

These notes are prepared earlier than before. The purpose is to enable an earlier view.

These readings for the Twenty-six Sunday in Ordinary Time are about self-importance. Simply by preparing this, why are we not better than other people are? We might, after all, be doing something else. The point is that surrender to divine grace must be total and any little bit left out is a disaster. Without becoming overly exercised, we may not assume overlooking anything is all right.

## **Ezekiel 18:25-28**

Verse 25     Thus says the Lord: “You say, “**The Lord’s way is not fair!**”

It is one thing to pray for our daily bread; it is something else to say, “**The Lord’s way is not fair!**” because we have no bread.

The Latin for *fair* is *aequa*.<sup>1</sup>

Later, in Philippians 2:6, *aequalem* is used for “**who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.**”

Verse 26     When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity, and **dies**, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must **die**.

The Latin simply uses the future tense, *morietur*, leaving the sense of **death** as a consequence of iniquity, rather than that as a punishment. This is what happens if we make a choice of **iniquity**, rather than if we make a choice of **iniquity**, then God must catch us.

## **Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9**

This is an alphabetical acrostic psalm, more than a simple burst of emotion, but a reasoned explanation of God in history.<sup>2</sup>

Verse 5             guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.

---

<sup>1</sup> Nova Vulgata: Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio: Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II ratione habita iussu Pauli PP, VI Recognita Auctoritate Joannis Pauli PP, II Promulgata Editio Typica Altera (00120 Citta Del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979, 1986, 1998) ISBN 88-2209-2163-4.

<sup>2</sup> Hanan Eshel and John Strugnell, “Alphabetical Acrostics in Pre-Tannaitic Hebrew,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 2000) 441.

The King James Version<sup>3</sup> and the *Nova Vulgata* (NV) add **on thee do I wait all the day.**

Verse 9            He guides the **humble** to justice, and teaches the **humble** his way.

For **humble** the NV has *mansuetos* (humble) and *mites* (poor). The *New Jerusalem Bible*<sup>4</sup> explains, in a footnote: “‘poor’ Syr.; Hebr. repeats ‘humble’.” This means that the Syriac version has one thing, the ancient Hebrew another.

## Philippians 2:1-11

Verse 6            **who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.**

One scholar develops the self-righteousness of Saint Paul:

... an explanation of what is wrong with works that is very similar to the explanation given by the [so-called] Reformers [of the Protestant Revolt] and their heirs comes again into play. Pauline theology is seen once again as a struggle between divine grace and human self-sufficiency, without being reduced to the tension between social inclusivism and exclusivism.

... Both the heirs of the Reformers and the post-new-perspective interpreters correctly see that the heart of Paul's theological struggle is between divine grace and human self-sufficiency, whatever the particular circumstances evoking his letters may be.

...

No matter what concrete, contingent image is used by the Apostle, the import is that the Christian life is enabled by God, or Christ, or the Spirit. Christian behavior is fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). It is a living out of the salvation of the God who is active within, enabling us to will his good pleasure (Phil 2:12-13) and to work for it. It is a manifestation of the faithfulness of the Son of

---

<sup>3</sup> General Editor, The Reverend Cain Hope Felder, Ph.D., *The Original African Heritage Study Bible: King James Version* (Nashville: The James C. Winston Publishing Company, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Henry Wansbrough, General Editor, *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1985).

God who lives in and through believers (Gal 2:20). In Paul's mind, Christian obedience is due to divine enablement. Because of his pessimistic anthropology, nothing else would suffice. If there is any human faithfulness in the relation to God, Paul believes that it is due to divine empowerment. It is all of grace! The scriptural root for this basic assumption is the new covenant of Jeremiah 31. Whatever the contingent image may be, this is Paul's coherent core. In this way, he, if not his heirs, escaped the pitfalls of the legalism and synergism against which he devoted his ministry.<sup>5</sup>

## **John 10:27**

[no comment here]

## **Matthew 21:28-32**

This parable of the two sons is very interesting. The bottom line is that neither son is much good, as one scholar explains.

Findlay [another scholar] relates the story of a twentieth-century missionary who told the parable of the two sons to a group of Palestinians. He was greatly surprised when they unanimously preferred the "polite" son's answer: "A day's work in the vineyard is a little thing, but to say 'No' to your father's beard is a grievous sin." This accords well with Scripture, which puts verbal abuse of a parent on the same footing as physical abuse (Exod 21:15, 17) ... the Matthean Jesus plans from the outset to extend the alternatives to include the surprise answer, but he does so only after his adversaries have made their choice of what they hear in the parable—one son giving obedience, the other withholding it, (initially, or subsequently)... then how much more disobedient must the son be who is both initially and subsequently disobedient? ...<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Charles H. Talbert, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 14, 21-22.

<sup>6</sup> Wendell E. Langley, S.J., "The Parable of the Two Sons (**Matthew 21:28-32**) against its Semitic and Rabbinic Backdrop," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 2 (April 2001) 232, 237-238, and 240.

Personal Notes  
020929 Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 136A  
© 2017  
Raymond J. Jirran

Verse 32     “Yet even when you saw that, **you did not later change your minds and believe him.**”

The grammarian observes, “... the final or consecutive sense ... (consecutive) “**nor did you repent afterwards so as to believe him.**”<sup>7</sup>

When I see my lack of totality, e.g., in racism, I need repentance, **so as to believe him.**

---

The Magnificat ® quotes Saint Teresa of Avila.<sup>8</sup> “... for often it is the Lord’s will that we should be persecuted and afflicted by evil thoughts, which we cannot cast out ...” While those thoughts are a true sign that we have not given ourselves completely to God, those thoughts may also be a sign that at least we are trying. “Pray, pay, and obey” is not enough. That is too easy. If that is all Jesus ever did, there might never have been a cross.

---

<sup>7</sup> Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 132.

<sup>8</sup> Saint Teresa of Avila, *From Interior Castle*, E. Allison Peers, Ed., Tr. © 1989. Image Books, A Division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1540 Broadway, NY 10036, *Magnificat* ® Vol. 4, No. 7 (September 2002) 392.