

## Yahshua's Ministry of Service

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

Last week, we were looking at principles that may be gained from reading the first half of the fourth letter in the Letters to Rachel Series that we are planning to convert into audio format. I presented to the Church that I had been deeply impressed by the nature of Yahshua's ministry with regard to His healing the sick.

The Gospels have recorded many incidents of the Savior's miraculous acts of healing, and the powerful testimony that came about due to these acts. We examined the way in which the Son perfectly reflects the character of the Father, even in this (deliberately chosen) ministry of healing...

We saw that both had conditions for being healed, ceasing from sin, and actively pursuing righteousness. We saw that in both the Old and New Testaments, Yahweh provided health to His people before they were capable of true obedience, and then set before them a choice – “Because I am the One who has healed you, be faithful to me. Maintain my covenant, and you will continue to be spared.” In the New Covenant, Yahshua healed, and then gave the recently recovered instructions on several occasions.

Health, just like right-actions, is an element of holiness. The word “Holy” means to be set apart, to be sanctified, to be significant to the Almighty. To be “set apart” means to be different from the world; and it is from the world – the world that reflects Satan's character – from which all manner of disease has arisen. That being the case, we must conclude that it is the natural state of the saints is one of health, a health that we did not earn as a result of obedience. Yet, by obedience to the laws of Scripture, our bodies, and the spiritual principles we have learned, that health will be maintained and increased.

Now, the healing ministry of Yahshua had several purposes. It revealed the character of the Father as a kind and sensitive Healer. It demonstrated the divine nature of the Son, who had authority over both evil spirits and biological illnesses. It drew attention to the doctrines that Yahshua was teaching and, while this was not the primary goal – as I will discuss this week – it did gain Him notice. Considering that Luke was a physician himself, it is not difficult to imagine that this may have played a role in his introduction to the faith. The healing ministry of Yahshua also showed a clear difference between His principles and those of the Pharisees, who saw healing as a work to be avoided on sacred days, and was one of the issues that raised their anger against Him, leading up to His sacrifice on our behalf.

But the acts of physical healing, the removal of disease and the casting out of evil spirits... these by themselves were not enough to win the hearts of most who had come to follow Him.

In the Book of John we read of this incident: “Then Yahshua said unto them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.’” (John 6:53-58)

The result of this is recorded thus, “From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.” (John 6:66)

Many had been drawn to Yahshua because of His miracles. Many had witnessed His acts of healing, and His feeding of many with limited resources. They may have seen, or heard of, Him walking on water, turning water into wine, and even raising the dead. In these things they rejoiced, saying, “By these things we know that Yahweh is with us.”

But Yahweh being “with” us means more than merely reaping the benefits of His presence. To be in the presence of the Most High is a fearsome thing, and just as the healing showed that the Father and Son shared the same Spirit of love, so the words of the Son showed that the Two shared the same Spirit of holiness, and eventually of judgment.

Yahshua said, “And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.” (John 12:47-50)

Some may ask, “How can Yahshua say that He does not judge, when He says His words will judge? What is the difference? Doesn’t He judge through His words, or are the two separate?”

Yahshua does not condemn any (this is how “judge” is used in that context); however, His words reveal a standard of righteousness which all must meet if they will see the Father. Those who reject Yahshua’s words deny also the Father, who gave Him those words to say, and must meet those words again, and give account of their rebellion, in the Day of Judgment.

When Yahshua gave “hard” sayings, these words judged those who had been following merely for the sake of the healing ministry. They wished the benefits, but did not love the righteousness, of the Healer, and therefore they turned back and abandoned Him. They had understood the healing aspects of Yahshua, but they had not drawn close to His character, to His Spirit’s essential nature.

More significant, but less “flashy,” than Yahshua’s acts of healing were those acts that most clearly revealed who He was as a divine Person. That is, Yahshua’s acts of service.

Perhaps more important than healing the sick, casting out devils, and even raising the dead, was the way that our Master served those around Him in ordinary things. He, who was infinitely greater in wisdom, and power, emptied Himself of all His divine majesty to become our Servant... and it is this aspect, this reality, of His earthly ministry that truly has the power to win the heart from evil forever.

Yes, the ministry of healing allows people to shake loose from Babylon’s darkness – to sit up and pay attention... but what is it they are attending? What is it that the Father wants them to notice?

It is Himself, Yahshua the Servant. It is Yahweh the Minister to all people.

When Yahshua spoke of His Father, He was ministering to the people on a heart-level, telling them how to draw near to the Creator, and experience His love. When He went about teaching in the temple, and out in the streets, He was bringing the people knowledge that was kept from them by the traditions and burdensome rituals of the religious leaders.

