

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 the last passage we learned that we must receive the kingdom of God like little children, who simply trust and obey. As one of our hymns says, “Trust and obey, For there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey.” When Jesus comes into our hearts, he rules with peace and love and gives us true joy. A Christian man was always happy at his workplace, even on Monday mornings after a holiday weekend. His co-workers asked him how he could be so happy all the time. He said, “I take drugs.” They wanted to know what kind so they could buy some. He said, “Jesus is my drug. When Jesus is in my heart, I have true joy and peace. I don’t need anything else to be happy.” May God help us receive his kingdom like little children. Jesus is the greatest treasure. We must follow him at any cost. He promises to bless us abundantly in this life and with eternal life in the age to come.

In today’s passage Jesus predicts his suffering, death and resurrection. It is important for us to know the deep meaning of these events, for they are the essence of the gospel. After that, Jesus heals a blind man. We can learn the faith that obtains the Messiah’s mercy and how to pray with one clear request. May God bless our study today.

First, the Son of Man will suffer, die and rise again (31-34).

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 was now very near Jerusalem, where he would fulfill God’s will through his death and resurrection. Jesus knew what awaited him. Jesus was like a lamb being led to the slaughter. But many of those around Jesus were under an illusion that he would establish an earthly messianic kingdom with Jerusalem at the center. They followed Jesus as though going to a coronation ceremony and inaugural ball. They would be greatly disappointed. Then these very people who had received Jesus’ amazing grace would turn completely against him. Jesus’ disciples should be different. Jesus’ disciples must know the truth and live by the truth. Most of all, they must know who Jesus is and why he came to this world. They must see Jesus from God’s point of view.

So Jesus took his disciples aside and had a special meeting with them. He 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 did not see himself from a human point of view. Jesus was not overwhelmed with sorrow. Rather, Jesus saw himself in the stream of God’s redemptive history. Through him the words of the prophets would be fulfilled and world salvation would be accomplished.

All three synoptic gospels include Jesus predicting his suffering, death and resurrection right before entering Jerusalem (Mt 20:18-19; Mk 10:33-34). But Luke is unique. Matthew, who was one of the Twelve, and Mark, who was influenced by Peter, wrote eyewitness accounts. They vividly describe specific details with emotional contents such as Peter’s attempt to rebuke Jesus (Mt 16:22; Mk 8:32). But Luke does not mention this. Luke wrote from an historian’s point of view. Luke alone records Jesus’ words, “everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.” Luke sees Jesus from God’s point of view as one who fulfills prophecy. Luke is also universal.

In speaking to his disciples, Jesus calls himself, “The Son of Man.” This title appears 78 times in the gospels. Nearly always, it is Jesus referring to himself as “The Son of Man.” We cannot describe the full meaning of the title, “The Son of Man,” in this short message. But it indicates that Jesus, who is God, became a human being. It is so amazing that the Almighty God gave up his power, glory and majesty to come to this world as a man. Jesus is God in the flesh. He came to fulfill God’s will for world salvation. The Lord first made this known in Genesis 3:15 where God says to the devil, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel.” It was the prediction of the coming of a son who would destroy the devil completely. This promise was made more specific to Abraham in Genesis 22:18, which says, “...and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.” Jesus fulfilled this by coming to save peoples of all nations from their sins (Gal 3:8). Again, God promised David that a son from his line would

inherit his throne and rule forever (2Sa 7:13). As the Son of Man, Jesus fulfills these promises to be the Savior, and the Blessing to all people, and the King in David's line. However, his character as a suffering servant was revealed most clearly through the prophets.

Jesus summarized his mission as the Son of Man in verse 32. It says, "He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him." Jesus' prediction was fulfilled exactly. Jesus was tried by the Jewish leaders and handed over to the Gentile ruler Pontius Pilate to be executed. Jesus was mocked by the soldiers and insulted (22:63-65). Jesus was spit on, flogged and finally crucified (Mk 14:65; 15:19; 15:15). It is shocking that the Son of Man would be treated this way. Isaiah cried out, "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Isa 53:1) Among all the prophets, Isaiah understood best the suffering of the Messiah. His poetic description is ever superior to explain its meaning. Isaiah 53:3-6 says, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Jesus took the punishment that we sinners deserve. St. Peter understood this well and 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' suffering and death was not the end. Verse 33 says, "On the third day he will rise again." Jesus rose from the dead! Jesus defeated sin and death and the devil forever. Jesus opened the way to eternal life in the kingdom of God for all who believe. When we accept Jesus' death and resurrection, something happens in our hearts. Jesus forgives our sins, cleanses our consciences, and heals us from all the consequences of sin (1Jn 1:9; Heb 9:14). Jesus restores the image of God in us and gives us new life, new hope and new joy.

There was a young man who seemed to do everything well. He was an honor student, a good athlete, and popular among his peers. He also tried to be a good Catholic. However, while sympathizing with a girl from a broken family, he fell into sin and became a victim of the devil. Shame and disgrace filled his soul and he despaired, wanting to disappear from the earth at age 22. But God had mercy on him and led him to one-to-one Bible study. Jesus' word spoke to him, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk 2:17). He realized that he was a terrible sinner and that only Jesus could save him. So he studied the Bible with all his heart. Through Mark 8:29, he met Jesus as the Christ who shed his blood and died for the sin of the world, including his sin. Then something happened in his heart. The guilt and shame of his sin was taken away. The despair that had darkened his soul melted and vanished. The hope of God changed him into a man of faith and vision. Now he believes that God will change North America into a kingdom of priests and a holy nation through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 34. "The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about." The disciples were not quick to understand in this matter. They had the same response to Jesus' previous prediction of his death (Lk 9:45). It was not because they had a language problem. They did not understand the spiritual meaning of Jesus' words.

