

# Beggars Cry Out

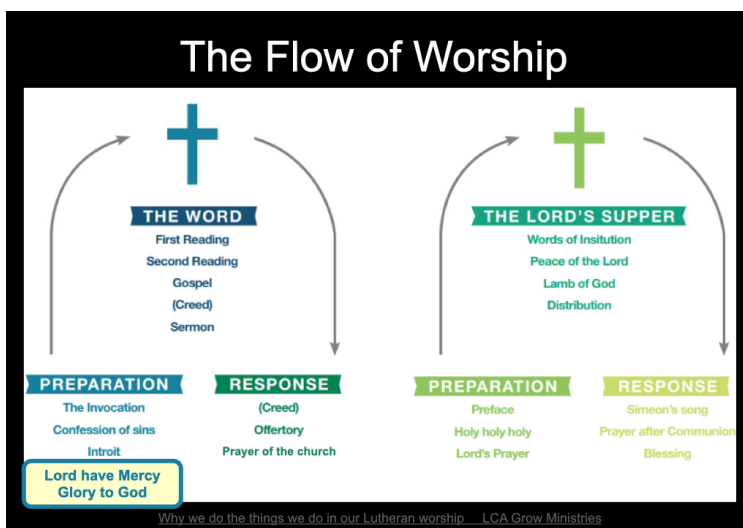
## Luke 18:35-42

When Sue was recently undertaking lots and lots and lots of appointments with different medical specialists, and having regular post-op treatment and care, we found out how few parking spaces exist in the Box Hill Hospital and the medical office precinct which surrounds the two hospitals. It could at times be frustrating to try and find a park, and when you're running late it seems even harder. On more than one occasion, as it turned out, we came out of medical appointments to find one of those stickers on our windscreen that nobody likes to get. The dreaded fine! "Lord, have mercy!" (or something a little different) would come to my lips. On one occasion, we found what we thought was a good park — a really good park; and we paid for that park in good faith, only to find that we'd registered the park for Sue's car when we driving mine! So, off to the Council office to plead our case — to plead for mercy; and what did we get? "Pay up or else!!!"



Who can you turn to in order to find mercy when you need it? Who can you trust to know how flawed you are (or can be), and yet in confidence you can go to, to receive mercy and to know the joy of receiving it? That's what we explore today.

So, today is the second in our six-week series of sermons and kids addresses on worship. Last Sunday we were reminded that Lutheran worship not only reflects our theology and what we teach on justification (that is how we are saved from the punishment for sin), but also that in worship, God comes to us to bring us the gift of life and love and forgiveness in Christ anew. God calls us out of the hustle and bustle and trial and tribulation that life can be, to receive blessing to go out into the world to live that life. And last week, we recognised that God gives us peace for our relationship with him, our relationship with each other, and for our own peace of mind with the gift of forgiveness. We have just shared that peace.



In that peace, in our worship we now enter more fully into God's presence, and rest, preparing to hear his Word for us.

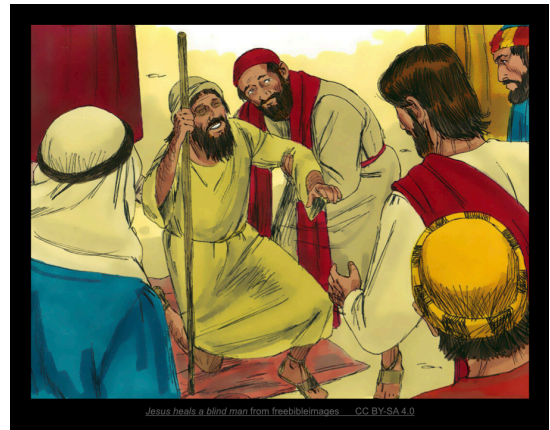
Martin Luther's great contribution to the world, and certainly to the Church, was the recognition that God says: We are saved by grace through faith. This next section of the liturgy highlights for us our Lutheran theology of salvation. We are saved by grace to live a holy life.

Let's pray...

In the ancient world, the cry for mercy was a common cry of people, for example, appealing to the Emperor as the divine help. “Lord, have mercy!” was not uncommon. Jesus puts this cry into its proper and eternal perspective for the world.

The blind man in Luke 18 puts his total trust and faith in Jesus. At the sound of Jesus coming down the road, the blind man looks with heart eyes of faith. He looks forward expectantly to sit at the feet of the one who comes, for here he will find mercy. He comes boldly and he comes loudly.

