

Ki Tisa When You Elevate There is a G-d in Israel

Torah: **Exod. 30:11-34:35**

- (1) 33:5 "If I went up for a single instant in the midst of you, I would consume you"
- (2) 33:11 "YHVH spoke to Moshe face to face, as a man speaks to his friend"
- (3) 33:20 "YHVH said, you cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live"
- (4) 34:28 "Moshe was there for forty days and forty nights. He ate no bread and drank no water and YHVH wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten words"

Haftarah: **I Kings 18:1-39**

- (5) 18:31: "He took 12 stones, after the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, of whom the L'RD said, your name shall be Israel:
- (6) 18:36: "at the time for the evening offering, Elijah the prophet came forward and said, YHVH, G-d of Abraham, of Isaac and of Israel, let it be known today that you are G-d in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all things according to your word."

Brit Chadashah: **I Cor. 8:4-13 (L)**

- (7) 8:9 "Take heed that your liberty does not become a stone of stumbling for the weak."

2 Cor. 3:1-18 (F)

- (8) 3:17 "Thus, the L-rd is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the L-rd is, there is liberty."

Jewish Hero: Joshua

He stayed in the tent after Moshe left. He was a faithful spy and a good fighter. He led the people at Jericho. He fought the longest day (sun appeared to stand still). He finished what Moshe could not. He led the army in three campaigns and killed 31 kings. He performed history's biggest circumcision. He was a prince of Ephraim. He was a servant leader.

Introduction

Jos. 24:15. We need to decide to serve the L-rd (get rid of false gods, and walk in integrity and faithfulness)

What does it mean to serve the L-rd and how do we do it? Three things, of course.

First of all it needs to be a personal thing – a private walk with the L-rd, where you learn to talk face to face with Him, as a man talks to His friend. Not weird encounters where you see lights and hear thunder, but where you learn to focus on Eternity, and on eternal truth, and let Him renew your perspective. Where it finally dawns on you that you have to see things His way, and do things His way, if you want to walk with Him (Amos 3:7).

It will come mainly from regular and constant Bible Study and prayer. It will come from bringing your life to His Word, and unpacking it according to the principles of that Word. It also means bringing His Word to you life, and establishing His priorities in your life.

For this two passages, and may they always be before our hearts:

Jer. 9:23, 24: "Thus says the L-RD, let not the rich man boast in his riches, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the wise man in his wisdom. Let the one who wants to boast, boast in this, that he has the understanding to know Me that I am the L'RD who exercises mercy, righteousness and justice on the earth. For it is in this that I take pleasure, says the L'RD."

Micah 6:8: "It has been made known to you, Oh man what is good and that which the L-rd requires of you: that you practice righteousness, that you love mercy and that you walk humbly with your G-d."

Second of all it needs to be a community thing

As for me and my house, we will serve the L-RD. In the Torah portion the sheloshim regalim (pilgrimage festivals). This is the real issue with our recent troubles. They have not committed murder, fornication, theft. They have broken ranks and refused to maintain unity. We have to work it out together. But what happens when you can't fix it? You fix what you can.

This is why I did not just walk away. This is why legal action is not a serious option. It was hard to wait five months. It took a toll on everyone on both sides. But the price we paid to do as much as we could was worth it. Why? We're still here and a clear conscience is of great value before G-d. Our walk with each other is as important as our walk with G-d and we need to take it seriously. As we chew on it, we will see how we could have done things differently, and better, but we survived with a community intact, and that is the most important thing. It's all a matter of perspective and community needs to be our perspective.

Have we broken ranks? No. If we cannot work it out, we do not give up on community. Rom. 12:18 and 2 Thess. 3:14, 15 tells us what to do. And we did it. "As much as depends on you, be at peace with all men." "If they will not listen, withdraw from them, but do not treat them like enemies." We withdrew and came together. I know of people who have given up on church and synagogue, because of all the fighting and the hypocrisy – funny they don't give up on bars and on their jobs, and friends.

It will take us time to heal and accomplish closure, but through it all, we must never give up on community. We must strive to build a better community, not a bitter community. Not a perfect community, but a loving one, a safe place, a sanctuary. Not a sour grapes club for losers who cannot make it on their own, but a fellowship of people who seek the L-rd together and who learn to love and trust one another, as this generation passes on the faith to the next one. This is the bottom line, and the top line here.

Third and last, it needs to be a practical thing

Theology and spirituality are two different, but related functions. Theology is all about the truth of G-d - who he is and what He does. Spirituality is all about who we are and what we do. Some people have great theology, but poor spirituality. Some people have great spirituality, but lousy theology. One without the other is deficient, but of the two, spirituality is more important, because without a personal commitment that becomes part of a lifestyle that shines and is salty, we are still born, constipated believers.

Conclusion

Our Torah portion spoke about the first and worse case of idolatry in Israel, after the glorious departure from Egypt. It also speaks of the great forgiveness of G-d. He forgives to remove the stain, and help us to get back on track. As for B'nai Chayim, we will serve the L-rd. We must forgive and get back on track. Life goes on.

It is going to take some time, and we are going to stumble and bumble. There is still a lot that needs to be set up, and Purim and Passover are coming fast. We will figure it out. I still have clay feet, and even though we are the best group of people on G-d's green earth, we will not always agree and we may even fight. But working on our community life together is part of the commitment we make to each other, and part of what we have come together for. Don't give up on each other. Don't give up on anyone.

We need a personal walk with the L-rd. We need a community walk with G-d. We need a practical walk with G-d. All three elements have to be in place, and in harmony, in order for us to serve the L-rd.

To Do List for B'nai Chayim:

1. Torah Reader's List
2. Siddur Leader's List
3. Shabbat School List
4. Youth Group
5. Leadership Council Meetings
6. Challah Providers List
7. Nosh providers List
8. Congregational Directory
9. Passover
10. Purim
11. Combined Service with Fellowship Baptist
12. Build a working relationship with Fellowship Baptist
13. Get my office set up
14. Government Registration
15. Mission Statement for Charter Membership
16. New Constitution and By Laws
17. Establish a pattern for our services
18. Get used to working together and build momentum

We will get all of these done as expressions of our commitment to community, as our commitment to working out the details, which is part of serving the L-rd. Sometimes we will feel overwhelmed, and tired and discouraged. Sometimes we will feel so excited and relieved. Sometimes we will feel angry and cheated.

At all times we will be there for each other and will remind each other that the L-RD is with us, one day at a time, one issue at a time, one success at a time, one failure at a time. Life goes on. We are moving on. How we move on together will determine what kind of community we build.

It is a worthwhile endeavour that needs our prayers and our support. In the letters that you received I said Israel needs our prayers, and I meant it. I was at Missionsfest yesterday for the sixth time, and it did feel weird not having a table, but I gave away all my blue boxes, and ran into some old friends. Tomorrow night, I will be blowing my shofar for the Sunday evening service.

Pray for us, and let's rest in Him together.