

The Blessing of Unity

Happy Sabbath to all.

For about the past year or so, the Spirit of Yah has been impressing upon His people the importance of communication, and the importance of the unity of spirit that would naturally result from cultivating this practice. We have talked about it in our weekly meetings, on our New Moons among the members, and through various emails and posts online.

This week, as I reviewed another portion of the sixth *Letter to Rachel*, one of the longer entries of the series, I find communication and unity presented here again.

The Book of Acts describes what a Church looks like, and the power it holds, and the authority it has to command evil spirits and wicked men. But a prerequisite to obtaining this power, this necessary ingredient for effective Gospel work, is that the members must be “as one” with the Father and Son, and with one another.

When Yahshua was crucified, His remaining followers were thrown into confusion. Despite the prophecies and careful preparation the Savior has shared with them, it was perhaps the case that their hearts and minds could not conceive of the world triumphing (even in appearance) over their wise and miracle-working Teacher. “Surely,” they reasoned, “even if what He was saying should begin to come to pass, He will manifest His power and escape.”

This was certainly an idea prominent in the thinking of Judas, to the degree that he betrayed the Master, believing in his impression of Christ rather than the reality he had access to.

In this generation, with unity so needed in the Christian Churches, those who would be the people of Yah are facing the same problem – and largely for the same reason.

Those who worship an “image” of the Father and Son can never truly come into unity with Them because, like Judas, they can have no clear picture of who They really are. Those who would endure to the end must ensure that they have no false conception of the divine character or else, while they may seem to be “okay” on the surface for a time, they will ultimately fall short of settling into the truth.

What Judas envisioned of Yahshua’s actions seemed quite reasonable to his thinking. He had seen Yahshua escape from angry crowds before. He had seen Him walking on water, raising the dead, and healing illnesses far beyond the abilities of the physicians of that day (and this day as well). Thus, there seemed to be some “evidence” to support his thoughts – if Yahshua were ever to be captured, He would have more than enough power to escape unharmed.

The problem with that thinking is, just because Yah has the ability, even the authority, to do something, His character has pre-ordained a certain “way” of accomplishing His goals. Those who experience the blessing of unity, being of “one mind” and “one Spirit” with the Savior,

know not only His limitless power, but also His personality. They are in agreement with His goals, and the path that He has outlined for achieving them. When Yah's power, but not His character, is (to a degree) understood, error and even persecution are sure to follow, and we might mention here everything from the Inquisition to the SDA trademark lawsuits.

As I mentioned a couple weeks ago when I began to examine this sixth letter, this is the one in which I began to introduce Rachel to some of the identifying doctrines of Adventism, including our understanding of the Law, the state of the dead, and other particulars. The goal was not, as it is among many evangelists, to "convert" her to a state of mere agreement with me. The goal was to bring her into unity with the Father and Son, to introduce her to their Persons. It is one thing to say, for example, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," and another to make a personal application of that and say, "Through Christ, whom I know, and who lives in me, I resist this or that particular temptation, and any and ALL temptations." The goal was to bring her into unity of purpose, and common expectation, with those who have committed themselves to seeing Yahshua as He IS, and letting that shared, accurate vision, direct the course of their lives.

As I mentioned, the Book of Acts is heavily dedicated to showing what is possible for a Church in unity. They had the right doctrines, the proper practices, and the correct teachings – but this was merely a consequence of the fact that they had been with the Son during His earthly ministry, and that He was now with them during His spiritual one.

We read of how the apostles came into their unity in this passage, despite their initial confusion: "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." (Acts 1:13, 14)

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

What began in one physical "place" was as a seed, planted to reap a harvest "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev 5:9) Nevertheless, location considerations aside, it is the same unity then as now that empowers the Church to accomplish the sure purposes of the Almighty. That is the "way" by which the Father and Son accomplish their goals on the earth.

It is also this unity (both with the Creator and our fellow believers) that casts out the faulty "image" of the Father and Son that dulls the mind of those who think, in ignorance, they are

worshipping the Members of the Godhead, when in fact they are worshipping false gods. They pay their service to gods of a tri-une nature, that promise everlasting security even to unrepentant sinners, that alter their own Law by giving authority over the Commandments to human beings, that remove blessings from appointed times that they once declared “sacred,” that cast their enemies into eternal, conscious torment for a few years of transgression...

