

## eLectionary Readings Discussion for Sunday, August 1, 2010

A Ministry of Christ the Redeemer Church, San Marcos, Texas

### **Honor, honor, honorable, honorably**

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This week's Lectionary readings:

Hosea 11:1-11

Psalm 107:1-9, 43

Colossians 3:1-11

Luke 12:13-21

My preacher and I have been asked to speak to a 912 Group Rally in August. The theme of the rally is "Restoring Honor to Our Government". What would you say about the subject? I remember that General Douglas McArthur was adamant about "Duty, Honor, Country" in his address to West Point Cadets. Is "honor" based on scripture or is scripture based on "honor"? Is "honor" a Biblical concept or a secular concept? I am doing a study about honor as it relates to our country, our faith and our government. (Yes, our GOVERNMENT is different from our COUNTRY.) Is "honor" passé? Is "honor" mawkish or maudlin? Is "honor" a "feeling" like the chill bumps that run up my spine when the flag passes or we sing The Star Spangled Banner? The "Pledge to the Texas Flag" starts out "HONOR the Texas Flag..." How do we go about the task of "restoring honor"? Is "restoring honor" akin to "restoring virginity"? Once the egg is cracked, can it be mended? I will have more to say as I progress in my study of "honor". Meanwhile, back at the ranch...

### **Hosea 11:1-11**

*When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and out of Egypt I called my son.*

*The more I called them,  
the more they went from me;*

*they kept sacrificing to the Baals,  
and offering incense to idols.*

*Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,  
I took them up in my arms;  
but they did not know that I healed them.*

*I led them with cords of human kindness,  
with bands of love.*

*I was to them like those  
who lift infants to their cheeks.  
I bent down to them and fed them.*

*They shall return to the land of Egypt,*

*and Assyria shall be their king,  
because they have refused to return to me.  
The sword rages in their cities,  
it consumes their oracle-priests,  
and devours because of their schemes.  
My people are bent on turning away from me.  
To the Most High they call,  
but he does not raise them up at all.  
How can I give you up, Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, O Israel?  
How can I make you like Admah?  
How can I treat you like Zeboiim?  
My heart recoils within me;  
my compassion grows warm and tender.  
I will not execute my fierce anger;  
I will not again destroy Ephraim;  
for I am God and no mortal,  
the Holy One in your midst,  
and I will not come in wrath.  
They shall go after the LORD,  
who roars like a lion;  
when he roars,  
his children shall come trembling from the west.  
They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt,  
and like doves from the land of Assyria;  
and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.*

The cited passages constitute a complete “chapter” of Hosea. We discussed the tragic nature of Hosea’s life last week. This chapter is about God’s love for the People of Israel and is a reflection of Christ’s statement of compassion for the City of Jerusalem: “O, Jerusalem, you who killed the prophets...how often would I have gathered you under my wing like a mother hen gathers her chicks...but, you WOULD not.” It reminds the Israelites of the past goodness that God showed to them from the days of Egyptian captivity until their present state of idolatry and “whoredom”. God CHOSE the Israelites and then, like Hosea’s unfaithful wife, they acted the “whore” and honored “other gods” in flagrant disobedience of the First Commandment. This week’s passage is about an unfaithful “son” who has not honored the Father. The underlined verse 3 is a tender portrayal of a loving father teaching his son to walk, lifting him to his cheek and kissing his “boo-boos”. God wants to have a relationship with each of us but WE won’t allow it because we refuse to HONOR the Father. God, the loving Father, chastened his children (the Israelites) in order to “save” them. “Spare the rod and spoil the child”? We, like the people described in the Book of Hosea, have chosen to NOT HONOR God as Father and we pay the price. Until

we accept the sovereignty of the Creator and the LOVE of God as unconditional, we will continue in OUR “whoredom” and have not learned the lessons of history. It is our PRIVILEGE to HONOR our FATHER.

### **Psalm 107:1-9, 43 Page 746, BCP**

#### *Confitemini Domino*

1

***Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, \*  
and his mercy endures for ever.***

2

***Let all those whom the LORD has redeemed proclaim \*  
that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.***

3

***He gathered them out of the lands; \*  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.***

4

***Some wandered in desert wastes; \*  
they found no way to a city where they might dwell.***

5

***They were hungry and thirsty; \*  
their spirits languished within them.***

6

***Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, \*  
and he delivered them from their distress.***

7

***He put their feet on a straight path \*  
to go to a city where they might dwell.***

8

***Let them give THANKS to the LORD for his mercy \*  
and the wonders he does for his children.***

9

***For he satisfies the thirsty \*  
and fills the hungry with good things.***

43

***Whoever is wise will ponder these things, \*  
and consider well the mercies of the LORD.***

Is gratitude one facet of “honor”? Do we “honor” someone because we are “grateful” for something they have bestowed upon us? Do we “honor” our country because of the “freedoms” they have bestowed upon us? Do we “honor” the Founding Fathers because we appreciate the form of government they established? IF God bestows the “rights” of life, liberty and the pursuit of

