

This past week we may be relieved that the Federal Election voting is now past history. We can relax and hope that the country has made the right decision as to who will govern us for the next three years.

We have listened to candidates making a case for why we should vote for them. We have battled with endless heated debates; bouts of anger; some untruths; opponents trying to discredit opposing candidates and letterboxes swamped with pamphlets as to who the running candidate really is, and what they will do for us if elected.

What a contrast our reading gives us about our future in this torn apart and fractured world we inhabit. This is all about Jesus' credentials, his cosmic mission, and a prescription for perfect unity.

This is a prayer of petition as Jesus prays to His Father, not only for his disciples, but for all who believe in Him now, and in the future. His prayer encompasses all those who follow Christ, regardless of race, culture, economic situation, denomination, education etc. Let us hear Jesus' words and try to understand them.

"I in them and you in me, that they (including us) may become 'Perfectly one,' United in intimate love, with an all embracing purpose, " So that the world may know that you sent me and loved them, even as you loved me."

There are some baffling concepts within this prayer. It took me a long time to try to work it out until I realized that to the rational mind, it was physically impossible.

This seems to belong to the mystery section of the Bible.

St Paul was into mysteries. He mentions the word 21 times in his writings in the New Testament. However, he doesn't leave us wondering but also reveals the answers and turns the mystery into a revelation, or a secret to be known to all who would hear.

E.g. Cor.2:1-11: "I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God in lofty words of wisdom....but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power".

Eph.5.29:32 "For this reason a man will leave his parents and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the Church."

The Prayer:-

" They may be one – just as you Father (note the Familial connection) are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us.....that they may be one, even as we are one. "

This can only be comprehended with the help of the Holy Spirit, revealing the true meaning to our hearts.by revelation, the key to unlocking many biblical concepts.

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However, I am going to try to demonstrate this relationship in an easier way. Take a glass, fill it with hot water, and then immerse a tea bag into the water. Both the water and tea bag are in the glass, the tea bag is in the water. The water is in the tea bag. All are contained in the glass. The three components make for one unit and a deliciously, refreshing, beverage.

One of my daughters at age seven, understood this concept. One afternoon we were relaxing on the family bed with our Dalmation /Labrador dog between us when she made the statement:- "I love Tessa so much that I want to crawl inside her." How much more does our Heavenly father love us and want to inhabit our being. In John 14.v.23 Jesus states "Those who love me will keep my word and my Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them.

Jesus also prays that those who are with him may see his glory. Often this is a vague "out of this world" word. We see the glory of a spectacular sunrise or sunset, but what is His glory. It is the revelation of God's being, nature and presence to mankind, sometimes accompanied with physical phenomena. It is the character or presence of God as in the person and work of Jesus, His Son. What he said and what he did. He only did the work of the Father. "If anyone has seen me he has seen the Father" He reflects the Glory of God.

At the conclusion of this prayer, just before the visit to the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus mentions the word "know and known" five times. This must be important for us to take notice! How is it possible to love someone deeply unless we really KNOW them?

This is a process and takes time. Time to be with the "other". Remember your first love. How you wanted to spend every moment with them. How exhilarating it was. Then came the foibles and habits that were either endearing or annoying. It was the love for each other that sustained the relationship which became a commitment to each other. We understood each other and even sometimes began to think and act as one.

Prayer and the reading of God's word, worshipping and having fellowship together rewards us with a relationship that cannot be broken, because we are bound together with the love of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

I had a neighbor that was very hard to get to know. I tried everything. The children were not allowed to play with hers and there were other restraints. No matter how I tried, nothing could break the wall of resistance. Prayer was my only avenue to try to at least be neighbourly. Other friends would make comments on our both being Christians, but so different. A few days after praying for her, these words of comfort were whispered to my heart, "As my Spirit dwells within you, so also does it dwell within "D". You are to love her, and in loving her you are loving me" From then on it was easy. No longer did I feel hurt and rejected. And I didn't need to try, just let His love be for her.

In Hosea there is an injunction to Israel through the Prophet, where God speaks to them..”For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Rituals and sacrifice do not make the mark or bring knowledge and love. Remember the song, “to know , know, know, him is to love, love, love Him and I do” To know God and Jesus is to love them and “know” their unfathomable love for us. Romans 8.37-39 “Nothing can separate us from the love of God.” A covenant of unbroken love.

In Matt.7.21-23 there is a passage relating to knowing who is genuinely a disciple or a false prophet. There were those who supposedly did mighty works in Jesus’ name, but the reply was “I will declare to them, “I never knew you, depart from me, you evildoers.”

Hidden in this “prayer- treasure” are the times that Jesus uses the name of God as applied to himself. The great I AM that was revealed at the burning bush when Moses encountered God YHWH. This is further evidence of the unity of Jesus with God the Father.

So how can we keep the unity of the body of Christ? “To be above with the saints we love, well that will be glory. To be below with the saints we know, well that’s another story!”

A person had a picture of a logging camp near a river where the felled logs were able to travel to the factory. However the logs were quite numerous and eventually became jammed at a bend in the river.

The person was asked by God, “what would you do to fix the problem?” They replied “I would use some dynamite to increase the flow of the river. “No replied God, that would damage the logs”. “ Well God, what would you do?” God replied. “I would just raise the level of the water”

We are about to celebrate the festival of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Author and giver of life (part of the creed we affirm every time we worship together)

Will there come a time of the unity that only the Spirit of God can give? Where the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, binding us together in love? Can we look for a coming time when we can truly worship in Spirit and truth? Not becoming clones, still individuals, but knit together in true love and unity just as Jesus prayed for us in his prayer. This is how the world will know God’s love and presence is amongst us, regardless of the labels we carry, as we let the Spirit of God work in and through us for his purpose and glory to bring healing and hope to a suffering, lost world.

“What the world needs now is love, sweet love, It’s the only thing that there just too little of.....” (popular song)

What would happen if we could just “let go” of our own agendas and follow the way of life that Jesus has shown us, and become the true people of God.