The idea should be clear. We may give studies, and write articles, to prove these falsehoods wrong... but unless we live out the principles of those studies, and unless we apply what doctrine reveals to us, the hearts of the deceived cannot be truly won for the Kingdom of our Father.

We may praise the evangelists who reach out to others, and we may rightly find inspiration in acts of faith, such as pastor’s current walk across the country. However, when contacts are made that express interest, and they seek to find out about the Church to which the messenger belongs... it is the unity that they find among the brethren, speaking invincible testimonies, sharing their lives with one another, bearing one-another’s burdens, correcting and reproving one another in love, receiving this correction humbly and gratefully... this is a Church with power... this is what will seal the sincerely seeking hearts, turning them back to the Creator.

There is a closer place to which the people of Yah are called. There is a greater sharing to be experienced, so that we may rightly be described as being “with one accord in prayer and supplication.”

The Spirit’s indications to us – that we must communicate more often, and more openly – can no longer be lightly regarded. But Satan will suggest fears and temptations in an attempt to make those who would do this hesitate. He will present fear of judgment, fear of changes, fear of rebuke, fear of rejection. “If they come to truly know you, how can they love you?” “If they come to truly understand you, how can they accept you?” The voices of demons speak this way, and until the tormented soul can say, “No, but the Father has given me these brethren, as it says in His Word, to love me, and accept me, and to help me,” true unity can never be enjoyed.

Temptations such as these have been whispered among us by the Enemy of souls... sometimes in our spiritual “ears,” and sometimes in human voices from those who have been placed as obstacles in our lives. Loving concern has been misrepresented as hardness and coldness in times past. Reproofs designed to draw an erring soul closer have been received as statements of rejection... Satan will attempt to cast our fellow brethren in the worst light he can, just as He has attempted to (and often succeeded) in casting our Heavenly Father as an arbitrary and judgmental tyrant.

But just as we must see the “real” Yahshua in order to truly worship Him, “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” (2 Cor 10:5) so we must do with one another to enter into unity. We must identify our temptations – not necessarily to speak

them aloud, lest we glorify our own trials – but to know them as they are, and then to say, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

The new ways of communication that have been presented before us recently, I pray that we will make frequent and extensive use of these. What we have begun to do since the last feast, to speak more often, to share posts, to give opinions, to offer testimonies of praise, let us not draw back from continuing to do. We have, as a people, have committed to pressing closer together. If any of us, as individuals, have not made this a personal commitment, then I encourage you to do so now, putting aside all fear, all temptation, and to accept that Yah is waiting to give us the power of Pentecost, if only we will ready ourselves in unity to receive it.

And, once you have made that commitment, do not take your hand away from the plow. Do not, having begun a good work, pull away for any reason. If troubles arise, do not use these as a reason to be distracted... merely cast them aside or, if you cannot see how, bring them to the Family for healing.

Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts, twice warns us about the dangers of pulling back. In His Gospel He records the Master giving the simple but powerful warning: “Remember Lot's wife.” (Luke 17:32)

In the Book of Acts, our current focus, He shares this incident: “But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.’ And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.”

“Then Peter said unto [Sapphira], ‘How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.’

“Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.” (Acts 5:1-5, 9-10)

As long as we had our lives, they were our own. Yah has given us freedom to accept Him, or to reject Him. He has given us freedom to unite with His purposes and His people, or to reject them, or to stand at the sides in apparent neutrality (which is really just a subtler rejection). But... once we have said, “I will give this to Yahweh,” and given a public confession of our faith, then we know that the life we had before is “dead,” and, being dead, cannot keep us from a new life – everlasting.

It is in this life, this new life, this new creation, that we come to truly know the Father, and the Son, and the Good News that they have for us. It is in this new life that we have victory, and that invincible testimony of true Christianity. It is in this new life, and only in this new life, that we can be “one” with the Father, the Son, and Their People. It is the new creation that casts off temptations, saying, “I will not fear. I will not fail, nor be discouraged.” It is the new creation that presses together in unity, taking advantage of the avenues for blessing that we have been shown, and drawing closer and ever closer to our Creator and our brethren. It is the new life that has been given to us through repentance, faith, and baptism, that has been given to us through the Three Angel’s Message, that becomes united with the saints in glory, and that receives the Holy Spirit’s outpouring, to finish the work in triumph.

I pray that we all hold this vision before us, counting it worthy of any effort to obtain, and that those whom Yah will shortly bring into our areas of influence will see the blessing of unity alive in the Church of Yahshua.

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