

*Spiritual Sunshine, Walking in the Light* J. M. Terrett  
**Real Forgiveness: Rom. 12:14**

Korach: Korah (Bald)  
Torah: **Num. 16:1-18:32** Double rebellion doesn't derail G-d's purposes  
Haftarah: **I Sam. 11:14-12:22** Obedience breaks the cycle of failure  
Brit Chadashah: **Rom. 13:1-7** the mandate of authority G-d placed among men

Passage: "Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse."

In today's Torah portion we deal with a rebellion against Moses, by both the leaders of the people, and by a portion of the leaders of his own tribe. The people transferred their own failure onto Moses and Aaron and were not happy with the wilderness wandering which G-d had decided it was necessary for Israel to endure. In the Haftarah portion, G-d allows the people to select a king, but they needed to understand that it is still G-d who remains forever Israel's CEO. In the Brit Chadashah portion we see that it is still possible to serve G-d under a repressive regime, such as pagan Rome. Things do not have to look bright for us to shine and be salty.

The passage for today's sermon appears just before today's Brit Chadashah portion, and I want to talk about **real forgiveness** in at least three aspects. First of all I want to talk about our need to stubbornly view each and every detail of our fleeting lives from the permanent perspective of eternity. Next I want to talk about closure and resolution, as part of our witness as a community, which is determined to activate our *binah* (spiritual understanding) and allow G-d stir our inner being, until our *kavanah* (spiritual motivation) reflects our burning drive to fulfill (complete) His will, expressed through our willing obedience to His Word, *mitzvot* (commandments).

Lastly, I want to talk about the inner pain and rage that prolongs the pain and continues to damage us, long after the violence and the injustice has ravaged our lives. Some people, instead of rebuilding their bombed out ruins, let the fires keep burning, and perpetuate the cycle of retribution which Cain started, and which Children of Life should have no part of. Ever.

What Have You Done With My Son?

As believers we understand that there is a judgement coming which bring an end to this life and to every aspect of this *temporary reality* we call the universe (2 Peter 3:10). Have you ever seen the crazy squirrel in the animated feature: "Ice Age"? He runs around gathering all the acorns he can find, and yet he loses all of them except one, which pummels him back into the ice. When he regains consciousness, he triumphantly holds up his treasure, only to have it turn to ashes in his paws. I don't have his teeth, but I can really relate to his obsession and to his frustration.

How much of our lives will turn to ashes when our L-rd returns? Three events will one day have a more permanent impact than anything else which could possibly happen to us during our brief, though eventful lives. They are the resurrection, the judgment and Eternity.

I was lead into faith by a guy who was not impressed with all of my objections to spirituality and to G-d. I was angry, hurt and wanted to attack all the problems of the world with zeal and determination, because this old world is such a sorry place full of injustice, poverty and sadness. I wasn't having much of a good time either. Well, he listened to all of my objections and silenced them all with a challenge which ought to haunt all believers and put even our most traumatic

horror into perspective. He said: "**Mike forget about all this other stuff. When you die you are going to stand before G-d and the only thing He is going to ask you is – what have you done with my Son?**"

Ouch. Cool. You mean all my acorns are going to turn to ashes? Yup. All the pain, poverty and injustice that has ever plagued this miserable planet will one day have to give an account of itself before G-d. Unless I am ready to give an account of myself before this same G-d, then I am not ready to fix anything, cause it's all gonna burn – and the sooner the better, most days. Amen.

Am I preaching that there is a coming judgment which will rain down hellfire and brimstone on the heads of all infidels and evil doers? Yup, but that is none of my business, because The L-rd wants this squirrel to prepare for my own judgment, and to stop cluttering my heart and my life with acorns that are just going to turn to ashes when He returns.

You see, one day all of mankind, in all of our generations, nations and cultures will rise from the ashes of Yeshua's return to give an account of what we have done with G-d's Son. In the final analysis, **in the long, long, really long, long run, nothing else really matters for very long.** His judgment of the world and of us will be fair, final and forever. Are you living "fair" with "final" things which will last you "forever"? Acorns are not worthy of our attention.

We are called to heal, to help and to shine forth with mercy and compassion, not because we want people to have a better life in this miserable world, but because we understand that there is a new world coming, where all the joys, and trials of this age will be sorted out and cease to exist. **This is only a scary thought for all of the deranged squirrels of this world, wasting their time gathering acorns, instead of filling their hearts with the treasures of the world to come.** Unless our lives are focused on these treasures, all that we live for and hope for, is not more real and enduring than the silly movie and that weird little sabre toothed squirrel. So, squirrels of B'nai Chayim get real. Walk with the L-rd and stop chasing acorns.

What Are You Doing With The Son?

