



“And the Blind Shall See”
Luke 18: 31-43
December 1, 2019

We are going to be in Luke Chapter 18 this morning. Please join me there. The title of this morning’s message is *And the Blind Shall See* to which someone might say, *This is going to be a very nice Bible story, but I am not quite sure how it is going to be relevant to me, because I have crystal-clear, 20/20 vision. I can see just fine.*

That might trigger somebody else to say, *Well, my vision is not quite 20/20, crystal-clear. My sight is a little bit fuzzy, but I have some glasses. They do the trick, so that I can see with clarity when I put them on.*

Let me remind all of us of a couple of things as we get into the text that is before us this morning, and preparing our hearts for God’s Sacred Word. Let me remind you first of the name and the occupation of the man who wrote the book we have been studying together on the life of Christ.

His name was Luke and he was a physician, a medical doctor in the First Century world. He was acquainted with research and what it was to dig into and to study things and to get to the facts. In the first four verses of Chapter 1 in the Gospel that he wrote, Luke tells all of us that he went and interacted with the eye witnesses that he might get the facts of what happened in the life of Christ.

How it must have just blown this man’s mind, this doctor, to hear about the power that was manifested in this one Man to provide healing in places where he himself had no ability to heal, or to provide sight to the blind. Understand that Luke intended to get across to us things that actually happened here on the face of the planet earth.

Stories like the one that we have set before us this morning show us the authority of Jesus of Nazareth over the human body, every part of it even in its decline. As we see the account of this blind man receiving his sight, understand that it was a miracle. That means that it was something that was kind of unique. Miracles don’t happen every day.

But this miracle came, and it was provided as an emblem of the power that Jesus has come to bring His people. In the end, all of those who come to Christ, they are going to be resurrected with Him on that last day. They will dwell in a New Heaven, on a new earth and will be raised up in bodies with eyes. With those eyes, they will see the glories of who God is and all that He has created.

Let me remind you also as we dig into what is here this morning, there are two kinds of blindness. Not only is there physical blindness, but there is spiritual blindness as well. We read in I Corinthians 4:4

⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

There is an adversary. He has the ability to influence people in such a way that they don't see the substance of who Christ is. They don't see the glory of what He came to do when He entered into this world to atone for sin and make us right with God and raise us up into eternal life.

There are people all throughout this world who are blind to this.

There are also people in churches just like the church that we are gathered in that are blind to this. So we pray that the Lord will give us eyes to see the glory of Jesus Christ as we enter into God's Word this morning.

As we pick up in the storyline of the Gospel of Luke, we are on the discipleship road with Jesus to Jerusalem. He was on His path to the capital city of Israel where He would die for sin. He had been walking with His disciples, teaching them lessons about the Kingdom all the way along.

Now as we understand just where Jesus was geographically, He was about to go into a city called Jericho. This is one of the gateway cities that is not far from Jerusalem, maybe just less than twenty miles away. Also understand the Jesus was just weeks away from His crucifixion at that point.

Here in this text that we have before us today, there are actually two stories of blindness that are set before us. First, we see some familiar men, the disciples of Jesus. They had physical sight, but they did not see certain spiritual realities that Jesus put before them. We will see that.

In addition to that, in the second part of the portion we are in today, there will be a blind man without physical sight, but he could see certain spiritual realities. Based on what he could see, he called out to Christ with fervency for his healing. It is an amazing picture to see.

We have so much to learn from both of these stories of blindness. First, we will see a picture of spiritual blindness. Then we will see a picture of physical blindness, yet within a man who had spiritual sight.

First, let's take in:

1. A story about Spiritual Blindness (18:31-34)

Let's read Luke Chapter 18 and Verses 31 to 34:

³¹And taking the twelve, he 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. ³²For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. ³³And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” ³⁴But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

Jesus laid out for them all that laid ahead—the suffering that He would endure and the victory that He would accomplish over the grave on the third day—all which is prophesized in Sacred Scripture.

