

The Park Church
Adult Study Group
“Praying the Lord’s Prayer”
Rev. Wayne E. Gustafson, D.Min.

Session 7 – “Remembrance: The Birth of New Creation and Liberty”
April 6, 2008

Questions and Comments from last class

Wela tahlan l’nesyuna, Ela patzan min bisha
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

“Having involved ourselves in the work of justice (bread) and compassion (forgiveness) in the preceding lines, we come again to see our limitations as well as all the pain and suffering that we cause ourselves and the rest of creation. The prayer here reminds us not to forget our origins in creation and the divine Breath, not to “burn out” over all that needs to be done.”

It is particularly important when we are considering temptation and evil to remember that Aramaic speaking people had a more mystical cosmology and therefore did not think of religious experience in a moralistic way. Religious experience had to do with connection to the divine and the process of growing into human fullness.

Wehla tahlan – (Lead us not)

- Don’t let us enter...
- Don’t let us be seduced by the appearance of...
- Don’t let us heap up what’s false or illusory in...

l’nesyuna – (temptation)

- “something that leads to inner vacillation or agitation, diverting us from the purpose of our lives.”
- Like a flag that blows here and there in the wind
- like a mind rendered uncertain by the seductions of materialism (including spiritual materialism).
- The picture of forgetfulness: a losing of oneself in appearances, a failure to look deeper when the situation calls for it.
- Means getting lost and confused in the superficial clutter of our lives and losing track of our primary purpose as co-creators with God.

patzan – (Deliver)

- loosen the hold of
- give liberty from
- break the seal that binds us to...

We need to hold the sense of what we are delivered for at least as much as what we are delivered from.

bisha – (Evil)

- means “evil” or “error”, but in the Aramaic sense of “unripeness” or inappropriate action.
- the root points toward a sense of what delays or diverts us from advancing
- as well as a sense of inner shame for not producing good fruit – the right action at the right time.
- that which has “fallen out of rhythm with Sacred Unity”.

Superficiality keeps us from action. “The prayer reminds us that sometimes our ideals – including those of holiness, peace, and unity – carry us into the future or the past and make it difficult to be in the present where help is needed now.

In this line, we ask God to keep us connected with what matters most, to loosen the grip that our fear and our desire for superficial certainty can have on us so that we can be responsive to the needs of the moment. It reminds us that unripeness can be either “not yet ripe” or “past its ripeness and becoming rotten.”

It is OK to trust the process of our maturing into fullness where we bear good fruit. It is also OK to let go of what may have been timely and useful in past situations, but no longer works in the present.

Mystical Prayer

1. Living in the present – While walking, notice each footfall: Now, now, now...
Embrace whatever thoughts and feelings come up. Feel yourself fully and completely accepted (in each “now”) in the presence of God.
2. As you walk, be aware that you continue to be in the process of ripening. What is not yet ripe perhaps does not yet need to be ripe. There are times in the future when that ripeness will be necessary. “That part of ourselves that feels as though it will be the last to wake up to the presence of the divine also serves a purpose in God’s universe. Forgetfulness and unripeness may be the keys to our own perfection and draw us together as a planet, as we realize how fragile life can be...A walking meditation (from the Buddhist tradition) asks us to take time to walk as though we were stepping on the heads of all beings – not gingerly or holding ourselves away from the earth but with compassion and openheartedness.”

Reading List

Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus, Translation and Commentary by Neil Douglas-Klotz, Harper San Francisco, 1990.

The Hidden Gospel: Decoding the Spiritual Message of the Aramaic Jesus, Neil Douglas-Klotz, Quest Books, Wheaton, IL, 1999.

7. Remembrance: The Birth Of New Creation And Liberty

Don't let surface things delude us,
But free us from what holds us back
(from our true purpose).

Don't let us enter forgetfulness,
the temptation of false
appearances.

(To the fraud of inner vacillation –
like a flag tossed in the wind –
alert us.)

But break the hold of unripeness,
the inner stagnation that
prevents good fruit.

(From the evil of injustice –
the green fruit and the rotten –
grant us liberty.)

Deceived neither by the outer
nor the inner – free us to
walk your path with joy.

Keep us from hoarding false wealth,
and from the inner shame of
help not given in time.

Don't let surface things delude us,
but free us from what holds us back.