Well, we can't just all sit around and wait for the kingdom, and carry signs and preach at people all the time about the end of the world. It is not a good way to win friends and influence people. Let me say something which sucks, beautifully, when you think about it. G-d does have a plan for your lives and He is in control over all which happens to each of us every day. No, He is not going to make us rich, healthy and powerful, as if the cross of our Messiah were the key to give us the desires of our greedy hearts. Holiness has nothing to do with acorns.

Instead, He will never allow anything to overpower us or corner us, whether we are trapped in Auschwitz, or whether we own a different BMW for every day of the week (I Cor. 10:13). He wants us to set straight paths for our feet (Heb. 12:13) and to cherish our hearts above all things (Prov. 4:13), as we grow in love for Him (Deut. 6:4-9) and for one another (John 13:34, 35), no matter what else is going on in our lives. He has no other will for our lives.

Acorns are good, but they are not the purpose of life. Our King superintends the world in which we live: **that is His business.** He wants us to superintend the life we live in this world, because: **that is our business.** Our *binah* (spiritual understanding) is the only acorn worth living for, and our *kavanah* (spiritual motivation) is the only crank worth turning, because the *mitzvot* (acts of faith and obedience) we perform in our Messiah are the only fire proof acorns this world will ever know. Now we are ready for my last point, squirrels and dodos.

## What Is The Son Doing With You?

I have taken a job in a warehouse, with a great bunch of guys with exceeding foul mouths and I may be the only non smoker in the bunch. I am having to learn complicated product numbers and I am on my feet all day long. I have three college degrees and nearly thirty years teaching experience, twenty one of which has been spent in ministry. I have a vital, growing shul which needs lots of prayer, and lots of care. But I am where I need to be, for the moment.

Sometimes my heart hurts so bad, I have trouble breathing. Then I think of the squirrel and I am able to smile, cry and deal with the evil which is sufficient to each day, with more to come tomorrow (Matt. 6:33, 34). Heaven is our home and it is coming to stay forever. Wherefore, the L-rd wants me to learn to be comforted as I bounce down the glacier watching all my acorns disappear. That is His will for each and every one of us. It's not nuts; it's not about acorns either.

It's about the treasure we are storing up in our hearts. I am still dealing with pain and sorrow, because I had to take a second job, and let me make something abundantly clear. I am not mad at anyone at B'nai Chayim and do not think you guys ought to be doing more to support my excellent ministry. I am just glad I lost 60 lbs. and am fit enough to make tents for a while. Keep on tithing. Keep on praying and studying. G-d will supply all the acorns we need. Eventually.

But we do not live in the best of all possible worlds, and we should not be grateful for all the pain and loss we have suffered. Always looking at the bright side of your lives is called denial and will not equip you to solve any problems. This is what you gotta do, squirrels and other strangers, Jewish and Goyish. Keep the goal in mind, so you do not lose your focus and so that you do not have to watch the things you gave your life to, turn to ashes on that terrible, wonderful day. You only have one life to live, don't waste your time chasing acorns. I have a better plan.

Bring all the pain, the anger and the damage to the King and let Him do three things. Let Him **comfort** you and put things in perspective (Heaven is coming baby, and He knows what we need before we ask Him). Let Him **heal** your heart, slowly or quickly, so that His **joy** and **peace** can continue to flow through your pain and your successes (hey, my son is getting married, and my baby girl graduated from High School). Then let Him **wrestle** with your heart until you know what it is He wants you to do during this particular episode of the Chronicles of the Squirrel who needs to learn to let the acorns come to him.

One final thought, and this brings me back to our passage. There are only two things you do in this life which will follow you into the resurrection and the final judgment, and which will have a lasting effect on the eternity you will experience. The blessing and the cursing you cherish in your hearts as permanent responses to the whatever we live through on our journey home.

**Anger is not cursing. Bitterness** is not the same as **regret**, and will eventually turn to **gratitude** – not for the valley through which walked, but for the eternal weight of glory our "light" affliction produces. **We can only dance on the grave of our afflictions, if our hearts are no longer buried with them.** Let's start a new self help group: Squirrels Anonymous, where we teach each other to let go and to let Him comfort and heal at His speed, cause we don't have all the time in the world.

We will never have the life we want, all we should hope for is to live the life which He wants us to live, in the way which He wants – because nothing that happens to us in our short lives is the end of the world – how we live our short lives will become evident at the end of the world.

Nothing else matters in the long run, so why waste so much energy worrying about it in the acorns you are losing in the short run. **Forgive, bless** and do not let your heart fill with **curses** which will only fall back on you (and knock you back into the ice). Let go, be comforted and let Him heal your heart. Let Him take care of the rest. Next Week: Real Compassion. Let's pray.