

When You're Flying Blind

Luke 22:63–71

Have you ever heard the phrase “flying blind”?

It comes from the early days of aviation, when pilots couldn’t fly safely in fog, clouds, or darkness—they had to see the ground or risk crashing. Many did. But on September 24, 1929, Lieutenant Jimmy Doolittle climbed into a biplane in thick fog at Mitchel Field, New York. A canvas hood was placed over his cockpit—he could see nothing outside. Relying solely on new instruments—an artificial horizon, directional gyro, and altimeter—he taxied, took off, flew a 15-mile course with turns, and landed perfectly. It was the first “blind” flight in history. Doolittle trusted his instruments when his eyes failed him, and that single act revolutionized aviation, saving countless lives.

Doolittle is most famous for something even bolder—the Doolittle Raid on April 18, 1942. After Pearl Harbor, America needed a strike on Japan to show we could hit back. Doolittle led 16 B-25 bombers off the USS Hornet, bombing Tokyo and other cities. It was a one-way mission: overloaded planes, no fighter escort, no return to the carrier. In a real sense, they were flying blind—facing unknown defenses, fuel shortages, and crash landings in China. The raid caused little physical damage but shocked Japan, lifted American morale, and forced the enemy to divert resources. Doolittle’s trust in preparation, teamwork, and mission turned uncertainty into a turning point in the war.

This morning, in our text, we see the Sovereign King of the universe flying blind for us. Blindfolded, mocked, beaten, taunted—“Prophesy! Who is it that struck You?”—Jesus could have drawn on His divine power to see, know, and strike back. But He refused. He entrusted Himself to the Father’s plan, laying down His life willingly.

Sermon in a sentence: When you’re flying blind in the fog of evil and injustice, take heart: the Sovereign King sees, reverses, and redeems.

1. When Evil Mocks, the Sovereign King Overrules

Let’s begin right where the text begins—with the guards’ cruel mockery and how it reveals the Sovereign King’s overruling power.

“Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, ‘Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?’ And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.” Luke 22:63-65

These guards—likely temple police—treat Jesus like a punching bag. They beat Him, blindfold Him, strike Him, and mock His prophetic claims: “Prophesy! Who hit You?” It’s cruel, humiliating, and blasphemous. They think they’re in control, ruling over this prisoner. Evil seems to have the upper hand.

But look closer. Jesus is silent. He doesn’t retaliate or defend Himself. Why? Because He is the Sovereign King, fully in charge. No man took His life—He laid it down willingly (John 10:18). Ironically, the mockery fulfills prophecy. In Isaiah 53:7, we read, *“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth.”*

Even blindfolded, He sees all. When evil mocks, the Sovereign King rules.

This is a vital lesson: Jesus was not a victim; He was the victor. He’s in charge even when everything seems against Him. And beloved, He’s in charge in your life too—when circumstances mock your faith, when pain blinds you, when evil seems to triumph. Trust His eyes and sovereignty. When our sight fails and man seems to rule, He overrules.

This trust in sovereignty extends to our position in Christ. Through our union with Christ, as Paul explains in Ephesians 2, God has made us alive together with Christ, even when we were dead in sin (Ephesians 2:4–5). He has raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). We are spiritually united to Christ in His death, resurrection, ascension, and exalted position at God’s right hand.

This union means we are set free. Jesus has decisively defeated the powers of Satan at the cross (Colossians 2:15), disarming them and triumphing over them. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him (Matthew 28:18), and since we are in Him, the enemy

has no ultimate power over us. Satan is a defeated foe—his claims on us are broken.

Yet, to exercise this authority, Scripture calls us to be under what God has put over us if we want to be over what God has put under us. We will never exercise authority over the defeated powers (including sin and the enemy's schemes) unless we remain submitted to God's authority—through obedience to His Word, humble submission in the church, accountability to one another, and heeding our leaders who watch over our souls (Hebrews 13:17). A fiery podcaster may inspire you, but they can't replace a faithful pastor who shepherds with Christlike care.

True victory comes in humble dependence and community, not isolated defiance.

2. We Are Victorious When We Entrust Vengeance to God's Hand

Now the scene shifts to the sham trial at dawn, and here we see how Jesus wins—not by fighting back, but by entrusting everything to the Father's just hand. Luke continues:

“When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.” Luke 22:66-70

Jesus' responses here are measured and masterful—He's not being evasive or defensive, but exposing their hardened hearts. These leaders weren't asking sincere questions; they were seeking ammunition to condemn Him. Truth incarnate stood before them, yet they couldn't (or wouldn't) grasp it. Why? Pride blinded them—their self-righteousness, envy of Jesus' authority, and fear of losing power created a fog of unbelief (John 9:40–41).

