



3/3/19 Luke 6:39-45 & Sir. 27:4-7

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Fr. Robert Beck (subscription)

Stone, Naomi. [Journey of Love](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [On Being Loved Sinners Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind c1568; Bruegel, Pieter, ca. 1525-1569

[Can the Blind lead the Blind?](#)

**ENTERING THE SCENE:**

We are living in times where it is becoming vitally important to recognize our blind spots. There is hardly any issue today that does not reveal that we have fallen into ‘ditches’ because we are following people or ideas that have become ‘logs’ in our eyes.

In books like [Moneyland](#), we are identifying the hypocrisy of preaching the prosperity gospel that leaves others to lives of poverty and despair. Now the fruit of our lives will reveal who is truly our master.

**Lk. 6:39-45**

39<sup>9</sup> He also told them a **parable**: “Can a **blind person** guide a **blind person**? Will not both **fall** into a **pit**? 40 A **disciple** is not above the **teacher**, but everyone who is **fully qualified** will be like the **teacher**. 41 Why do you see the **speck** in your neighbor’s **eye**, but do not notice the **log** in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your **neighbor**, ‘Friend, let me take out the **speck** in your **eye**,’ when you yourself do not see the **log** in your own **eye**? You **hypocrite**, first take the **log** out of your own **eye**, and then you will **see clearly** to take the **speck** out of your **neighbor’s eye**. 43 “No **good tree** bears **bad fruit**, nor again does a **bad tree** bear **good fruit**; 44 for each tree is **known** by its own fruit. **Figs** are not gathered from **thorns**, nor are **grapes** picked from a **bramble bush**. 45 The good person out of the **good treasure** of the **heart** produces good, and the **evil person** out of **evil treasure** produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the **heart** that the mouth **speaks**.”

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Jesus uses this parable to help us see clearly so as to see as God sees. How does taking this teaching to heart help me to see as God sees?

**PRAYER:** Teacher Jesus. The only reason to share my humanity was to help me see as God sees. My ‘world’ thinks it knows better than you do and tries to convince me that their god is God. But the world can only give me what it has and you invite me to treasure its gifts, but to realize that God’s reality is not bound by its space time limits. When I listen to you those limits drop away and my heart recognizes your truth. Help me to trust that my heart will lead me to choose the unlimited love of God. Amen.

**WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

**PARABLE:** Fr. Richard Rohr teaches “Parables should make us a bit uncomfortable is we are really hearing” them. If we fit them nicely into our business-as-usual world, parables have not served their purpose. A parable is supposed to change our operative word-views and unlock it from the inside- so that we can see and hear reality correctly”

*What in my current world view needs to be examined more deeply to make my choices line up with Jesus’?*

**BLIND PERSON:** A blind person is a person who lack sight, but a hypocrite lacks insight.

*Am I blind or am I a hypocrite who is pretending to see but does not?*

**FALL / PIT:** To fall in a pit is to drop to a lower place where getting out might need someone to help us.

*How can this teaching parable help get me out of my ‘pits’?*

**DISCIPLE:** A disciple is a person under the mentorship of one who has knowledge that one needs.

*How is this teaching helping me learn what I need to learn?*

**TEACHER:** A teacher is someone who knows things that I want to learn.

*What do I want to learn from this parable?*

**FULLY QUALIFIED:** Someone who is fully qualified is someone who has learned something that has proven to be true and can help me get the skills or wisdom I am needing.

*What do I need today to avoid the pitfalls of the current “common sense” to come to the uncommon sense of Jesus?*

**SPECK:** A speck in a tiny object that is hardly noticeable from a distance, but obscures the vision if it in the eye.  
*What are the specks in my eye that blur my vision and keep me from seeing clearly?*

**EYE:** The eye is one of our most used senses. It takes up a lot of our brain power and often leads us to believe only what we can see.  
Can this parable help me to see more clearly what Jesus is trying to point out as my blind spots?

**LOG:** A log is huge compared to a speck.  
*Do my assumptions sometimes come in the size of logs?*

**NEIGHBOR:** A neighbor is the one who is close-neighbor to me. It can be anyone who God chooses to put in my path today.  
*Can my assumptions or plans get in the way of truly seeing the next person who calls or comes close?*

**HYPOCRITE:** The classic definition of a hypocrite is someone who is playing to be someone other than who they truly are.  
*How can this parable reveal the places where I am tempted to play Christian?*

**SEE CLEARLY:** When someone's vision is impaired in any way, it is impossible to perceive truly.  
*What ways does this parable help me to get 20/20 vision?*

**GOOD TREE / BAD TREE:** Trees can only produce from out of their inner health. When we harvest their fruit we can quickly tell if it is a tree worth keeping or does it need some help with its problem.  
*Can my choices show if I am a good or bad tree?*

**GOOD FRUIT/ BAD FRUIT:** Good fruit is essential for good nutrition, bad fruit can make us sick.  
*How can this teaching help me pick what is good or bad?*

