

The Thirty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 18:35-63

And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. (KJV)

We are blessed to hear the Holy Gospel within God's Holy Church. The Gospel is a blessing for all with open hearts and minds seeking to draw closer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Attentive believers enrich their lives by incorporating the message of the Gospel into personal daily life. The Gospel contains the teachings and life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believers experience Jesus Christ and the power of Jesus Christ when welcoming the Gospel into the heart and mind. Believers are empowered and renewed in Christ through the Holy Gospel.

The present Gospel is a lesson of the value of persistent hope and faith in Jesus Christ. The blind man reached out to Jesus for mercy in hope of healing. Jesus acknowledged the blind man's strong faith and granted the man his sight.

Pleas for God's mercy are an integral part of God's Holy Church. The prayers of the Church have innumerable pleas for the Lord's mercy. Individual believers learn at very young age to seek the Lord's mercy.

God is known through the ages as a good and merciful God. The hunger of the soul leads the believer to seek God's goodness and mercy. God's goodness and mercy do not absolve believers of personal responsibility.

The blind man reached out to Jesus even when he was rebuked for his initiative. In present day society, there are many who discount efforts of prayer and worship. There are voices who say pleas for mercy will be fruitless.

Some years ago there was a man, a drinker, who needed a liver transplant. Many said he would not get the transplant. His mother was confident in her prayers the transplant would take place. She prayed fervently.

The mother's prayers were answered. The transplant occurred and the man became renewed in Jesus Christ. The mother's strong faith was rewarded and God's goodness and mercy were realized.

The blind man in the current Gospel had his faith in Christ rewarded. The blind man's life became new when he received his sight. His initiative in reaching out to the Lord in hope and faith was not in vain.

Believers have the responsibility to make the effort to remain strong in faith and hope even when resistance exists. Hope in Jesus Christ is well-placed hope. Seeking the Lord's mercy is constructive and purposeful action.

At times when situations seem very dire and hope wanes among those affected, it is common to say all we can do is pray. Praying is powerful, constructive and formidable.

Praying brings results. Coal miners' pensions were in jeopardy for many years. The miners' union took extensive action to protect and ensure the pensions were secured as previously promised by the federal government.

Very little success was expected by onlookers that the government would secure the pensions. A few years back the likelihood of the government securing the miners' pensions was set at 1% by legislative predictors.

The United Mine Workers of America leaders firmly held prayer as a very vital part of the continuing effort to secure the pensions at the highest government level. Last year Congress passed the legislation and the President signed it.

The miners' pensions were secured against overwhelming odds. The value of prayer was once again verified. A careful look at history reveals through the ages the value of prayer.

God is attentive to serious prayer and hopeful hearts. God is attentive to serious believers seeking constructive results. God is mindful of pleas for mercy. God is at work every day performing miracles.

When believers face difficult situations, hope, strong faith and the love of God always have a place. Hope, strong faith, love of God and God's love always have a place in life.

Difficulties arise in life sometimes unexpectedly. Sometimes, we create our own difficulties. The lessons from the Gospel keep us focused and grounded. The Gospel helps each of us to move past our own blindness to see God at work.

God is always at work in our lives. We may not see God at all times but if we turn to God in faith, love and hope, God's reassuring presence will be experienced.

The present Gospel is a basic lesson of faith, hope and love. The blind man reached out in hope and faith for mercy and healing. God's attentiveness and love were revealed in the healing of the man's blindness.

Blindness evokes thoughts of darkness. Miners losing their pensions gave rise to thoughts of a dark future. A mother's son losing his life for failing to get a needed liver transplant would have been a dark ending.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Light when darkness exists. The Lord giving sight to the blind, a liver in answer to mother's prayer and securing pensions for miners having worked years in darkness are proof of God's goodness and mercy.