

Quinquagesima

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[0 : 00] May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Please be seated. Tradition is an important aspect of the faith that we insist upon here at St. Philip's.

Tradition, the history of thought about the death and resurrection of our Lord, insists that we accept and believe what has been passed down to us through the ages. One of those things that tradition and scripture have passed down to us is the crucifixion and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are required by spiritual law to believe this. But tradition is not just about what we believe. It's also about what we do. And this is exactly what we are taught in our gospel text today on Quinquagesima Sunday, that the gospel is always fulfilled in giving ourselves to those who are in need.

When Jesus tells the disciples that there is a time coming when he will be handed over to the Gentiles to be insulted, crucified, and killed, only to then rise from the grave afterwards, they had no idea what he was talking about.

[1 : 19] It is likely that they only heard part of his words. The scriptures were clear that the servant of Israel was to be killed as a sacrifice to make atonement for his people.

The scriptures were also clear that after he died, he would give the spoils of his victory to his people. It's a beautiful picture that is painted for us in the book of Isaiah, one of the most important liturgical texts for the people of Israel.

But even through the scriptures, even though they were clear about what was going to happen to Jesus, there was a different understanding of what was going to happen in the common eye when the Messiah came.

Many Jews believed that when the Messiah came, it would be a revolution. The Messiah would come and stick it to the Romans, or whoever else was in power at the time, and establish a new government so that the Jews did not have to be ruled over by the Gentiles anymore.

They would now have possession of a land, and they would flourish like they did before when they had people, they had land, they had civilization, and they had culture. All things would have been well again.

[2 : 27] However prevalent this idea of becoming Messiah, Jesus' idea of kingship takes a very different form. His idea of what it meant to be a king was to die at the hands of his enemies and to rise from the grave.

This would explain why the disciples didn't understand the meaning of Jesus' words about his death and resurrection. Now enter a man who is begging by the side of the road.

He is unable to see, and he relies upon the mercy of those who pass by in order for him to make it to the next day. When this man hears that there is a crowd coming, he asks, well, what's happening?

What's going on? Those near him tell him that Jesus of Nazareth is approaching. Without hesitation, the blind man cries out and says, Jesus, son of David, have mercy upon me.

Not understanding why this man would be crying out to Jesus at this time, the others around him tell him, don't bother Jesus. He has more important things to deal with than you, a blind man.

[3 : 30] But the man, fully aware of what he is doing, cries out even louder, son of David, have mercy upon me. Jesus hears the man and has compassion.

He asks him, what would you like me to do for you? The man then asks for his sight, and Jesus heals him and tells him that his faith has made him well.

Everyone praised God because of what they saw. The irony is that even though this man was blind, he had eyes of faith to see more than the 12 did.

They didn't understand the words of Jesus, but the blind man knew that the son of David was coming in power to seek and to save the lost. He understood that Jesus was a great teacher and that his teaching was always accompanied by great action.

Nothing could be greater than being healed from his infirmities by the Messiah. We can learn something about the order of events that happened that day.

[4 : 33] Jesus's words about his crucifixion and resurrection were intimately tied together with his action of healing the blind beggar. In healing the beggar, Jesus was teaching that his kingship was not about taking over the Romans or the Gentiles in power.

Rather, Jesus being the Messiah was about healing. It was about restoration, giving sight to the blind, food to the hungry, and comfort to those who are weary.

That was his mission. That was his mission as the Messiah. He was going to be handed over to the Gentiles, but through this action would come the salvation of the world.

He was on a quest to die, but through that death, he would offer life to all who seek after him. What does that mean for us?

How do we hear these words and live a better life because of it? Here's how we appropriate the words of Christ. By knowing that Jesus's death and resurrection was done in order to have mercy on those who need it.

[5 : 38] When we think about Jesus's death and his resurrection, we should also think about how we can give mercy. When we speak about the great truths of God, we follow up with actions of love and mercy to others.

The greatest contemplation of the mysteries of Christ should urge us to live a life like Jesus did. We preach the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus when we give to those in need.

All of Jesus's life is connected, and because of that, all of our lives are connected as well. Brothers and sisters, let us all fulfill the gospel together by giving up our lives for the service of others.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen.