

Loving in the Right Direction

(a retelling of Follow Me)

The 10 commandments of the Brit Hadashah

drash on Parashah 17; Yitro

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“As Yeshua walked by Lake Kinneret, he saw two brothers who were fishermen – Shim'on, known as Kefa, and his brother Andrew – throwing their net into the lake. Yeshua said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers for men!” At once they left their nets and went with him.” - Mattityahu/Matthew 4:18-20

As Yeshua begins his ministry, the first thing we see Him doing is building His minyan. This is before any of His teaching or His miracles. Yet, we see Him going to the men He has chosen, and simply says, “Follow me”, and they stop what they are doing to do exactly that. Why is this? These are men who had their own businesses and had families. However, when Yeshua calls them, with no questions asked, they drop everything, leave everything behind, including their families, and follow Him for the next 3 years of their lives. What would compel them to do this?

Part of this comes from the things Yochanan the Immerser/John the Baptist said about Him. Yeshua was declared to be the Lamb of God. He was known to be a rabbi, sent by God. Some thought Him to be a prophet, and others already saw Him as the Messiah.

Another part of this, perhaps even more so, has to do with the culture Yeshua is acting in. Most of what we know of higher education comes to us from the Greco-roman empire. Gaining an education beyond basics, whether it was philosophy, religion, or some trade, was extremely valued and generally only accessible to the elite of society. In Jewish culture, this was even more true in the case of a teacher of Torah. Studying Torah is one of the greatest things a person can do in Jewish society. In some places, people who studied and taught Torah, didn't have to pay taxes or do any other work in order to give them more time to study.

Everywhere Yeshua went, people knew He was a rabbi. They would stop what they were doing to listen to whatever He had to say. So when this teacher of Torah, who quickly showed Himself to be even more knowledgeable of Torah and the ways of God than the Temple leaders. This is why they felt threatened by Him. So when this expert teacher in Torah invited someone to follow Him, this was the opportunity of a lifetime. Not only was it an opportunity to learn under the teachings of an expert rabbi, but in doing so, the talmid would eventually become like Him.

In our Parashah, we read the backbone of the rest of Torah, the 10 commandments. With these 10 commands being so important to life as the people of God, we would expect to see them evidenced in the teaching of Yeshua and the early body of Believers. If Yeshua's life was at all contradictory to Torah, especially the 10

commandments, He wouldn't have had any following from His Jewish talmidim. So here are some examples of the 10 commandments as we find them in the Brit Hadashah.

"No one can be a slave of two masters; for he will either hate the first and love the second, or scorn the second and be loyal to the first." - Mattityahu/Matthew 6:24

We are told by Moshe to not have any other gods before Adonai. Yeshua echoes this, and tells why. He also shows in the context that a god can be anything which controls our life, like money. God is to be the center of our life and there is only one throne. Even we cannot sit in it. This is not only the first command, but the most important. Nothing else matters if God and only God is King of our life.

But as for the cowardly, the untrustworthy, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those involved with the occult and with drugs, idol-worshippers, and all liars – their destiny is the lake burning with fire and sulfur, the second death." [Revelation 21:8]

"So, since we are children of God, we shouldn't suppose that God's essence resembles gold, silver, or stone shaped by human technique and imagination." - Acts 17:29

Moshe tells us not to make any graven images. Here, we are told by Sha'ul, the same thing. We and the rest of the world is created by God and under His control. We cannot then take that which was created and create something we worship as a god. Yeshua taught His talmidim that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. For Isra'el, there was one God, one way out of Egypt, and one way to the Promised Land. The same thing is true for the talmid of Yeshua. All of Torah requires preparation in order for it to be carried out. Some people have a hard time seeing the reality of God in their life. This is most likely because they are relying on gods of their own design more than they think, rather than the God of Isra'el. Sometimes this is why God leads us into hardship. He has to remove all the 'gods' of our life in order to show Himself to be the only true God of our life.

"Our Father in heaven! May your name be kept holy." - Mattityahu/Matthew 6:9

We are told in Torah not to take God's name in vain. Here in Yeshua's teaching on prayer, He starts out declaring the holiness of God's name and that it must be kept holy. Yeshua healed in His Father's name and by His name people were saved from their sins. The talmidim later did the same. There was power in the name of God, and as such had to be kept holy. This not only has to do with the words that come from our mouth, but the way in which we live our lives. If God is King of our lives, we will seek to live His way, by His Torah. A life lived any other way takes God's name in vain as we are called by His holy name.

"Then he said to them, "Shabbat was made for mankind, not mankind for Shabbat; So the Son of Man is Lord even of Shabbat." - Mark 2:27-28

There were times when Yeshua had conflict with the Jewish leaders over doing things like healing on the Sabbath day. This is not because He did not follow the Sabbath, but because some of the oral traditions the Jewish leaders followed put man made laws before the needs of people. Yeshua had to correct this wrong set of priorities, not to go against Torah, but to help the true Torah shine through the laws of men better. He had to re-teach what the Torah meant to give people the Spirit of Torah, rather than just a list of do's and don'ts.

Honoring the Sabbath was not only important to Yeshua, but in Acts 13, we see Jews and Gentiles gathering together at the synagogues to hear the Gospel preached every Shabbat. This was done with great anticipation and joy. Again in order for Shabbat to properly observed, we must prepare. We rest on the 7th day, because we have worked for six days in such a way that all our work is done, so we can rest before our Creator as our rabbi Yeshua did.

"When his parents saw him, they were shocked; and his mother said to him, "Son! Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been terribly worried looking for you!" He said to them, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be concerning myself with my Father's affairs?" [Luke 2:48-49]

"Children, what you should do in union with the Lord is obey your parents, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' – this is the first commandment that embodies a promise – 'so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the Land.'" - Ephesians 6:2

Family is an important part of God's value system throughout the Bible. Within the family structure there was love as well as order. Here was where children were taught about God and His Ways. It was in the family setting where marriage unions took place, which brought about the next generation. Without this basic of social structure the rest of Israeli society could not stand. Even today, many of our problems with society can be traced back to a problem with family.

*"For out of the heart come forth wicked thoughts, murder, adultery, and other kinds of sexual immorality, theft, lies, slanders...These are what really makes a person unclean."
- Mattityahu/Matthew 15:19-20*

*"For the commandments, 'Don't commit adultery,' 'Don't murder,' 'Don't steal,' 'Don't covet' and any others are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'
Love does not do harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fullness of Torah."
- Romans 13:9-10*

For the sake of space, I have combined the last five commands together, however we see, not only here, but many other places where Yeshua and His talmidim taught and upheld these commands, as well as the other commands of Torah. One of Yeshua's goals,

however, was to take the letter of the law, and teach His talmidim the Spirit of the law. He taught us where the laws came from, which is God Himself and His character. He taught us that it is not enough just to not kill, but hate is just as much a sin. He taught that it is not enough to avoid adultery if you still have lust in your heart toward someone. Certainly He did not mean for us to be emotionless people without desires or feelings, but these things that come from our heart must be controlled by Torah so that they do not become sin.

Yeshua tells us that if we love Him we will follow His commands. Regardless of anything Shaul may seem to teach later, it is difficult, short of just plain ignoring it, to get around Yeshua stating point blank, that if we love Him we will obey His commands, and elsewhere he states that He did not come to abolish the law. The question of obedience is one of order. Yeshua starts with love for Him. From there He states that the two greatest commands are to love God and love our neighbor. How do we love God and our neighbor? Well, of the Ten Commandments, which are like the five fingers which come out of our two hands, equaling ten, the first five relate to loving God and the last five relate to loving our neighbor. From here, the rest of the 613 laws of Torah describe and relate to these ten, and then the rest of Scripture relate to these. Our mistake is when we start with the laws and try to work our way up to love. I follow God's commands because I love Him. I don't love Him because I follow His commands. I eat Kosher because it is one way that I acknowledge God as the one and only God in my life, the first commandment, which in itself is one way, the primary way in fact, of showing my love for Him. However, I don't love him because I eat Kosher. I eat Kosher because I love Him, and someone else who does not eat Kosher does not necessarily love God less, because, again, this is going in the wrong direction. Chances are that person does things, prescribed in Torah that I don't out of their love for God, and the fact I don't do those things does not mean I love God less.

There is another lesson our Rabbi has for those who would call themselves His talmidim.

"For a person who keeps the whole Torah, yet stumbles at one point, has become guilty of breaking them all." - Ya'akov/James 2:10

Salvation from sin does not come from obedience to Torah, however Torah defines for us what sin is. Torah has always been and always will be the way God desires His people to live because it is based on His perfect character and will. Our failure to perform it perfectly is what gives us the need for a redeemer.

"Yah is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. This is my God: I will glorify him; my father's God: I will exalt him. Adonai is a warrior. Adonai is his name." - Sh'mot/Exodus 15:2-3

Torah does not mean law. It means teaching. Torah itself is our rabbi, and Yeshua is the living Torah. He teaches us how to live a life of love for God and our

fellow man. He has also provided us with atonement from our sins through our faith in Him. Torah is also means to shoot an arrow. The 10 commandments, along with the rest of the teachings of Torah are for us arrows with which we defeat our enemies, and Ha Satan. How did Yeshua resist temptation? Torah. How do we resist? We use the arrows He has given us.

Yeshua was a talmid and rabbi of Torah. He taught His talmidim to do the same. After His resurrection, He passed on the torch to them with this mission:

“Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even to the end of the age.” -Mattityahu/Matthew 28:19-20

Today, the Living Torah, is inviting you to partake in a journey that will change your life. He is coming to you with His arms stretched out to you saying, “Follow me”.