There's a biblical principle here: **Light refused increases darkness; light received brings more light.** Jesus Himself taught it in the parable of the soils: *"For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away"* (Matthew 13:12). When we resist the light of truth, our hearts harden, and what little understanding we had fades. But when we receive it with humility, God multiplies revelation and fruitfulness.

In my own years of counseling and preaching, I've seen this play out again and again. When a person comes with an open, humble heart—ready to receive, willing to be corrected, eager for God's Word—something remarkable happens. Not only do they receive wisdom, but their disposition seems to draw out more from God through me as the counselor or preacher. Fresh insight comes in the moment; clarity sharpens; words I hadn't planned flow with unusual power. The Holy Spirit illuminates responsive souls (John 16:13–15), and He often gives the minister fresh understanding right then and there (1 Corinthians 2:10–13).

Pride closes the door; humility flings it wide open.

Again, the leaders are “flying blind” in the fog of their own pride—not because they couldn’t see, but because they refused the Light, and refusal only deepened their darkness (Matthew 13:12). But for those who receive Him, more light comes, illuminating the path.

Even so, Jesus doesn’t defend or retaliate. He leaves vindication to God (1 Peter 2:23). Vengeance belongs to Him (Romans 12:19). He wins by surrendering to the Father’s plan.

There's a slogan going around today that says, “LET THEM.” Let people do what they do—don’t react, don’t care what they think or say about your choices. It’s a defiant attitude: “I’m doing me. Let them judge, let them talk, let them leave, let them hate—I don’t care.” In some cases, it’s empowering—setting boundaries against toxic people. But often it’s rooted in rebellion: “I refuse to be accountable to or submit to anyone.” It can justify sinful, disgraceful, or shameful choices with a shrug: “Let them judge—I’m living my truth.”

But what if, as someone has suggested, rather than “LET THEM” we “LET HIM”? Jesus didn’t respond with a defiant “Let them.” His silence wasn’t passive-aggressive or “none of your business.” He wasn’t saying “Let them think what they want.” He knew they weren’t asking honest questions—they were mocking Him and suppressing the truth.

Paul calls this out on in Romans 1 where he describes: people who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18), and it leads straight to shamelessness, moral decay, and sin that keeps getting worse.

When we do shameful things, the shrugging off accountability suppresses truth, hardens the heart, and invites more bondage—not freedom.

Instead, Jesus embodied “LET HIM”—letting His Father have His way, entrusting everything to the One who judges justly. In our text, the guards and Sanhedrin tried to shame Jesus through blindfolded mockery and false accusation. But He had nothing to be ashamed of—He rested in the Father’s pleasure and vindication, not man’s opinion (v.69).

The same must be true for us: When mocked or shamed for righteousness, we reject misplaced shame and rejoice (Matthew 5:11–12; 1 Peter 4:16). We rest in God’s approval, not man’s.

Moreover, this “Let Him” posture helps us handle anger rightly. How many of you know, the enemy gains a foothold through unchecked anger (Ephesians 4:26–27).

Daniel Henderson, who served as a young associate under Pastor John MacArthur, shares this memorable story in his book *The Prayer God Loves to Answer*. One day, MacArthur’s wife Patricia casually mentioned to a group of young pastors—including Henderson—that in all their years of marriage, she’d never seen John lose his temper. That motivated Henderson to personally ask MacArthur about it. He replied: “Well, it is my theology. You see, anger is a control mechanism and I have such a high view of the sovereignty of God

that, apart from some rare occasions of true righteous indignation, there's really not a lot that I have to get angry about."

What John MacArthur was really saying is this: If we truly believe God is sovereign—if we believe that where man rules, He overrules—then we don't have to grab for control through anger or revenge. We don't have to get even, because the Judge of all the earth will do right (Genesis 18:25). We don't have to seethe with anger when things don't go our way, because God always has a better way—even when we can't see it yet.

This isn't "Let them" in the defiant modern sense—"Let them do what they want; I'll live my truth." No. This is "Let Him" in the biblical sense: Let the Sovereign King handle what only He can handle perfectly.

When we do, anger loses its grip, bitterness finds no foothold, and we walk free—entrusting vengeance and everything else to the One who never loses control.

