

Transcript Segment, Part 3

“Praying the ‘Our Father’ with Jesus”

Presented by Michael Simone, S.J.

“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” “Thy kingdom come” is the line that’s in both Matthew and Luke. “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” is only in Matthew. That’s a very unfortunate translation, but I think it gets it. He wants to count the hairs on their heads. As a shepherd examining his flock while he, himself, is among his scattered sheep, so “I will examine my sheep. I will deliver them from every place where they were scattered on the day of dark clouds. I will lead them out from the peoples, gather them from the lands.”

This is God restoring his nation, restoring his flock. If that doesn’t describe Jesus’s, well, if that doesn’t describe Matthew’s understanding of Jesus’s image and Luke’s understanding of Jesus’s ministry, I don’t know what does. “There they will lay down in good grazing land, in rich pastures. They will be pastured on the mountain of Israel. I, myself, will pasture my sheep. I will give them rest. The lost I will search out. The strays I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, and the sick I will heal. The sleek and the strong I will destroy,” this is the Old Testament, after all, “the sleek and the strong I will destroy, I will shepherd them with judgment.”

Now, Ezekiel seems to be pretty convinced that if you’re sleek and strong during this period of utter national catastrophe, you’re up to something bad. This is not Ezekiel writing during a period of peace and prosperity. This is Ezekiel writing during a period when everything was falling apart. You’ve taken what isn’t yours, or you’ve compromised with the conquerors, you’ve become a traitor in some way. And Jesus has some of this bias, too, because his social circumstances were similar to Ezekiel’s. “Go and sow what you have.” “Come and follow me.” “It is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” I think he’s working with some of Ezekiel’s same biases here. The sheep, the real sheep, the sheep that he needs to gather back together, are the scattered, lost, poor, suffering, the ones who need to be bound up and searched out and healed.

So now we get to this understanding of kingdom. “I will appoint one shepherd over them to pasture them, my servant David.” So when I said before that it might actually be noteworthy that Yahweh is the father of the Son of David, I look to this, and I think, well, I wonder if Jesus wasn’t inspired by this line. I wonder if Jesus didn’t in some way appropriate this as a way of thinking of his own ministry. I don’t know. Again, only working with primary sources so far. But to me it’s a noteworthy connection.

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have understood the manna, I think, as just unmerited pure divine grace, not dependent on something like the land, which by his time the Israelites would have known that they could lose because they had lost it by that point, and then regained it, but were about to lose it again.

There's something in Jesus's mind here. I think he wants to go back to that desert experience of simply the dependency on pure grace as a way of understanding the material goods that he receives in his ministry. I think that's there. It's, again, just a hunch, but I think it's there. So that's where my mind is with that particular verse.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us." I think this is a lot about . . . I like that Matthew talks about debt here. We say trespasses, but the original word could also mean debt. Luke, by the way, changes the word trespasses, or debt, to sins. "Forgive us our sins as we, ourselves, forgive everyone indebted to us."

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