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”  
Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”



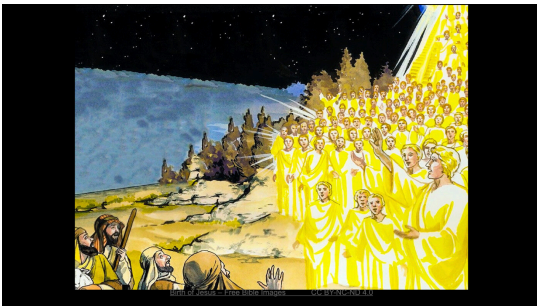
The crowd tries to shut him up; but Jesus is here, and this blind man knows God is here for him. He is not worthy, perhaps; but he knows the merciful one is here and will never turn him away. His eyes of faith already see who is here for him, and he won't be silent. At Jesus' feet, he cries, “Lord, have mercy!” It's the cry of those who know they are beggars, but who also know *God for them*, and so can, with true confidence and sure hope, cry “Lord, have mercy.” “Christ (for you are the Lord), have mercy.” “Lord, have mercy.”

Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, glorifying God, and when all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Luke 18:43

At Jesus' feet, we too are healed, and have the eyes of our hearts opened, and are filled with faith like this man; and so we too join in the song of praise with him and the saints on earth and the angels in heaven.

And note really carefully that there is no gap, no delay between our cry as beggars and God's merciful response of grace and love and life. So we join in with the people on earth, and we join in with angels who announce God amongst us at Christmas, with the song of praise; “Glory to God in the highest!” With the song of life, and with those who sing it, sing for joy at the presence of God amongst us, and announce it to the world; for when we sing the Great Gloria, make no mistake, we sing with the heavenly host, like the angels at the very first Christmas. God didn't give me any musical talents to sing in a choir or a band. But the wonder of wonders is that I, you, we all sing with the angels and archangels



and all the company of heaven — just as John heard and saw in worship on the island of Patmos so long ago, as recorded in the Book of Revelation. By the way, Revelation is first and foremost a book about God's victory over Satan and sin as it is played out in worship. John's vision is on the Lord's Day, and what does he see? Worship!

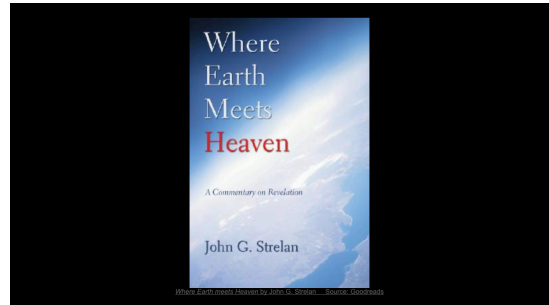
People from every nation, tribe and language (perhaps he sees amongst them this man who greets Jesus in



the reading we've just heard), standing before the throne and before the Lamb and with them are the angels; and together they sing:

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever!”

We sing with the healed man, and we sing as healed people who have received mercy, and we join with the choir of angels and those who have gone before us in the faith. We raise our arms at the altar as a sign of worshipping at the very throne of God in heaven and here on earth. *Where Earth Meets Heaven* is the title of an excellent commentary on Revelation by John Strelan, a former Assistant Bishop of the LCA. ‘Where earth meets heaven’ is an apt description for worship.



We are human beggars, it is true. My gravelly old voice is just that. It's true. As a spiritual beggar, there is nothing I can do to heal or fix myself before God. This too is true. But it is also true that Christ is here, and he is here in mercy for us. We are beggars at the feet of Jesus, it's true. The blind man knew of the feet of Jesus bringing his Saviour to him, and he wouldn't be quiet.

Luther's theology and Luther's struggle and his life came to that point in his life as his death beckoned soon. “We are beggars. This is true.” were the final words that Martin Luther wrote down while on his deathbed. Here was the rubber on the road. Here there could be no fudging it. Here on his death bed, Luther came face to face with God. What did all of Luther's great theological discoveries, and all his life as a doctor of theology, and a leader of reforming the church, mean for him now as he came to the end? Luther cried out for mercy. Like the blind beggar, he knew his fragile existence as a sinner, and he knew the original sin which stuck to him like sticky mud. But also, like the man in our text today, Luther knew his Lord and his Saviour was near, and in faith he could be who he was in the presence of God. With confidence in *Christ for him*, and in sure hope, he could cry out ‘Lord, have mercy’, knowing that that is exactly what he would receive anew. And he would soon pass to heavenly eternal life, joining the company of angels in heaven to praise God forever. The same gift which is yours, which is mine, which is ours, and of which we celebrate and sing as earth meets heaven in our worship.

Lord, have mercy!

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Please stand as we continue with these parts of our service, resuming with the ‘Lord have mercy’.

*Video of the service including the above address: <https://youtu.be/CZ2D1yX15Mg>*