In betrayal or injustice, let Him be your defender. We are victorious when we entrust vengeance to God's hand, living out our exalted position in Christ. Appropriate shame draws us to God for forgiveness and restoration. Misplaced shame—because of faith—turns into rejoicing in the victory and vindication of Jesus.

3. We Can Trust That God Works All Things for Good

But the story doesn't end with mockery or a sham trial. Let's look finally at how God takes even this moment of apparent defeat and turns it toward ultimate victory and our lasting good. This sham trial in verses 66–71—where the religious leaders condemn the innocent Son of God—leads straight to the cross: evil at its absolute worst. Yet God sovereignly overrules it for our salvation. As Peter declares on the day of Pentecost, "*this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death*" (Acts 2:23–24).

Notice Jesus' climactic declaration in verse 69: "*But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.*"

Even in the moment of apparent defeat, Jesus announces His coming exaltation. The cross is not the end; it is the means to His enthronement and our redemption. This is the promise that undergirds Romans 8:28: *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”*

But let me clarify, the popular saying “everything happens for a reason” can fall short of this profound truth, especially in seasons of pain and suffering. First, the phrase can be insensitive in grief. It implies suffering is inherently good or will quickly resolve, dismissing real pain. Romans 8:28 doesn’t deny suffering; it promises God’s redemptive work through it.

Second, it can foster passivity, excusing inaction as if we can just always wait for things to “work out.” While God’s providence is sovereign, it calls us to active faith. Like Esther, who risked death to save her people, we cooperate with God’s plan. When Mordecai said, *“Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”* (Esther 4:14), Esther called for fasting and prayer, then declared, *“I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish”* (Esther 4:16). She acted in faith. God’s providence—(His gracious oversight)—often works through ordinary events and human obedience, not just miracles. Don’t just throw up your hands—trust and act in faith.

Third, the phrase often focuses on short-term fixes (comfort now), missing the eternal purpose. The “good” in Romans 8:28 is conformity to Christ (v. 29). If we only seek visible miracles, we miss God’s quiet work in natural events. Trust He works all for good by cooperating through prayer, obedience, and bold faith. In trials, He refines and redeems.

Ultimately, we must live by His eyes, not ours. As Paul says, “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Like Job, we trust, “He knows the way that I take” (Job 23:10). Like Esther, we act in faith even when we can’t see the outcome. We cultivate this trust by listening to God through His Word, letting it shape our prayers, and relying on the Spirit to obey what He says.

Adrian Rogers put it this way: “You cannot trust somebody you do not know. And you cannot know someone you do not spend time with.” We have divine instruments infinitely more reliable than Doolittle’s—namely, Scripture, prayer, the Spirit, and obedience. They help us not only trust His eyes when we can’t see, but to see through His eyes—and when we do, the fog begins to lift.

Conclusion

When it feels like you’re flying blind—when evil mocks, injustice blinds, and hope seems lost—the Sovereign King reigns in silence.

We may not always understand His hand. The fog is thick. The pain is real. The waiting feels endless. The questions linger: Why this suffering? Why the silence? Why the delay?

But we can trust His heart. The heart that stayed silent under the blindfold. The heart that refused to call down angels. The heart that laid down His life for you, so you would never have to face ultimate abandonment alone. That heart is good. That heart is sovereign. That heart is for you—right now, in this moment, in this fog.

Like Doolittle, who relied on newly invented and untested instruments to fly safely through the fog when his natural sight failed him, don’t we have far greater reason to trust the Lord to navigate, direct, and bring us safely through the uncertainty, the darkness, and the seasons of fog in our lives?

And like Doolittle, who trusted his preparation, his team, and his mission to turn impossible odds into a turning point, we can trust the equipping of the Holy Spirit, the fellowship of the body of Christ, and the unchanging mission of our King—even when the odds and opposition seem insurmountable. Jesus has already flown the ultimate blind mission for us, trusting the Father’s plan to the end, and He invites us to trust Him in ours.

And because you are united with Him—crucified, raised, ascended, and seated at the right hand of God—you stand in resurrection power. The enemy is defeated, sin’s dominion is broken, and you are free to

live victoriously as you stay submitted to Him and His people by His strength.

So when the instruments of human sight fail, when the darkness presses in, lift your eyes to the One who sees. Lean into the One who overrules. Rest in the One whose good purposes are being worked out, even now, even in the hidden places, for those who love Him.

Beloved, He reigns, He redeems, and He is worthy of our trust.