Jesus laid it out before the disciples. Luke’s summation of the disciples response to this in Verse 34 is classic, because He stacked up three statements all to get across the same point that the disciples just could not see. They were not getting it.

Look at how it is repeated in three different ways in Verse 34:

³⁴But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

Jesus stacked it up three times, but they did not get it.

I remember back in the 90s, I began seeing these posters that you still see around even today. However, they were really popular back then. They are called *Stereograms*. Does that ring a bell for any of you?

If the title does not ring a bell with you, maybe this picture will (pastor shows overhead slide). Have you ever seen one of these? To me that looks just like colorful and speckled visual fuzz. That is all I see in that picture.

Supposedly in the midst of all that two-dimensional fuzz, the artist has placed some kind of 3D image and if you look at it in just the right way for a certain amount of time, you will finally see the image that is there. It will pop out to you with total clarity and you will be stunned that you did not see it before.

I hate these things! I will sit and look at them all day long. I remember once looking at one of these Stereograms, and I saw the image for half a second, then it disappeared, and I could not see it again. Stereograms are tortuous.

Here we have the Lord Jesus putting a picture before the eyes of the disciples of what was about to happen in Jerusalem, that He was going to suffer for sin as prophesied in Scripture in Psalm 22, in Isaiah Chapters 50 and 53, where there are portraits of the Messiah suffering for the sin of His people. It almost reads like the New Testament.

Jesus laid this out for the disciples, but they just could not see the picture that He presented because they were looking for the wrong thing. They were looking for the vision of the

conquering Messiah, the one was going to come and redeem Israel from the power of all the Gentile overlords. There are such visions of conquest given throughout the Old Testament, but first He would come, and He would suffer for the sins of His people.

They were looking for the picture of conquest, and Jesus was telling them to back up, they had to talk about what came first. And the disciples just could not see it, because they were looking for the wrong thing.

You could forward in to the church time that we are living in now, where the Gospel has been spelled out so clearly in the pages of Scripture and people still don't see it. You can even go into evangelical church gatherings, conservative church gatherings, and people just don't get it.

They don't see the glory of God manifested in the person of Christ and His suffering on the cross and His resurrection on the third day. Their hearts and their minds remain dull to these realities, because maybe they are looking for the wrong thing. Maybe they are looking for a spiritual guide to upward mobility and to the things of this world.

But the Lord presented a picture of redeeming grace in the person of Jesus Christ. Praise God for what came later in the Gospel of Luke for these disciples. After He had suffered on the cross, after had He had been risen from the grave, Luke 24 and Verses 45 through 47:

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Jesus opened their eyes and their hearts to understand the Scripture. It is so glorious to see the transformation that took place here in the pages of Scripture, because we have these men who were so dull when Christ was trying to get these things across to them. Then getting into the book of Acts and the New Testament letters, suddenly these men were so lit up with the Doctrine of God's Atoning Grace in Christ Jesus.

The disciples were writing out all of the intricacies and details of this doctrine and their hearts were aglow with the most glorious thing that has ever taken place and that ever will take place in the history of the universe, and that is that the Son of God would come out of such love to die for sinners such as us, and to be risen to secure for us life everlasting.

The first thing that God is going to make known to you is the Gospel. The best thing that God is going to open your eyes to is Christ suffering for your sin with love, and rising from the grave to take you into His Everlasting Kingdom.

While there is so much for us to learn, so much that He is going to reveal to us about who He is, how we are, what we ought to be in the pages of Scripture, I pray that the light of the glory of the Gospel of Christ would remain that which our eyes are opened to and our hearts are profoundly thankful for, and that it springs up for us with a well of worship and life for all eternity.

This is what Jesus is going to get across to you first and foremost. This is the resting place for you. He is going to make known to you. Do you want to know the precious gift of God? He is going to let you see that there is one God who created everything, that He is holy, holy, holy, and that He is perfect in every way. He is morally pure and He is righteous and He is full of love and He is full of grace.

