eternal victory over sin, death and the devil. Jesus, the first-fruits, shares his victory with all who believe in him. Jesus' resurrection is the power that restores God's reign in the hearts of people, and in the world. This victory is being won progressively at the present time. Finally, it will be completely won at his Second Coming. Paradise will be restored and we will share the love and joy and peace of Christ forever in his glory.

What Jesus was teaching his disciples was actually the gospel of salvation. It was really good news of great joy for all mankind. However, since they were occupied by a dream of earthly victory, his teaching about suffering, death and resurrection seemed like nonsense. They remained spiritually blind to the main point of Jesus' teaching.

Like the disciples, we can have blind spots in our Christian faith that adversely affect our spiritual lives. These blind spots come when our faith is not rooted in everything Jesus has taught us. We must carefully study Jesus' teaching about sin, repentance, forgiveness, resurrection faith, loving God and not money, the work of the Holy Spirit, living hope in the kingdom of God, preaching the gospel to all nations, loving one another, and so on. Then we must prayerfully seek to practice Jesus' teaching in every area. For this, we should have a humble heart and be willing to listen and learn from Jesus every time we open our Bibles. We have so many things to learn of Jesus and we should make real progress every day. We should also listen carefully to our Christian brothers and sisters. They may see things in a way that helps us open our spiritual eyes. We should be always growing in the knowledge of Christ with a clear goal to attain to the fullness of his likeness. Let's not try to pick and choose which teachings of Jesus to practice. Let's ask the help of God that we may believe and practice everything Jesus wants us to.

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In light of this passage, there is one particular blind spot that we need to pay attention to. It is the tendency to avoid the cross. We pray for Muslim countries to hear the gospel and follow Jesus. We pray for North America to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These prayer topics will not be realized without the cross. We must be ready to suffer with Christ in the fulfillment of these prayer topics. There is no fruitful ministry without sacrifice and suffering. No cross, no crown; no sacrifice, no fruit; no fishing, no sheep; no one-to-one Bible study, no disciples; no death, no resurrection. We must accept this truth in order to follow Jesus properly.

Last week six American Christians were among ten aid workers who were discovered in a remote part of Afghanistan by the Taliban. These workers had all left prosperous practices to offer free medical care to needy native people. The Taliban shot them, execution style, for preaching Christianity. From a human point of view, their deaths look humiliating. But from God's point of view, they are glorious martyrs. They shed their blood to advance the gospel in a Muslim country. Their blood speaks more powerfully than the weapons of their killers. Through their deaths, Christ can bring about a great spiritual victory in Afghanistan. At the last regional summer Bible conference, many of us went forward to volunteer as missionaries. We must know that being a missionary is more than riding an airplane to another country. It is to participate in the remaining suffering of Jesus to destroy sin, death and the devil, and to advance the reign of Christ. It will require suffering and even death. We should accept this truth and be willing to go through rigorous training and preparation to be a missionary.

Now we are beginning a new fall semester. We pray for the gospel to spread on each of our campuses as we witness Christ and carry out one-to-one Bible study. But we must know that fruit will not come without cost. We will be misunderstood and persecuted for preaching the gospel. We must decide to accept this and pray for the Lord's help. Then he will strengthen us and enable us to serve his purpose. I was recently encouraged by the story of Tim Tebow. He is well known in college football. As quarterback for the Florida Gators, he won both the Heisman trophy as the best college football player in America, and two national championships. What is not so well known is that he is the son of American missionaries to the Philippines. He uses his fame as a collegiate athlete as a forum to preach Christ. A few years ago, during the national championship game, he painted "John 3:16" on his eye black on his cheeks. Every football fan in America could see this whenever the television camera took his close-up shot. As a result, 92 million people googled "John 3:16" to find out what it meant. However, for

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doing this, Tebow was insulted by many ungodly people. But he did not mind. He considers it a great privilege to suffer with Christ, for he knows that he will also share in Christ's glory. Tim Tebow has not been blinded by fame or success or money. He is not afraid of people's criticism or the devil's mischief. He sees Christ clearly and makes Christ known, going through hardships to preach the gospel. Preaching the gospel on our campuses is not easy. There is a cross involved. Let's accept the cross, pray for the Lord's help and preach the gospel boldly on our campuses this fall semester.

II. Jesus heals a blind man (35-43)

As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. While many such people would have withdrawn from society, this man was eager to participate in what was happening around him. Though he could not see, he borrowed the eyes of others to find out what was going on. He was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

Look at verse 38. **“He called out, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’”** **“Son of David”** is a messianic title. This man believed that Jesus is the Messiah who could heal any kind of person, including giving sight to the blind (Isa 35:5). He also believed that the Messiah would hear his cry of mercy. He knew clearly who Jesus was. It must have come from carefully listening to the stories about Jesus, and to Bible prophecies he had heard. Though he was blind physically, he saw Jesus most clearly. It was his faith in Jesus that became his remarkable strength.

Jesus' advance men told the blind man to be quiet. They thought he was an annoyance. He was undeterred. He shouted all the louder, **“Son of David, have mercy on me!”** He had the power of faith in his soul, for he knew from the Scriptures who Jesus is. He believed that anyone and everyone can come to the Messiah for mercy, including him. He would not be denied. His persistent prayer was heard by Jesus. Jesus stopped and had the man brought to him. Then Jesus asked, **“What do you want me to do for you?”** The blind man said, **“Lord, I want to see.”** It was precisely the right thing to ask. It was what he really needed and it was what Jesus came to do, according to the Scriptures. Jesus said to him, **“Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”** Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. All the people also praised God.

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We learn from this man to cry out to Jesus for mercy. Jesus can heal our spiritual blindness or any other infirmity and enable us to see clearly and to follow him joyfully. In Brazil, I met the missionary family of Timothy and Teresa Han in Sao Paulo. They married fourteen years ago, when Teresa was thirty. She needed to have children right away, both for biological reasons and to remain in Brazil as missionaries. But they could not. Years passed by. After trying various solutions, all they could really do was pray to God for his mercy. Seven years after marriage, Teresa became pregnant with the first of their three children. It was nothing but the Messiah's answer to their cry for mercy. They applied this kind of crying out prayer to their mission lives. Through prayer, Timothy could get his Ph.D. from USP, the best university in Brazil. Now he teaches math to students in the Portuguese language, and his class is very popular. They also prayed for Jesus to raise disciples through them. Two beautiful and intelligent Brazilian girls, Attania and Jeanne, have committed themselves to follow Jesus and are growing as his disciples. They both delivered messages at the Bolivian conference. God is answering all of the Han's prayers for mercy one after another. Jesus is our merciful Messiah who hears our cry and answers.

Though I have learned of Jesus in many ways for the last 30 years, I need to learn this kind of crying out prayer. Last Friday I attended the graduation recital of my oldest son David from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. On the one hand, I enjoyed his piano performance and realized that he has really studied music well. On the other hand, I met his live-in boyfriend for the first time and learned that they plan to move to Washington D.C. to live there together from today. My heart was broken. I realized that there was nothing I could do in my natural strength. However, the Lord opened my spiritual eyes to the power of prayer. Prayer is a mighty powerful weapon in spiritual warfare. Now I want to pray for David to know Christ, become a new creation, and marry a godly woman. Humanly speaking it seems impossible. But it is possible through the Messiah's mercy.

Jesus is our merciful Messiah. In order to solve our sin and death problem, Jesus fulfilled everything written by the prophets--the painful and shameful, as well as the glorious. Jesus hears the cry for help. Let's accept the cross of Christ in our hearts and cry out to him for mercy in our personal lives, in our ministries in this new fall semester, and for our nation.