**KNOWN:** To know or be known is to have some experience with someone or something.  
*How can my experiences of being loved or being hurt help me to learn from this parable?*

**FIGS / GRAPES:** Each of these fruits are sweet and much desired.  
*How do these examples help me to see with insight?*

**THORNS/ BRAMBLE BUSH/ EVIL PERSON:** Each of these realities are harmful and need to be avoided.  
*My experiences can teach me what to avoid because of the pain they cause. How does this teaching prick my consciousness so as to teach me what I need to learn?*

**GOOD TREASURE / EVIL TREASURE:** Treasures are something we greatly value because of their importance to us.  
*I treasure things that help me find meaning. Can the things I treasure reveal how I chose love or hate?*

**HEART:** The heart is thought to be the center/core of who we are. It is one of the first organs to be detected before birth.  
*How does this parable help my heart be healthy?*

**SPEAKS:** [Words create realities](#). In the beginning was the word.  
*When I look back over my words today how will this show others what my reality is?*

**PARALEL TEXTS:** Mt. 7: 1-5; Jn. 13:16: 15:20;

**OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK:** Sir.27: 4-7; Ps. 92:1-4; 1Cor. 15: 51-58; Lk. 6: 39-45  
Revised Common Lectionary: Ex. 34:29-35; Ps. 99; 2 Cor. 3:12 - 4:2; Lk. 9:28-36, (37-43)

#### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:**

6.37–42: Judging (Mt 7.1–5; 12.36–37; 15.14; Mk 4.24–25). 37: Do not judge, see b. Rosh Ha-Shanah 16b; b. Meg. 28a. 41–42: Log in your own eye, b. Arak. 16b; b. Hor. 3b. Hypocrite, see Ps 26.4; Sir 1.29; 32.15. 6.43–45: Bearing good fruit (Mt 7.15–20; 12.33–35). See also Jas 3.11–12. 45: Heart, the moral center (see Gen 8.21; Deut 6.5–6; etc.). On the relation of heart (Heb “lev”) to lips (Heb “peh”) see Ps 19.15. Pg. 114. [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#)

Where does it leave us? Well, it is precisely this ambiguous place of compassion in our lives that provides both the reason for this book and its starting point. Must we simply recognize that we are more competitive than compassionate, and try to make the best of it with a "healthy dose of skepticism"? Is the best advice we can give each other that we should try to live in such a way that we hurt each other as little as possible? Is our greatest ideal a maximum of satisfaction with a minimum of pain? This book says No to these questions, and proposes that in order to understand the place of compassion in our lives, we must look in a radically different

direction. The perspective presented here is based on the words of Jesus, "Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate" (Lk. 6: 36) and is offered in the deep conviction that through compassion our humanity grows into its fullness. Pg. 7.

Nouwen, Henri. Compassion.

In the true Church of Christ, there can be no rule, regulation of law that prevents or excludes any believers from ministering or proclaiming and preaching the word he or she believes, or that prevents any person of compassion from doing any of the work of healing in the name of Jesus. "You must stop them" (Lk. 9:50) for any reason, not because they haven't gone to the right schools, not because they haven't paid their dues, not because they don't belong to the right club, and most of all, not because they are "only women".Pg. 158. Parr, Rayond. Process, Person, Presence.

In Dominic Crossan's *The Birth of Christianity* we find on pages 359-361 under the heading: Internal Dissent in the Common Sayings Tradition, several references to the other places in which this teaching is discussed. The Gospel of Thomas (saying 34) says; "If a blind person leads a blind person, both of them will fall into a hole." And, "Jesus said, "You see the speck that is in your brothers eye, but you do not see the beam that is in your own eye. When you take the beam out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Gospel of Thomas 26: 1-2) And, Jesus said, "Grapes are not harvested from the thorn trees, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they yield no fruit. A good person brings forth good from the storehouse; a bad person brings forth evil things from the corrupt storehouse in the heart, and says evil things. For from the abundance of the heart this person brings forth evil things." (Gospel of Thomas 45: 1-4)

"Building communities that practice understanding, loving-kindness and compassion may be the most important thing we can do for the survival of our world." -Thich Nhat Hanh

Compassion is language the deaf can hear and the blind can see. ~Mark Twain~

Compassion constitutes a radical form of criticism, for it announces that the hurt is to be taken seriously, that the hurt is not to be accepted as normal and natural but is an abnormal and unacceptable condition for humanness. - Walter Brueggemann

Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. ... Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. - Henri J.M. Nouwen

76. A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness.[70] He or she is consoled, not by the world but by Jesus. Such persons are unafraid to share in the suffering of others; they do not flee from painful situations. They discover the meaning of life by coming to the aid of those who suffer, understanding their anguish and bringing relief. They sense that the other is flesh of our flesh, and are not afraid to draw near, even to touch their wounds. They feel compassion for others in such a way that all distance vanishes. In this way they can embrace Saint Paul's exhortation: "Weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15).

