

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

There's always a bit of tension when going through either a time of transition, or a time of transformation. We're not always comfortable going from one thing to the next or in becoming something that we're not. It doesn't really matter what it is, whether happiness, such as a wedding or the birth of a child or grandchild, or taking a new job, retiring, or a death. It doesn't really matter if we are growing or increasing in our discipleship, really a good thing, but also one that means change that we're not really controlling. There's still some tension involved, might be a good thing, like growth in a muscle from placing it under tension, or it might not be so good like a sprain in a muscle that's been overloaded.

I was thinking of this in connection with the disciples, fishermen, tax collector, doesn't matter, they are being transformed and they, from the moment of their call, have been in a time of transition.

Close your eyes if you want to, and imagine that you were there as one of the twelve. Jesus has just told you that a time is quickly coming when you will be scattered, now he looks up to heaven and begins what we call the High Priestly Prayer. You were with him when he entered Jerusalem to the acclaim of the crowds, so this, this is unexpected, even though Jesus has told you that where he is going you cannot come, that he goes to prepare a place for you and he will come back to take you where he is, and of course you heard Thomas say "Lord, we don't know where you are going, how can we know the way?" You heard Jesus respond with words you will never forget "I am the way and the truth and life; no one comes to the Father except through me." You're a little uneasy, you sense something is happening, that you're in transition, you don't think of yourself as going through transformation, but that's what is happening.

This talk about glory, Jesus' glory and glorifying the Father, and then, then it seems like he's praying for you, on your behalf, not on behalf of the world, but for you, he says in his prayer that you were given him by the Father. You remain in the world, and Jesus asks that the Father protects you in the name given to Jesus the Christ, that you may be one even as Jesus and the Father are one.

And now time has moved on, you fled from the scene in Gethsemane, you grieved the crucified Christ, now you have seen the Lord, risen from the dead. You are realizing that transition and transformation aren't over yet. Jesus has told you that "... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." You watched as Jesus was lifted up, out of your sight, you heard that Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but he'll come back the same way you saw him go.

So you wonder, what's going on and what's happening and what's it mean for me? You and those with you devote yourselves to prayer. For you, prayer includes studying scripture, pondering what Jesus has told you, sharing your thoughts, fears,

desires with those around you. After all, you recall that Jesus has told you time and again that scripture points to him, he shared with those of you who he joined on the road to Emmaus. You wonder what does it mean that Law and Prophets have been fulfilled, that both depend upon love God and love your neighbor as yourself. What did Jesus mean when he said you would proclaim his name to the ends of the earth?

You realize you have already caught a glimpse of the glory of God in Jesus' resurrection, and now in his Ascension. But with all you are doing, you are really caught up in Jesus' prayer that evening before the crucifixion. You were at that last supper with him, you heard his words, but what did he mean, what does it mean that you were given to Jesus from the world? You go over again and again Jesus' words to you, all that he gave you, looking with new eyes at all that has happened, recall "protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

You are beginning to realize how hard it's going to be to remain one, to remain in unity, why it seemed you weren't even always unified when Jesus was with you. Oh you're pretty unified right now, but you know it's not going to last. You live in a sinful world, a fallen world, you know that, and that tension can fracture relationships, including that of your unity, but right now you are grateful for Jesus' prayer!

You know you're going somewhere, sometime, but what the new world will look like, when it will happen you don't know. But somehow you're okay with that, you realize you have a foundation that somehow you know is going to get stronger. Another Advocate, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you trust, you trust in Jesus, his words and promise. You don't understand it but you know his words will be passed down to generations unseen. The unity between Jesus and his Father, passed to and through you, as you bear the name given to Christ. Jesus prayed for you then, and he prays for you now. AMEN