

26 Sivan, 5772 (16/06/12) *Heart's Baggage, Pilgrim's Progress* J.
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Being Hopeful Without Being Stalled

Shelach L'cha Send For Yourself Snatching Defeat out of the Jaw of Victory

Torah: Gen. 13:1-15:41

(1) 13:18-20. He wanted them to be fully informed of all the benefits and all the obstacles. To be spiritual, you must also be a realist. Fools rush in, wise people tread carefully

(2) 13:25. They had lots of time to see the whole picture.

(3) 14:36. Those who plagued the people, died of a plague.

(4) 15:41. All His commands have a single, double objective – our holiness and our belonging to Him.

Haftarah: Joshua 2:1-24

(5) 2:11. A generation later Rahab gave the best testimony the tow spies had heard (beware of committees, like the twelve)

(6) 2:24. They believed what He said and what they had seen and heard. How about you?

Brit Chadashah: Heb. 3:7-4:11

(7) 4:11. There are places of rest in Him for us throughout our lives. We need to live in His rest.

Psalm 64

Jewish Hero: Caleb

Luke 18:1, 8: Yeshua addressed them another parable to the effect that they should always pray and not lose heart. . . I tell you that He will promptly render them justice, but when the Son of Man shall come, will he find faith on earth.

Eccl. 11:6: From the early morning sow your seed and give no rest to your hand in the evening; for you do not know what will succeed, the one thing or the other, or they both will succeed.

I Cor. 4:5: That is why, judge nothing before the time until the L-rd shall come and bring to light that which is hidden in the darkness and make manifest the designs of the hearts. Then each shall receive from G-d the praise from G-d which is due.

Prov. 13:12: A hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes it is a tree of life

I Tim. 5:22: Do not lay hands on anyone suddenly, nor participate in the sinners of another. Keep yourself pure.

2 Tim. 2:24-26: The servant of the L-rd must not engage in disputes, but be gentle unto all people, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves in the hope that G-d will give them repentance to escape themselves out of the snare of the devil, having being taken captive by him to do his will.

We have been talking in this series about the impact of our actions and reactions on our pilgrimage through this life to our Father's home in glory and how this content will impact us on the day when all mankind shall stand in judgment before Him, to receive a reward for the spiritual treasures which they have been store up in their hearts or to suffer loss for the folly that they have allowed to crowd out the good things in their hearts and lives.

One of the weaknesses of those who are younger in the faith is the expectation that things will always resolve themselves speedily when we try hard enough and believe fervently enough, especially if we follow the principles of his Word. Now, I am a firm believer in the principles which he has outlined in his Word, both in how we should live and in how we should resolve conflicts and deal with the disputes we encounter, both with other believers and in our dealings with people in general.

This is because His Word contains the key to successful living and outlines all that is necessary for the healing of any hurts or damage we encounter as we travel through this life, generationally on our way to our Father's home in glory, where all things will be dealt with and we shall finally have rest forever.

However, when things do not resolve quickly, or when things actually get worse, even when we have done everything according to His Word, there is the possibility for discouragement and frustration and many who are what I would call rigid idealists, go through rough periods and even abandon the faith when they see things not happening according to how they are outlined in His Word.

Now, I am believe that it is both our **primary duty** to seek to resolve things according to His Word and also to protect ourselves when this is not possible in how we relate to others around us, be they believers or not. Sometimes we will see people react with the works of the flesh: anger, rage, gossip, lust, lies, deception, denial and other works of the flesh which cause more damage to the body of believers, than anything the world or the enemy can throw our way. And there is nothing we can do about.

How are we to respond, both so that we do not follow suit and also so that we do not lose our way and quit (or become inactive) because we see that things do not always turn out according to the patterns and principles outlined in His Word?

I want to suggest at least three responses:

First, we must always aim to respond according to His Word (both defensively and offensively), because He tells us how to respond when His Word is followed and also when it is violated and **we will never stand before Him for how other people have behaved or how other people have treated us**. We will only be held accountable for **how we have responded, both in our hearts and in our lives**. He wants us to grow to the place where we **no longer let how we are treated determine how we respond**, but where we are guided by what His Word outlines. This will not always be an easy procedure and we will not always get things right, but if this remains our objective then He will make sure we eventually get it right (Phil. 3:15 and Heb. 12:13).