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20180319\\_gaudete-et-exultate.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exultate.html)

The whole of life has a power to soften and open us against our will, to irrigate our spirits, and in those moments, we discover that tears, the water from within, are a common blood, mysterious and clear. We may speak different languages and live very different lives, but when that deep water swells to the surface, it pulls us to each other. — Mark Nepo, *The Book of Awakening*

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4/18 Mostly we think of people with great authority as higher up, far away, hard to reach. But spiritual authority comes from compassion and emerges from deep inner solidarity with those who are "subject" to authority. The one who is fully like us, who deeply understands our joys and pains or hopes and desires, and who is willing and able to walk with us, that is the one to whom we gladly give authority and whose "subjects" we are willing to be. It is the compassionate authority that empowers, encourages, calls forth hidden gifts, and enables great things to happen. True spiritual authorities are located in the point of an upside-down triangle, supporting and holding into the light everyone they offer their leadership to. Henri Nouwen

"Compassion is the radicalism of our time," Dalai Lama

True compassion recognizes that a society that creates beggars needs to be totally restructured. - Anne Braden

"Every person must decide whether they will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?" -Martin Luther King, Jr.

Only Luke and Matthew 7: 1-5 have this teaching in their gospels. Compare how closely they are aligned which suggest that their communities really cherished this parable.

Naturally, this attitude of listening entails obedience to the Gospel as the ultimate standard, but also to the Magisterium that guards it, as we seek to find in the treasury of the Church whatever is most fruitful for the “today” of salvation. It is not a matter of applying rules or repeating what was done in the past, since the same solutions are not valid in all circumstances and what was useful in one context may not prove so in another. The discernment of spirits liberates us from rigidity, which has no place before the perennial “today” of the risen Lord. The Spirit alone can penetrate what is obscure and hidden in every situation, and grasp its every nuance, so that the newness of the Gospel can emerge in another light. 173.

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20180319\\_gaudete-et-exsultate.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html)

We need to embrace the reality that the Divine is in our very DNA, and has resided intimately within us from the very moment we came into being. And most wondrously the Divine gives us the freedom to grow to full human potential, to make our own choices. Journeyman

"Do not imagine that character is determined at birth. We have been given free will. Any person can become as righteous as Moses or as wicked as Jeroboam. We ourselves decide whether to make ourselves learned or ignorant, compassionate or cruel, generous or miserly. No one forces us, no one decides for us, no one drags us along one path or the other; we ourselves, by our own volition, choose our own way." - Maimonides, 12th Century

It is heaven all the way to heaven. What you choose now is exactly what you choose to be forever. God will not disappoint you. Richard Rohr

Every time you make a choice, you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And, taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a Heaven creature or into a hellish creature — either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow creatures and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is Heaven: that is, it is joy, and peace, and knowledge, and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other. . . . C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

“. . . freedom to choose does not mean freedom to choose the consequences of our choice, for we are living in a universe, not a chaos: we can choose to do this or that, but the consequences of that choice will be governed by the laws of the universe in which we are. It is only if we use our freedom of choice—that is, our freedom to choose without coercion—to make choices in harmony with the reality of things—in harmony with what God is, with what we are and with what all other things are—that we achieve freedom in its sense as the fullness of being.” - Frank Sheed, *Theology and Sanity*

“The problem of personal mastery versus self-surrender exists in every moment of choice. It appears in the most mundane of daily decisions, and it glows fiercely in the way we view the very meaning of existence. It presents us with a dilemma; a dilemma that can confuse us and may—if taken far enough—even destroy us. Fundamentally, this dilemma has to do with whether we engage the deepest levels of our lives in willing or in willful ways.”— Gerald G. May, *Will & Spirit*

God is always choosing people. First impressions aside, God is not primarily choosing them for a role or a task, although it might appear that way. God is really choosing them to be God’s self in this world, each in a unique situation. If they allow themselves to experience being chosen, being a beloved, being somehow God’s presence in the world, they invariably communicate that same chosenness to others. And thus the Mystery passes on from age to age. Yes, we do have roles and tasks in this world, but finally they are all the same—to uniquely be divine love in a way that no one else can or will.

Richard Rohr: *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality*, pp. 42-43

To be risen with Christ means not only that one has a choice and that one may live by a higher law--the law of grace and love--but that one must do so. The first obligation of the Christian is to maintain his/her freedom from all superstitions, all blind taboos and religious formalities, indeed from all empty forms of legalism. - Thomas Merton

There are any number of ways that the seeds of our preferences can fall to the ground and die. If they die in the service of our brothers and sisters, God will make them fruitful, and provide for our needs. If we cling to them, they will eventually wither and die anyway and we will be left with empty shells. Fr. Neil Paquette

#### **SUGGESTED READINGS:**

Parr, Raymond. [Process Person Presence](#), Chicago. Thomas More Press. 1990.

Nouwen, Henri, et al. [Compassion](#). NY. Image Books. 1983.