He is going to help you to see that though created in His image, you, and all of us, are fallen in sin and that God has seen all your sin in great detail and it rises up before Him as an offense to His righteousness. It is serious! God is going to give you eyes to see His Son, the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, entering into this world as a human being.

God will show you Christ living a perfect life of love and righteousness in your place, and He is going to help you to see this Lamb of God nailed to the cross, suffering for you. He is going to help you see Christ lifted up from death, and in Him, life forevermore. This is where it begins.

I'm about as capable of helping you to see the glory of that as I am of telling someone who is totally farsighted that their sight is now clear. This is what the Holy Spirit does, and I pray that the Holy Spirit will help you to see the glory and the value and the treasure of what we have in Christ Jesus. This is first.

Now we continue to see a second story of blindness that is laid out before us. First we have the story of spiritual blindness, now we come to:

2. A Story about Physical Blindness (18:35-43)

But even though this man was a man without physical sight, oh my, was this man given spiritual vision. Though like the disciples, he would have things still to learn about the suffering of Christ. There is a fervency about this man, desiring the power of God applied to Him that I pray would fill our hearts so that we would be able to see with clarity the things of His Kingdom.

Let's take a look at this story about physical blindness, which ends us being a story about great spiritual sight. Verse 35:

³⁵As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. ³⁷They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." ³⁸And he cried out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ³⁹And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁰And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹"What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me recover my sight." ⁴²And Jesus said to him, "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well." ⁴³And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

They changed their tune!

Notice that the language of *recovery* is used all throughout this text. It is in Verses 41, 42, and 43. It would seem that this was a person that was born with sight. He had sight early in his life. Growing up he was able to see the faces of his loved ones. He was able to observe and take in the beauty of the surrounding countryside.

Then some kind of degenerative condition set in and he lost his sight and his whole world turned dark. Close your eyes for a second. I'm closing my eyes too. Now open your eyes and see all the things that you see through the course of the day. Then imagine your sight goes away and all you can see is darkness. That is what this man experienced as evidenced by the language of this text.

It is said that when a person is struck with blindness, the other senses become more keen and acute. So while this man was blind, it is very clear that his hearing remained and his ears were always opened to take in that which was going on around him.

It is evident here in this text that he was a biblically informed man. You can imagine how he listened with great interest when the rabbis spoke of the things of the Lord and of the Kingdom of God at the Saturday services in the Jericho synagogue. I don't know, but if it were me in his situation, I imagine that might be one of the highlights of my week, just going and listening to somebody talk about such things.

Then we see that he would have also been listening with great interest when he was outside at the city gate of Jericho, a very high traffic type place where there would have been others doing the same thing that he was doing by seeking to receive donations from the people that were passing by.

It must have been of such interest to him as he started hearing the people around him talk about this one, Jesus of Nazareth, who was doing amazing things through the landscape of Israel; who was bringing healing power, and who was doing so with grace. You can imagine how he took these things into his ears and mind. I wonder if he contemplated what he would do if Jesus of Nazareth ever passed by his way.

That day came for this man. With his hearing, he heard a crowd approaching and it would have been a crowd with unusual volume and clamor. This man asked what was going on. He took the information into his ears, then it seeped into his heart. It did so very quickly. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and with that, he instantly responded by yelling, *Jesus have mercy on me!*

With all that he had, he began crying out to the point where he was totally irritating the people around him. He was causing a scene. There have been times in my life when I have been in a public place, then unexpectedly I have seen somebody I know a ways off. Then I would yell their name, over here! It's me Jeff.

The person did not see or hear me, so I just gave up. I was aware of all the other people around and I did not want to cause a scene. However, this man was yelling and carrying on, and doing it persistently. He was calling, *Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.* He was yelling this out over and over again, to the point where he got rebuked by the people that were around him.

If you dig into the original Greek of what the people said to him, there are two Greek words that might be familiar to you. The two words are *shut up!* Just kidding. But what we do see is that there was even a moral nuance to how they were silencing him. They rebuked him. They were saying, What you are doing right now is totally inappropriate. Stop it! Cut it out.