happiness, why do we “honor” our government if they cannot “give” us anything? Is “honor” equal to “respect”? Is **“Whoever is WISE will ponder these things, and consider WELL the MERCIES of the Lord”** applicable in this discussion? Is “honoring” our country or government idolatry? Should I HONOR the President even when I disagree with his policies? Yes, it is especially important that we HONOR people who have been chosen to lead us EVEN IF we DISAGREE with them personally. We must HONOR our kids and fellow Americans who are willing to SERVE US with their very lives even though we may DISAGREE wholeheartedly with the government’s foreign policy. Those who are willing to SERVE us are worthy of HONOR because they REPRESENT US and we ask to be HONORED as individual citizens with opinions and ideas. If we think we are worthy of HONOR and we cannot HONOR those who are elected, GET UP AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. If you think you can do a better job, run for office. If you think others could do a better job, support them and get THEM elected. America is still the only country where this is possible and therefore, I HONOR my country and have defended IT with my Oath of Allegiance. WE must HONOR a system of government where the “least advantaged child” from humble beginnings can become our leader by peaceful means. Are there different “levels” of honor? What do we “honor” or consider “honorable”? Do we “inherit” our honor for our country? “HONOR your father and your mother” is one of the prime commandments of the Torah. If we are unable to define “honor” how can we keep this commandment? Therefore, an understanding of the concept and basis of “honor” is central to our understanding of our relationship with God and our parents? WE are commanded to HONOR our parents even though they may have mistreated us and not been supportive of us. Why? Because by honoring our parents, we honor God’s commands and please GOD.

### **Colossians 3:1-11**

***So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.***

***Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things-- anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but***

### ***Christ is all and in all!***

I give you an insight that came to me this week: NONE of the books of the Hebrew Bible are written in FIRST PERSON tense. (Yes, the Book of Enoch, in the Apocrypha, is written in the first person.) Since all of Paul's epistles are personal letters, they are written in the first person tense. This is one easy way to discern if the writer is the actor or the observer to the tale being presented. Paul, writing fatherly advice to his "children in the Lord" carefully warns the Church at Colossae of the dangers of "earthly things" versus "heavenly things". He reminds them that they are NEW CREATURES, clothed with Christ who died for them. Because of our great debt to Christ, we should HONOR Christ with our lives and abstain from "worldly things". Because we are "bought with a price", those who HONOR Christ are no longer divided by worldly appearances, nationalities, former "religions", geography, cultures, etc. New creatures retain NOTHING of their old existence. To do so would NOT bring HONOR to Christ or the Father and such fleshly things should be avoided IF we are to remain FAITHFUL to our Lord.

### **Luke 12:13-21**

***Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, TELL my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."***

The word "honor" can be used as a noun (honor) a verb (to honor) an adjective (honorable) or an adverb (honorably). Is "greed" the antithesis of "honor"? Greed is idolatry because we make wealth, power or fame our "God". "Honor" requires that we acknowledge the value and worth of someone or something OUTSIDE ourselves. Often, we must give up wealth, power or fame to "honor" someone or something. Again, is "greed" the antithesis of "honor"? Greed is a characteristic of those who are always "looking out for number one". "Honor" is a characteristic of those who are willing to GIVE to others without first considering "number one". Should we give "honor" to our government, our officials or our country IF their first concern is themselves? "Love your country, fear your government?" How can we "honor" someone or something that seeks its own reward at OUR EXPENSE? To restore honor to our faith and towards our government, perhaps we need to elect honorable people? Honorable people are true public servants who give up privacy, selfish behavior and willingly dedicate

themselves to honest behavior as the Rotary Clubs motto says "Service ABOVE self." All I HAVE, in reality, is what I have GIVEN AWAY. Many parables and Biblical tales revolve around the subject of "greed" and "selfishness". There are more scriptures about money, wealth and greed than there are about grace, love or faith. Why is this? Perhaps it is because God KNOWS that we, as sinful creatures, will have many opportunities for having to make decisions about money, wealth and greed. "The LOVE OF MONEY is the root of all KINDS OF EVIL." Money is not the problem. Our ATTITUDE about money is our problem. With wealth comes great responsibility and great opportunity. Who can realistically "honor" a person who is "greedy"? What ever happened to "public service"? Without "greed", term limits would be unnecessary. Without "greed", no one could afford to commit to "unselfish public service". Note that the "someone in the crowd" wanted his BROTHER to give him "HIS SHARE" of an inheritance. It was not money that he had EARNED. It was NOT HIS MONEY. Did the parents leave a will? Did they not delineate who got what in their will? IF he was the younger of the two brothers, he was OWED nothing under the doctrine of Prime progenitor. By demanding HIS SHARE, was he dishonoring his parents' will? He felt that, somehow, he was OWED something just because of his birth. Does this sound like some in our country today? Greed means that we "want it ALL" without any concern for others. We HONOR our God when we HONOR each other by not being greedy with our time, money or talents. Yes, I believe that the concept of HONOR is discussed widely in scripture because it is and has always been a "problem" for humanity. Giving HONOR to anyone or anything is a matter of ATTITUDE. Are WE worthy of HONOR for our "servant's heart"? I find that those who GIVE HONOR are often worthy of receiving HONOR but, I could be wrong. I have been wrong before.