Secondly, we must be patient and hopeful and give people the time and space that they need in order to get things right, **without putting our lives on hold, and waiting for them to get it right**. This is probably the hardest lesson to learn, because I always want to be someone with **high standards** and **great expectations**, but I never want to surrender the control or the direction of my life to waiting on other people's responses – like hanging around with nothing to do until they come to their senses. In other words, I want to leave the door open (unlocked), but not ajar, because even in unresolved disputes of any kind, there is always a **positive strategy** for us from the L-rd, so that we can see and do His will even while we are waiting for those who do not want to follow suit.

Now this doesn't mean we stick our tongues out and rant and rave at people because we see something which they are not yet willing to see. It means that we are determined to always give **primary place** to G-d and to His Word – **to the invisible world to which we owe our first allegiance** – and once we have reaffirmed our connection to that which is eternal, then we will respond in such a way as to keep our **primary connection primary**. And this reaction can be both a refuge for us and also a reality check, so that our motives will always be pure and not reactionary (so we are not trying to serve G-d so He will smack our enemies upside the head and cause them grief because they are causing us grief).

Thirdly, we must deal with our disappointment and not get grouchy and angry with G-d because other people seem to be getting away with things. Remember the **older brother** in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, who did not like how graciously the father treated the prodigal son and who forgot that he should be doubly joyful – first because his lost brother had come home and also that he had not followed suit and squandered his inheritance in a way that it could never really be gotten back.

We need to learn to mind our own business, even with family members and world leaders who appear to be breaking G-d's laws and getting away with it, while we are being good and seem to be suffering for it.

Our perspective needs to remain **eternal and long term, so that our daily lives do not set us up for more trouble in the short term**. We are not responsible for what others are sowing or reaping – G-d wants us to take charge of what we are sowing and reaping. When we do this, we are set free from the double trouble of a jealous and bitter heart.

Double trouble, **first** because we do not get angry and disappointed and feel that G-d's word and G-d's standards are somehow flawed and don't work when we do our best and try our hardest and see things get worse instead of better.

Double trouble **second**, because we avoid the trap of getting angry with G-d and feeling like He is being unfair by requiring that we keep His Word when others break it and seem to get away with it – and are tempted to fall into the same error and make the problem worse instead of better.

I want to be **hopeful** and I want to believe that when we follow the **principles** of His Word our lives will get better and our problems will be solved as we go from **glory to glory** and **victory to victory** on our triumphant progression through this life on our way home to our reward. What this looks like will not always be a **victory parade** in this life and we may get impatient for the recognition we can only reasonably expect to receive in the next life.

I know beyond a shadow of doubt that His Word is true and that He will definitely **judge** the hearts and motives and actions of all mankind by the same principles of righteousness, mercy and justice that He requires us to live by. But I also know that He wants me to understand **who is in control** and that it is my job to **remain under His control**, defensively and offensively, no matter what other people are doing or not doing and no matter how I perceive what He is doing or not doing.

He is never out of control, even when people are in rebellion to His Word, and He has never lets anyone violate His Word without consequences, **either in this life or in the one which is to come**.

If we let other people's **actions or lack of action** determine how obedient or how faithful we will be, then we have lost sight of Him and of His kingdom and are really following **the words and actions of people**, instead of follow His Word and basing our actions and habits on it. He wants us to have **faith in Him** and do our best and live according to His Word and also trust that He will eventually get around to dealing with other people, for reasons which He may or may not reveal to us.

In fact **He wants us to understand that He is already dealing with people**, even when they appear to be pulling away from Him and He does not want us to follow suit. What He wants us to do is to do is trust Him, but He does not want this trust to make us do three things.

His does not want this trust make us ***wait for other people to follow Him, before we follow suit.***

He does not want this trust to make us ***wait until He deals with other people, before we let Him deal with us or before we learn to deal with the concerns of our lives according to His Word.***

Finally, He does not want this trust to ***make us angry or frustrated*** because we somehow expected our trust in him to give us an ***easier or a better life*** during our temporary pilgrimage through this life, instead of understanding that He wants us to ***keep our eyes focused on the invisible*** and let the things of this temporary world ***work themselves out.***

The next life should be viewed as the baby, this life as the bath water. Which one is more important? We should let the waters of this life drain, repeatedly, no matter how muddy they get, and we should concentrate on that which is so much more important and permanent.

He wants us to ***remain hopeful, without being stalled.*** We are hopeful because we trust in His control and in the promise of His Kingdom, where everything will be worked out – whether or not they are worked out in this life.

We have to learn to wait and to walk according to His Word as our primary duty through all the twists and turns and slings and arrows of outrageous fortune and not let anything or anyone stall us or turn us away from our primary spiritual duty.

Lets pray.