Among His disciples, Yahshua acted the part of a servant in ways that they could not readily appreciate. For example, He placed them in positions where they could best be servants themselves, and at the same time refine themselves toward that perfect divine standard. Judas, for example, who ultimately betrayed Him, was given a position of great trust – the treasury – and this would have allowed him, had he been willing, to confront his own willfulness, his own worldly mindset, and be saved.

Yahshua’s ministry of service was more general than His healing ministry, because it requires faith to receive divine healing. We know from the Scriptures that those who encountered Yahshua could only be healed according to the degree of trust that they placed in the Savior. Yet even those who do not have the faith to receive miraculous healing can see the character of Yahshua in those who serve them with His Spirit. Those who might not have been able to say, “Through Christ, my faith has made me whole,” can say, “I see that you have been with the Master,” although perhaps they would not use those words very often.

Yahshua has instructed His people well regarding the servant spirit. Turn the other cheek. Give to the poor. Esteem others greater than ourselves. These are the ways in which that Spirit is made manifest through our actions.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of Yahshua’s healing spirit was revealed the night He ate the Passover with His disciples. We may read of it here – the passage is lengthy, but read it carefully, and with understanding:

“He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.

“Then cometh He to Simon Peter, and Peter saith unto him, ‘Lord, dost thou wash my feet?’

“Yahshua answered and said unto him, ‘What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.’

“Peter saith unto Him, ‘Thou shalt never wash my feet.’ Yahshua answered him, ‘If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.’

“Simon Peter saith unto Him, ‘Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.’

“Yahshua saith to him, ‘He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all,’ for He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, ‘Ye are not all clean.’

“So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, ‘Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.’ (John 13:4-17)

Consider, two disciples were offended that night. Judas, we know, was offended unto death, leaving this intimate fellowship to betray his Lord. Peter, however, was also offended by the idea that Yahshua, the great and mighty Healer, Teacher, and Rabbi, should be “reduced” to a servant, to a washer of feet.

But Yahshua saw no disgrace in being a servant of others; in fact, it was the very heart of His ministry, not only to do those things that men hold in high regard, but also those things that they consider beneath their notice. To Peter, the idea that Yahshua should wash his feet as a common servant was difficult to absorb, yet Yahshua said to him, “If you do not allow me to do this, you have no part with me.” If you do not understand, He said, why I am doing this, and what it says about my Spirit, you will never be one with my Father and I.

Peter, desiring to be united with Yahshua more than he was bothered by the spirit of servitude, reversed himself immediately. Did he fully, after that change of opinion, understand? No... he later denied Yahshua during His trial, and caused himself deep sorrow. It was not until Pentecost that he became filled with the Spirit necessary to accomplish his appointed work... but this incident was significant in forming him, in preparing him for those steps toward his full conversion.

The revelation of Yahshua the Servant was, perhaps, the beginning of true conversion in many of the Twelve. Up until that point, there had been disagreement, and strife. There had been infighting for positions of closeness to the Master, and jealousy when it seemed that others (such as Peter, James and John) were favored above them.

But here, now, when the Master served them, they became ashamed of their selfishness. At least, that was the case for most. Judas, the betrayer, only felt disgusted, and refused to look at himself in the mirror of Yahshua's service. He turned away from repentance, and his defects of character, unconfessed, unconquered, were projected outward unto others, and in his pride he considered himself superior to the others, and best able to bring about the results that he desired.

We know how that sorry record ends.

When we serve others, we do more than practice humility. We may also bring all the defects of character in those whom we serve to the surface. How a man treats a servant often reveals his true nature, and shows how, if given little, they would react if given much. If we allow someone to have authority over us, we may see how they would act if given the keys to the Kingdom of everlasting life.

Now, Yahshua said, "Ye should do as I have done to you."

This is a statement heavy with meaning, promise, and judgment. How do we, as individuals, serve others? How shall we, as a Church, serve the world? How do we, as a Church, serve one another? Have we considered this? Do we consider it sufficiently?

There are things that we may learn from Yahshua's washing of His disciples' feet. There are principles here that begin in the home, but extend outwards, with our individual ministries, to cover all the world in agape love. It is the work of the saints, those who follow Yahshua's path perfectly, to actively consider how we are best to serve others... how we may best edify them, building them up for Heaven, and showing them the joy of our Father's salvation.

We are given the tools, the doctrine, and the examples, to know the principles that ought to be applied. While we cannot speak of every possible situation, or all the ways in which one person may serve another, we are given a Spirit of love, and a Spirit of service. It is written, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." (Mat 10:19) Likewise, if we are listening to the voice of the Spirit, in that hour when we may serve another, revealing to them the character of our Master who gave His all to serve us, in that hour we will be shown what we shall do.