

Learning to Trust in God

Drash on Parashah 13; Sh'mot

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Brothers, my heart's deepest desire and my prayer to God for Isra'el is for their salvation; for I can testify to their zeal for God. [Romans 10:1-2a]

There may be much we can say about the sins of Isra'el and the ways in which they have turned their backs on God, whether in the Bible, or today. We have to be careful, though, because we are judged by the same standards we judge others by. Isra'el has had Torah and pursued God in its teachings, long before Believers today ever had the Messiah. Where we may fault them on their rejection of the Messiah that most of us know, their zeal in Torah is something we all need to pay attention to in order to complete our own faith, for who is Messiah apart from Torah? If we love him and don't obey His commands, do we really love Him? If we are filled with a spirit which contradicts God's Word, is it the Spirit of God? Whether our faith is Jewish or Christian, our zeal must be open for correction.

But it (their zeal) is not based on correct understanding; for, since they are unaware of God's way of making people righteous and instead seek to set up their own, they have not submitted themselves to God's way of making people righteous. For the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts. For Moshe writes about the righteousness grounded in the Torah that the person who does these things will attain life through them. [Romans 10:2b-5]

So is Salvation through Messiah or Torah? It is through the Messiah that the Torah speaks about. Salvation was attainable before Messiah, but only by people who trusted in God to provide it. This trust was learned through the Torah, which was and still is the teacher of such trust. Trusting in God had to be the mortar that held the bricks of the laws of God together. The laws themselves, along with the traditions which come from them are nothing, and lead to legalism. This is the legalism that Sha'ul speaks against in his letters. Torah without faith is legalism which leads to bondage. Faith without Torah is empty with no foundation, which leads to hypocrisy. Faith without action is no even faith, but knowledge, which in itself leads to pride, and we all know what pride goes before. Faith with Torah, however, leads to Messiah, which leads us to salvation and gives us the keys to His Kingdom on the Last Day.

Moreover, the righteousness grounded in trusting says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend to heaven?' " – that is, to bring the Messiah down – or, " 'Who will descend into Sh'ol?' " – that is, to bring the Messiah up from the dead. What, then, does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart." – that is, the word about trust which we proclaim, namely, that if you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be delivered. [Romans 10:6-9]

It is the Spirit dwelling within us, which fulfills the New Covenant spoken of in Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 31:30, which put the Torah and writes it on our heart. We are no longer following a law which is outside us, but one that is inside us and made alive by the Spirit of God Himself. It is the Word of God in us that proclaims to us the truth of Messiah Yeshua, who by trusting in Him will deliver us from our sins.

For with the heart one goes on trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgement and thus continues toward deliverance. For the passage quoted says that everyone who rests his trust on him will not be humiliated. That means that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – Adonai is the same for everyone, rich toward everyone who calls on him, since everyone who calls on the name of Adonai will be delivered. But how can they call on someone if they haven't trusted in him? And how can they trust in someone if they haven't heard about him? And how can they hear about someone if no one is proclaiming him? And how can people proclaim him unless God sends them? – as the Tanakh puts it, "How beautiful are the feet of those announcing good news about good things!"

The problem is that they haven't all paid attention to the Good News and obeyed it. For Yesha'yahu says, "Adonai, who has trusted what he has heard from us?" So trust comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through a word proclaimed about the Messiah. "But, I say, isn't it rather that they didn't hear?" No, they did hear – "Their voice has gone out throughout the whole world and their words to the ends of the earth." "But, I say, isn't it rather that Isra'el didn't understand?" "I will provoke you to jealousy over a non-nation, over a nation void of understanding I will make you angry." Moreover, Yesha'yahu boldly says, "I was found by those who were not looking for me, I became known to those who did not ask for me"; but to Isra'el he says, "All day long I held out my hands to a people who kept disobeying and contradicting." [Romans 10:10-21]

Everything we believe must have two witnesses. I do not believe that Yeshua is the Messiah based solely on His own testimony. That is just one witness. I have another witness, just as everyone else, that Yeshua is the Messiah. That would be the Prophets. Torah adds a third witness. Without these additional witnesses, faith in Yeshua as Messiah has no foundation. This is why the power of the Gospel is to the Jew first, then to the Gentile. It is because the Jew already knows the first two witnesses. These witnesses testify to the truth of Yeshua's witness. This makes the faith of a Jew more powerful, more solid. The Gentile can begin his faith based on Yeshua's testimony alone, but this is a house built on sand. The Gentile believer must learn the words of the Tanakh, in order to build a foundation under their faith and make it stable like that of the Jew.