Have you ever heard that ditty, *second verse same as the first. A little bit louder, a little worse.* The people were telling this man to shut up! Third verse same the first. A whole lot louder and a lot worse. He just kept going. He had the sense that this One is unique and he desired His attention and His mercy in his life.

So, he was persistent and was not going to be silenced. Is there a glimpse here that the man that concluded Chapter 18 is reminiscent of the women that Jesus presented at the beginning of the eighteenth chapter. Do you remember her? She kept knocking, knocking, knocking, and knocking. Oh, judge, help me.

The next morning, Judge help me. Knock, knock, knock, knock. knock. The judge told her to go away and she said she was not going to go away and kept on knocking. The people here were all telling this blind man to shut up, but he just kept crying out to Christ for his mercy.

The person who has eyes to really see the nature of God's Kingdom, the eternal nature of human existence, either in heaven or in hell, the person who has come to understand that He is perfect and we are fallen in sin and in rebellion, when they come to perceive these realities, and they understand that a gift of love was given in Christ, they are going to say, *Get me close to Him, into His presence and under His care.*

This man, he was crying out to Jesus. And just like the disciples, he had a lot to learn, but all he knew then is that the power of the Kingdom was manifested in this Man. And he needed Him. He needed Him. I pray that your eyes would be opened in such a way that you would say that you need Him, and that you would draw close to Him, and that you would abide in Him, and that you would walk in Him, with spiritual eyes to see all that He has done for you.

In this story, the crowd was telling this man to shut up, but Jesus stopped dead in His tracks. I love that detail. Jesus could hear and discern this man's persistent persevering bold faith, and Jesus commanded the people to bring the man to Him. He asked the man what he wanted Him to do for him.

The man then asked Jesus if He would help him to see, to give him his sight back. Then Jesus said, *Your faith has made you well. Recover your sight.* This man, he sprung up! I love the Gospel of Mark's account of this event. The story is told in three Gospels, Mark's account says, *He got up and he just tossed his cloak aside.*

His cloak would have been laid out in front of him. That is where the alms would have been gathered, so he just got up, went to Jesus and told Him he was going to follow Him. He got up and he went on the path with Jesus, following Christ.

With that laid out before us, I know this was a man who was blind and I don't for a second want to make light of the condition of losing eyesight, but he had spiritual sight all the way along. Based on that spiritual sight that he was given, he was able to see certain things, so let's close with a few lessons about what we learn from this man and the sight that he had as those who desire to be citizens of the Kingdom.

First:

a. He could see the identity of Jesus.

Repeatedly, he cried out, *Son of David, have mercy on me. Son of David have mercy on me. Son of David, have mercy on me.* In the Old Testament a series of promises were made to the ultimate Old Testament king David, son of Jesse of Bethlehem. David was promised that someone in his lineage would reign on the throne of God's Kingdom forever and ever and ever and ever. This blind man was tuned in to those promises.

We do know that *son of David* was a popular title that was used in the messianic expectation of First Century Israel. But this is the first person in the Gospel of Luke who actually used that title in reference to Jesus. Believe me, he did not use that title in reference to Jesus with the help of the Pharisees who were trying to persuade people that Jesus was working in the power of Satan.

This man knew the teaching and perceived the power, and he called out, *Messiah, Messiah!* And if we are going to have eyes to see and be those of keen spiritual sight, Jesus will be our pursuit and our foremost object of study and understanding. This is serious and this is what lasts forever.

If the person of Jesus is being nudged aside for other pursuits, we must get our priorities realigned. We are going to study other things. We are going to devote yourself so that you can do well in your place of employment. We are going to do well in our pursuit of study at school.

However, if those things nudge out the study of who King Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the God Incarnate come into the world, the Everlasting One, who has punctured the veil into that which He has created, we are missing something. Something is blurry that ought to be crystal clear.