Luke does not blame the disciples. He sees them in training as disciples. He alludes that the meaning was hidden from them, to be made understandable at the right time. Indeed, this happened. Luke 24:45-49 says, "Then he [Jesus] opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'" As Jesus ascended into heaven, they worshiped him, and then returned to Jerusalem praising God. Spiritual understanding came when they met the Risen Christ personally.

Here we must learn from Jesus. Jesus taught his disciples about his suffering, death and resurrection again and again, even though they did not understand what he was talking about. The joy of a teacher comes when his student really understands his teaching. When students do not understand, it is not easy to keep teaching. We feel that the labor is in vain. Even Jesus, the best Bible teacher, was not understood by his disciples. Still, he taught them. Later they

would understand. We also learn from the disciples. Even though they did not understand at the present time, they would understand in the future. When we do not understand what Jesus is teaching, we must not be frustrated. We must persevere in following Jesus. Understanding will come when we follow Jesus to the end without giving up.

David Saethre began Bible study nearly 20 years ago when he was fished as a student at Northeastern University by Missionary Hannah Kuper, who is now in Argentina. David met Maria at the Northeastern Bible house, and they both disappeared. Some time later, David was fished again by Missionary Moody Kim and began Bible study. For six years he didn't seem to understand. But Missionary Moody kept teaching him the gospel faithfully. Finally, two years ago, David could understand the gospel spiritually and accept it in his heart. Since then, he has grown remarkably and is a shepherd candidate in Northeastern UBF. We must persist in Bible teaching when sheep do not understand.

Second, the Son of David gives sight to the blind (35-43).

Jesus was entering Jericho, on the way to Jerusalem. A blind man was there, sitting by the roadside begging (35). We can only imagine how difficult this man's life was. Sight is a precious gift of God. With our eyes, we can see the beauty of God's world. We can see the sparkling white snow that seems to purify the dirty streets of Chicago. We can read good books that open the door of imagination to develop creativity in our thought world. We can see the faces of loved ones and rejoice. But this blind man could see none of these things. He lived in a world of darkness without light or beauty. But he did not become a victim of his fate. He was optimistic and proactive. Instead of being withdrawn due to the sin of self-pity, he paid attention to what was going on around him and wanted to participate in society. Instead of feeling inferior, he found how he was superior—having more acute hearing and sharper analytical ability. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. If he had not asked this, he might not have received Jesus' grace.

In response to his question, they told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." Then, this man did something amazing. He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" He called Jesus the Son of David. In all of Luke's Gospel, he is the only one who calls Jesus the Son of David. It was the title of the Messiah, for whom the people of Israel had long waited. Though this man was physically blind, he had spiritual eyes to see that Jesus was the promised Messiah. According to Isaiah's prophecy in 35:5, when the Messiah came, the eyes of the blind would be opened. He found hope in Jesus. With faith in the Messiah, this man called out for mercy. Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet. Their rebuke must have been sharp. The blind man could have given in to fatalism and kept quiet. But he did not. He shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" He cried out for the Messiah's mercy as the only solution to his life problem. He cried out for the Messiah's mercy as a matter of life and death.

Look at verse 40a. "Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him." Jesus heard a blind man's cry for mercy and stopped. Then Jesus ordered the man to be brought to him. Perhaps those who had been rebuking him had to escort him like a heavenly prince for his audience with Jesus. Jesus is the God of mercy. Jesus stops for one person who sincerely cries out for his mercy.

When the man came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus was ready to do anything for this man. But Jesus wanted him to ask for it specifically. Here we must realize that obtaining the Messiah's mercy is one thing and asking for the right thing from Jesus is another. This man had one chance to ask the Messiah of the world for whatever he wanted. What did he ask? He said, "Lord, I want to see." He asked for the solution of his life problem which would bring glory to Jesus as the Messiah. He asked for what he should ask for from the Messiah. He had the wisdom of Solomon who asked for a discerning heart to govern God's people and distinguish between right and wrong (1Ki 3:9). We should know what we really need from Jesus and ask for this one thing with absolute faith.

Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When this man was healed, he did not run off to the theater or to the shopping mall. Instead, he followed Jesus. He wanted to stay with Jesus forever. This man longed for the Messiah even more than he had longed to see. By healing this blind man, Jesus had mercy on a needy soul. Jesus revealed that he is the Son of David, the promised Messiah, who gives sight to the blind. When all the people saw it, they praised God.

In this passage we learned that Jesus is the Son of Man, who came to fulfill God's will for world salvation. Jesus is also the Son of David, the promised Messiah, who gives sight to the blind. Many of us are spiritually blind, though we have 20/20 vision. Jesus wants to open our spiritual eyes until we can grasp the meaning of his death and resurrection personally. Therefore, we must pray, like St. Paul, that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened to know the deep meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection (Eph 1:18). Lord Jesus, please open our spiritual eyes during this Easter season. Son of David, have mercy on us!