

Bible Study Reflections for Sunday, May 24th, 2020

John 17:1-11 ... (From Raymond E. Brown's translation)

Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you – inasmuch as you granted him power over all men that he might grant eternal life to all that you have given him. ... I revealed your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ...

I am no longer in the world; but while I am coming to you, they are still in the world. O Father most holy, keep them safe with your name which you have given to me [that they may be one, just as we].

From Brown's Comments: "power" might also be translated as "authority" ... *My question: Which word would we choose?*

"This prayer is said aloud before the disciples precisely so that they may share in the union between Son and Father. This is therefore a prayer of revelation as much as a prayer of intercession."

Question: Some of us might recognize that last phrase, translated from the Latin, "Ut Omnes Unum Sint", which graces the United Church of Canada's official crest! How would WE today understand or interpret this "prayer" which was at the heart of the founding of the United Church of Canada in the early 1920's with Union taking place in 1925 (95 years ago)?

Question: What do we think John intend for the readers in his era, and for us today, to understand when he has Jesus praying, "glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you"? Note especially that the use of the word "glorify" is typical of John, but rarely found in the other Gospels!

1 Peter 5:6-11 (From John H. Elliott's Translation)

Finally, all of you, clothe yourselves with humility in your relations with one another, because God opposes the arrogant but gives grace to the humble. ... The God of all grace, however ... will himself complete, reinforce, strengthen, establish you. His is the power forever, amen.

A Short Trip Down Memory Lane: The character of “Uriah Heep” in Dickens’ “David Copperfield” remains for me the epitome of how NOT to be humble! I still can replay in my mind the televised version from the late 1960’s, with the actor playing Heep wringing his hands, using his oiliest voice to say, “But I am just a ‘umble man!” It remains in my mind the most cringe-worthy performance I have seen.

Question: So, what does the word “humility” mean to us? Is there a difference between “humble” and “humility” and which would we prefer?

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 (From Mitchell Dahood’s Translation)

When God arises, his foes scatter, and his enemies flee before him. ... At the sight of God the wicked disappear, but the just will rejoice. O Sovereigns of the earth, sing; O gods, sing praises to the Lord! Hark, he sends forth his voice, the mighty voice! Give praise to God, the Most High of Israel, whose majesty and might are too great for heaven!

Dahood’s opening comment: “Widely admitted as textually and exegetically the most difficult and obscure of all the psalms ...”!

Regardless of the challenges in interpreting this psalm, are there ways in which its triumphal tone resonates with some folk in our world? How do we respond to what seems to some of us to be a distinctive triumphalism within evangelical Christianity?

Acts 1:6-14 (from Johannes Munck’s Translation)

“You will be empowered when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will then bear witness to me in Jerusalem, and throughout the whole of Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

A Question to Ponder, maybe ...

1. How do WE bear witness? Let us count the ways