

**BEHOLD! WE ARE GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.**

*In the name + of Jesus.*

**Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “Behold! We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.” (Luke 18:31)** Jesus never forgot what his purpose was in coming into this world. The prophets had spelled it out. New things the Lord had declared through them. Before they had sprung into being, the Lord announced them. (Isaiah 42:9) Jesus had studied these things for himself, even in the Temple at age twelve. Now it was time to fulfill them.

Behold! We are going up to Jerusalem. Jesus understood how the whole gory scene would play out. “[**The Son of Man**] will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.” (Luke 18:32-33) The way that Jesus would be treated would be too shameful to comprehend. Or is it? Because we treat Jesus this way.

**They will mock him.** Yes, we do. We hear our Lord tell us how we are to live our lives. He tells us that love is the fulfillment of the Law. **Love is patient.... It does not envy (1 Corinthians 13:4)**, but we are not interested in waiting for our blessings, and we are bothered to see others enjoy blessings that we don’t have. **Love is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered (1 Corinthians 13:5)**, but we are easily upset when others stand in our way and do not let us get what we want. **Love keeps no record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5)**, but we would rather remind our family of their sins than forgive them. **Love does not delight in evil (1 Corinthians 13:6)**, but we delight in gratifying our sinful cravings. And we quietly smile when our adversaries suffer harm or loss.

Love the Lord your God. Love your neighbor as yourself. These are God’s commands. We have not done what God desires, but we insist that we are good. We believe that our hearts are filled with love when they are filled with evil. In this way, we mock God. Then God confronts us in our sins, and we get angry at him. We do not humble ourselves when God shows us how evil we are. And so we add sin to sin – doing what is evil and then despising God for telling us that our deeds are evil. We lash out. We spit out our defense at him. We treat him abusively.

For this reason, “[**The Son of Man**] was handed over to the Gentiles. They *mocked him, insulted him, spit on him, flogged him and killed him.*” (Luke 18:32) Because we have sinned against our Lord this way with our shameful attitudes and disobedience, he had to make the payment for our sins. Because we have sinned by treating the Lord shamefully, he had to be treated shamefully to pay for our sins. Jesus knew this, and he did not avoid it. His attitude was not selfish, but humble. His actions were not reluctant, but willing. That is because Jesus actions were driven by love – a love that is pure and committed to you.

“**Behold! We are going up to Jerusalem,**” (Luke 18:31) he said. Jesus was resolved to suffer and die, because Jesus was determined to redeem and rescue us. Jesus did not envy a life of ease, giving into temptations. He patiently endured. Through fervent prayer, he persevered. Jesus was not self-seeking, but in taking up your sins he

sought only your good no matter how much it cost him. Jesus does not keep a record of wrongs. There is never a time when he says that you have gone over the limit. He always forgives your sins. He always has mercy. Jesus did not delight in evil. Instead, his delight was in paying for it. By his innocent sufferings and death, Jesus proves God's love to you. That love is not seen in glory and radiance, but in suffering and weakness.

Behold! We are going up to Jerusalem. “[**The Son of Man**] will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.” (Luke 18:32-33) The way that Jesus would be treated was too shameful to comprehend. And, in fact, the disciples did not get it. Jesus spoke as plainly as he could possibly have explained it. Still, **the disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about. (Luke 18:34)** *“Perhaps another parable? Perhaps another mystery? We are going to Jerusalem? Sure! Jerusalem is where the high priest is brilliantly dressed. Jerusalem is where the king has his throne. Jerusalem is where you go to reign, not to suffer and die.”* They still did not see it. Salvation comes through suffering. Life comes through death. Glory only comes after humility.

**Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “Behold! We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.” (Luke 18:31)** All guilt will be absolved. All shame will be removed. Death will be undone. Heaven will be opened. God's love will be proclaimed. God's mercy will be given.

Although the disciples did not see it, a blind man did. Jesus was passing through Jericho. When the blind man heard that Jesus was coming, **he called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Luke 18:38)** He did not care if the crowds rebuked him. He wanted God's mercy. He wanted his prayer to be heard.

**A blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. (Luke 18:35)** The blind man, whose name was Bartimaeus, knew his place. He was a beggar. He had nothing. He would only live if he would be given gifts from others. And that is what we all are. We are all beggars. We stand before the Lord with nothing – no works, no merits, no reason to be praised. Blessed are you if you recognize that you are poor, beggarly, and helpless. Then you will cry out with blind Bartimaeus – **“Kyrie eleison! Lord, have mercy!”**

This is the best prayer that we can pray. First, it acknowledges that we are beggars. It confesses that we are sinners. We are spiritually destitute, totally dependent upon God's mercy if we are to live. Secondly, it acknowledges that Jesus Christ is the source of that mercy. He is the one who takes away sin. He delivers from death. He comes to us in our poverty and pours holy riches into our hands. He finds us in our filthy rags and gives us his righteousness as garments of salvation for us. Jesus did not spare any expense to redeem us. Behold! He went up to Jerusalem to lay down his very life – the Holy God slain for sinful men, the Righteous One on behalf of the guilty. Jesus died so that we can have life. The Church calls out and will not be silent just because the world tells to be quiet. Instead, we intensify our prayer because we know our sins. We cry out all the more, **“Kyrie eleison! Lord, have mercy!”** And he does.

Behold! We are going up to Jerusalem. We are on the threshold of the Lenten Season. And so it is time to recognize our sins. It is time to intensify our prayers. It is time to cry out for mercy. It is time to join with Jesus, following his steps to the city where the holy sacrifice will be made. We know the gory scene that is coming. But we

will watch it all the same, because that is where God shows us the full extent of his love. His love is not self-serving, but serves us. He does not delight in evil, and that is why he pays for it with his precious blood. He does not keep a record of your wrongs, but bestows full forgiveness for every last one. His love never fails. There is always mercy to spare.

Behold! We are going to Jerusalem! Behold! The Son of David has mercy upon us! Behold! His love saves you!

**In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**PSALM 71 (page 92)**

**Cantor**

**Line 1**

**Congregation**

**Line 2**

**ALL**

**Refrain & Gloria**

**VERSE OF THE DAY**

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end.**

**SERMON PRAYER**

**INTERCESSIONS**

- **For Mike Roy, home from hospital**
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