We often use this passage to encourage missions and preaching the Gospel. However, taken in context, this is not what it is referring to. The Good News is the good news of Torah and the prophets. There was no Gospel of Yeshua when David said, "How beautiful are the feet of those announcing good news about good things!" We want to give people Yeshua first, then Torah. What did God give us first?

We are aware that Torah is not for a person who is righteous, but for those who are heedless of Torah and rebellious, ungodly and sinful, wicked and worldly, for people who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral – both heterosexual and homosexual – slave dealers, liars, perjurers, and anyone who acts contrary to the sound teaching that accords with the Good News of the glorious and blessed God. This Good News was entrusted to me;
[1Timothy 1:9-11]

We are always looking for a quick, easy way to our own salvation, and to others. We don't want to take the time to develop relationships with people, teach them the Word of God, and bring them to Messiah through that. We just want to get people to say some nice easy prayer and add one more point to our saved persons list to make ourselves feel better. Not that this never works, or Christianity wouldn't exist today, but it is not God's way. We who have been Believers for awhile, forget the long path that got us where we are today. We want to give people a crash course in what God has taught us to get them where we are. Instead, we need to go to where they are, and teach them at the level on understanding that they are at. If we don't, we end up trying to teach calculus to a two year old, and to make it worse, we don't fully understand it ourselves.

Adonai said, "I have seen how my people are being oppressed in Egypt and heard their cry for release from their slavemasters, because I know their pain. I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that country to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the place of the Kena`ani, Hitti, Emori, P'rizi, Hivi and Y'vusi. Yes, the cry of the people of Isra'el has come to me, and I have seen how terribly the Egyptians oppress them. Therefore, now, come; and I will send you to Pharaoh; so that you can lead my people, the descendants of Isra'el, out of Egypt." Moshe said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and lead the people of Isra'el out of Egypt?" He replied, "I will surely be with you. Your sign that I have sent you will be that when you have led the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." [Sh'mot/Exodus 3:7-12]

God made Isra'el's family into a great nation while in Egypt. However, they had grown in numbers to the point that they became a concern to the pharaoh of the day. As a result he sought to exterminate them. Moshe, leaves his people and the life he knew living in pharaoh's household, to live in Midyan. Here he becomes acquainted with God, who speaks to him through a burning bush. He is given a commission much greater than himself of which he feels he is unqualified. He's right, but as he will learn, God is in control of his work and the future of Isra'el, not him.

In the midst of learning about God Himself, He has to become God's instrument through which all Isra'el will learn the same. Trust is not something which comes overnight. It is a process and must be learned. The trials that Isra'el, led my Moshe will endure as designed to do just that.

In order for Isra'el to learn of their God and His love for them, so they could be saved from the Egyptians, Moshe had to go to where they were. He had to go back to Egypt and put his own life in danger, trusting that God would protect him. He had to

rely on what God had told him about Himself and His plan of Isra'el. It was God's desire that all Isra'el was saved, but as we will see later, there were trusting Egyptians who went with them.

The message that Moshe had was a good one, but it was not without challenge and risk. They would have to do exactly as God dictated and learn to trust in Him and not their own understanding. As we put our faith in Messiah, the Gospel is good news. However, the simple message of a Savior on a cross does not come without obligation. The road ahead is tough, and only those who maintain their faith and pursuit of the Kingdom will make it to the end.

We always thank God for all of you, regularly mentioning you in our prayers, calling to mind before God our Father what our Lord Yeshua the Messiah has brought about in you – how your trust produces action, your love hard work, and your hope perseverance. [1Thessalonians 1:2-3]