Abide in Jesus and know His power and His peace in your soul by contemplating and studying who He is. Understand that, yes, Christians study doctrine, and while it is informational, even more it is going to be relational. As you study who He is, the Spirit of Jesus ministers to your soul and He lights you up in ways that no other pursuit of study in this is going to do.

It is easy for me to say. I know I am the pastor and I do this all week long, but there was a time when I was not a pastor. And I remember working all those hours in the hotel and the restaurant, on top of working in the church, but still saying we must study Jesus.

This man understood Jesus. The church ought to be filled with people that are into Jesus. This is a great time for us to be contemplating that as we continue into this month of December, then

into January. After that into February, the month of love, Valentine's Day. Jesus is the greatest manifestation of love. St. Patrick's Day in March. Study St. Patrick's prayer. It is all about Jesus.

Let's have eyes to see Jesus. The blind man could see the identify of Jesus. Next:

b. He could see the nature of the Kingdom.

He understood that the power of the everlasting reign of God was manifested in this one, Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ, while He is to be approached with expectancy, He is to be approached with humility as well.

This blind man did not approach Jesus presumptuously or in any kind of fist-shaking way. The spirit of our age might have had him come to Jesus, declaring what an unfair lot in life he received from God and God ought to do something different.

We approach the Kingdom of God humbly, understanding that every last bit of suffering that occurs in this world, the door was opened to it from our sin. And we come to Jesus, saying, *I need Your mercy. I need Your mercy. Have mercy on me. Will You bring the fullness of Your healing into my heart.*

We come with contrition. The character of the Kingdom of God is not presumption. it is humility. I will confess to you that there are times when I get so doggoned irritated with myself and the things that happen in this world. Then I read the Psalms. Read about David who asked why things in the world are so messed up.

David let it all out, but then he came back to the Lord and said, *Test me. Try me. I'm going to trust in Your unfailing love and mercy because, in the end, I am a person who needs it just as much as everyone else.*

So we understand the nature of the Kingdom. While it has unthinkable power, it is to be approached with humble hearts of contrition. Have mercy on me, this man said. Have mercy on my situation.

Finally,

c. He could see the path of life.

In Verse 43, he received his sight. Then it says that he got up and he followed Jesus. He followed Jesus, glorifying God as he went.

He did not just want to get his healing from Jesus, then go off on his own way and leading his own self-determined life. He followed Jesus. In the Gospel accounts, this is the language of *discipleship*.

He went and he followed Jesus to be with Jesus, to be under the wing of Jesus, to learn from Jesus, to be under the instruction of Jesus. He was not going to go after Christ, living a life of autonomy, under his own authority. Rather, he was going to be submissive to the full counsel of God as revealed in and through the person of the Messiah and His apostles.

He was going to follow Christ. People who have eyes to see, they will understand that He is God, they are created by God. He is the One who has designed this life, and you need and you require His instruction, so you read Scripture and you put yourself under it.

You don't put Scripture beneath your feet and say you are going to kind of read through it and decide that which does not apply to you, as you were the authority of your own life. You seek to properly understand what is written in Scripture, saying, *Thank you, Lord, for revealing Your will to me.* Because this is God's Word.

We are God's creation. He is the authority. And the authority of this pulpit and our Bible studies, they go only as far as they correctly divide the Word of Truth, God's Word. This blind man wanted to follow Jesus. That is the language of discipleship. That is what the Christian life is.

Within the eyes of those who have the Holy Spirit working in their hearts, all of these things will be glorious. You have the seed of Adam. There are things in your flesh and existence that will still kick against this, but when the Spirit is filling your heart and life, you are going to say, *This is good. Jesus is the best. I'm with Him. I am in Him. I walk with Him. There is no greater love. There is no greater kindness. He is the truth, and I walk in His ways.*

With that, let's close in a word of prayer. Then we will go to the Lord's Supper, where we will remember the great price that He paid to bring us into His Kingdom.