

Jan. 6, 2008, ECBC *Prepared and Useful for the Master* J. M. Terrett

As we prepare to observe the L-rd's Table I want to share two thoughts with you. First of all, I want to talk to you about how we, as Messianic Jews and Gentiles, celebrate communion in our congregation. Then I want to talk to you about the spiritual hygiene we need to practice if we want to be effective in serving the L-rd.

We follow the Hebrew lunar solar calendar, which means that the new moon is always the beginning of our months. However, we add a special feature so that the calendar stays aligned with the sun and the seasons. Seven times every nineteen years we add a leap month, so that our festivals always occur during the right season.

This year is a leap year and we add an extra month before the festival of Purim (the story of Esther) – so this year Easter and Purim occur at the same time and Passover begins on April 19.

Next to the Sabbath, the new moon is the most important festival and there are special blessings and prayers to welcome the light of the new moon. We celebrate communion at the new moon because in traditional Judaism, the new moon is the time of the month when even traditional Judaism focuses on the coming of the Messiah. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, so believers need to reflect the light of G-d and always be prepared to welcome the Messiah.

Just as the new moon renews its light, so Jewish people believe the redemption of Messiah will come and His light will fill our lives and the whole world. Since we believe that Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah, we celebrate communion at the new moon so that His light can shine through us and we can prepare for His return, when He shall bring our final redemption and fill the New Heavens and the New Earth with His glorious light.

So, once a month, we get to ask ourselves if our lives are reflecting His glorious light or if we are slipping into an eclipse mode and letting things into our life which will block His light. We live in a dark world and are commanded to be light, but it will always be reflected light and not light that we generate ourselves. As a matter of fact, all the light we see and have and even produce on our planet comes from the sun, even if people do not acknowledge it.

As believers we need to acknowledge that Jesus is the source of all light and make sure we reflect it back and let our lights shine before men, so that people can see our good works and glory our Heavenly Father and our Saviour. How is your heart? How is your life? Are you reflecting His light or are you letting your life fill with darkness?

Now let's talk about spiritual hygiene. Turn with me to 2 Tim. 2:20, 21:

“In a large house there are vessels not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.”

In the ancient world there was little or no indoor plumbing. People used jars or containers for what can be called “night water”, because, before people went to bed at night, they put these containers of night water outside their doors. They were collected, emptied and returned before morning for another day's use. This is the ignoble use Paul is talking about.

If we really want to serve the L-rd, we have to practice the same kind of hygiene in our hearts and lives – in the house where our spirit and G-d's Spirit dwell. We have to take sin seriously and not hide it or deny it, because the Holy Spirit has a very sensitive nose. We need to practice good daily spiritual hygiene, but at communion, we get to do a more thorough spiritual house cleaning, just in case we have missed something and just in case there are things in our lives which need some renovation.

You see, G-d is not just concerned with our daily battles with sin, He is also concerned with our daily growth in Him and with the bigger ongoing life issues we face at whatever stage in our lives we find ourselves. In two days I will officially become a senior citizen – I turn 55. At my stage in life, I face concerns which some of you young ones do not yet face and I have an incredibly precious grand-daughter who is facing issues most of you have already dealt with.

Communion is our monthly check-up to make sure we are on track and to make sure our lives are going in the right direction and also that whatever damage we encounter or whatever plans we are making will not fill our lives with darkness or “night water”.

You cannot solve every problem right away, just like you cannot always get out every stubborn stain with one washing. Communion is also a time when we allow our hearts and lives to soak in His presence so that our hearts and lives are clean at every stage of our lives and that if there are stubborn stains, we bring them to His cross, and soak them in His forgiveness until they are gone.

It is a good thing to begin the New Year with communion. It is a good thing to celebrate the L-rd's Table once a month. The new moon will appear in the sky on Tuesday night and we will celebrate our communion next Saturday. But let me conclude by asking you some questions, as you prepare you heart for communion.

How is your light? Do your good works glorify your Father, or are there areas of your life which are full of darkness? Are you practicing good spiritual hygiene? When we celebrate communion, do you let the L-rd into every area, into every issues in your life, so that at least you will be spiritually clean while you are learning how to solve whatever bigger issues you are struggling with?

His light identifies problems and also brings healing. Sometimes this healing takes time, sometimes months and even years. At communion we bring these issues to the L-rd and allow the antibiotic treatment of His love and His cross to keep doing its work until the wound is healed and the problem is solved. Are you bringing your wounds and sores to the L-rd on a regular basis?

Communion is not just about healing; it is also about serving the L-rd. His Word says that He will only use clean vessels. His Word says that His light will only shine through us as we practice good works. They do not save us, they show the world that His light is in us and there is nothing blocking it – that there is nothing lurking in the dark shadows of our hearts and minds which will defile our hearts and lives.

Even as we work through deeper and bigger issues and are recovering from wounds, we can still serve Him by bringing them to the light and letting His light continue its work – because when people see that even when we are wounded and hurt, we dwell in His light, they will see that His light can also be a source of healing for them.

Let's learn to practice good spiritual hygiene. Let Him take away your spiritual "night water". Let Him renew your ability to shine and bring healing into your heart until all the darkness and all the stains of darkness are removed continually and regularly until that great day when He shall return and cause all darkness and sin to disappear forever.

Let's pray.