

A Willingness to Die – Part 2ⁱ

And they (we) overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Rev. 12:10-11)

The first component of this 3-point strategy to defeat Satan in our lives has to do with **The Atonement**, which is the shed Blood of Messiah *Yeshua*, as referred to in theological circles. The next two have to do with you and me: the word of our testimony (about the Blood) and our willingness to do something with our lives, even if it means dying. Nothing can be added or taken away from the first component—the already shed blood of the Messiah. But what we do with in terms of what we preach about it (what we say about it to others) and how much are we willing to risk losing in terms of self is what makes the difference. Part of the problem in the redeemed community is that there is little understanding of the Atonement. We constrain the preaching of “*Messiah and Him crucified*” to humans only when it is to be preached also to the principalities and powers. We must also go to the guards (the evil spirits keeping people under spiritual bondage) and remind that they have no legal right to keep the captives there. We must remember to tell (in prayer) the principalities and powers holding our loved ones (our people) captive that “*Our commander in chief Yeshua has defeated their commander in chief HaSatan, and to let our people (our loved ones) go.*” Proclaiming Messiah and Him crucified we have both the *Power of G-d and the wisdom of G-d*—Rabbi Sha’ul said that he determined to know nothing but Messiah and Him crucified. (See 1 Cor. 1:24-25). Thus, the second component tells us that when we pray for a situation where G-d’s Will has already stated His desire in the matter, we are providing the legal and moral justification for G-d to release His power to validate the title that Messiah has to that thing or situation.

The Overcomer’s Willingness to Die

The third component in our victory in Messiah is secured as we are willing to die—“*loving not our lives unto the death.*” Most people seem to interpret the passage as a reference to martyrdom, but it also goes beyond physical death. The most difficult death is the death to self. 2 Cor. 5:17 states: “*...old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*” How many things? ALL THINGS. How many? A-L-L. It states that there is a point in time when old things pass away and they are replaced with new ones.

In the first message, we proposed for your consideration, that all things were made new, not at the point of your conversion, but at the moment of conception. Scripture states that I should no longer know myself in the way I was known in the flesh. Even though the fact remains that I may have been abused as a child or maybe you were raped as a youngster, or you grew up in a home where the devil used your parents to destroy any good image of what parents should be, those facts remain. But G-d can use grace (the desire and power to do His Will) that is given to you the moment you take your position in Messiah to go back and reread those facts without the sting of bitterness and anger.

Forgiveness—Dying to Self Seventy Times Seven

²¹Then Kefa came up and said to him, “Rabbi, how often can my brother sin against me and I have to forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²²“No, not seven times,” answered Yeshua, “but seventy times seven!” ²³Because of this, the Kingdom of Heaven may be compared with a king who decided to settle accounts with his deputies. ²⁴Right away they brought forward a man who owed him many millions (\$20 million), ²⁵and since he couldn’t pay, his master ordered that he, his wife, his children and all his possessions be sold to pay the debt. ²⁶But the servant fell down before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷So out of pity for him, the master let him go and forgave the debt. ²⁸“But as that servant was leaving, he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him some tiny sum (\$20). He grabbed him and began to choke him, crying, ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ ²⁹His fellow servant fell before him and begged, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’

³⁰But he refused; instead, he had him thrown in jail until he should repay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were extremely distressed; and they went and told their master everything that had taken place. ³²Then the master summoned his servant and said, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt just because you begged me to do it. ³³Shouldn't you have had pity on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?" ³⁴And in anger his master turned him over to the jailers for punishment until he paid back everything he owed. ³⁵This is how my heavenly Father will treat you, unless you each forgive your brother from your hearts."

Let me ask you a very personal question: "Has anybody ever hurt you?" You don't need to think too long, right? Why is it that painful experiences have instant replay? Well, that is one of the characteristics of bitterness and anger. Bitterness comes with instant and constant replay. Even though something happened way back, until we are able to deal with that, until we are able to know the people not in the flesh but in Messiah, bitterness will always enslave us. And maybe this is what is happening to you, even though it happened a long time ago, and it happens every day and again and again...

Dying to Self

Let us look at the cast of characters: a king, deputy-1 who owed the king 10,000 talents (about \$20M), deputy-2 who owed deputy-1 100 denarii (about \$20), an undisclosed number of fellow deputies (slaves), and an undisclosed number of torturers (jail keepers). To put it in perspective, Israel paid a sum of \$1.5M to Rome (via the Roman IRS system of pay or die) and the sum that deputy-1 owes the king is 14.5 times the total taxes from all of Israel to Rome in 1 year! Now I want to raise five questions and then we will answer these questions.

1. Why did the king forgive the full debt if deputy-1 was only asking for an extension on the promissory note? The slave never asked for forgiveness. He said "give me time and I will repay you" How much? "Everything!" Why did the king never entertain that and moved directly to canceling the debt? (see verse 26)
2. Why is it that the forgiven deputy-1 used violence in trying to collect a meager \$20 after receiving an unsolicited gift of \$20,000,000? Doesn't make any sense! The fellow is given \$20M, first thing he does is choke the other deputy. What would you have done if it were you? Suppose someone gives you a lottery ticket and you get a call tonight that you have won \$20M in the lottery? Wouldn't you say "Hallelujah? Look what is happened to me?" But what would happen if instead you grab someone in the congregation that owes you \$20 and you grab them by the neck and throw them in prison. What triggered that reaction? Doesn't make sense! Would you like to know why he reacted that way? (vv. 30)
3. What is there no mention of deputy-2 being released from jail? For all practical purposes he still there, in jail. Why is there that omission? Would you like to know the answer? (vv. 30)
4. The king says to put deputy-1 in jail until he pays everything he owes. How can you pay back an un-payable debt in jail? If he were out of jail he could do some moonlighting. He could do something to earn money. But the Bible is very precise; it says he is to be put in jail until he pays how much? Everything! Does this make sense? Would you like to find the answer to that? And we will... (vv. 34)
5. How can a loving Heavenly Father turn over you and me to the torturers? ("Entonces su señor, enojado, le entregó á los verdugos, hasta que pagase todo lo que le debía" verse 34, Reina Valera 1909 Verdugos in Spanish areimps or demons.) Messiah said: "This is how my heavenly Father will treat you, unless you each forgive your brother from your hearts." I have no problem with G-d disciplining me, or with the L-rd chastising or even with the consequences of my sin having to be faced. But being turned over to torturers? Torturers inflict pain for the sake of pain itself. There is no redeeming value in torture.

The First Question - vv. 26-27

There was no way that deputy-1 could have paid such a debt. When a debt is unpayable the only way to deal with it is through grace. But he was a very proud man. He said: "I will repay you." How much? Everything! The

king forgave everything because he knew that the deputy could not pay. So he extended grace. That is the reason the king never entertained the notion of giving an extension.

The Second & Third Question - vv. 28

Why did he throw in jail the other deputy who owed only \$20? Very simple, he never received the gift of forgiveness. As far as he was concerned, grace was extended to him, but he was too proud to receive it. He was saying *"I will repay you everything."* Here we have the tension between cancellation and extension, between grace and works, between humility and pride. And here we have the sad case of someone who was given one of the greatest gifts ever, but he refused it because he was not wired intellectually or emotionally to hear what he was given. Why was that? Perhaps all these years he had been living in the land of *"if only..."* *"If I could only collect the \$20 that deputy-2 owes me, I will be in a better position to have some leverage with the king as I renegotiate my loan of \$20M."* The tyranny of *"if only..."* He seemed to be blaming on deputy-2 (the \$20 that he owed him), the entire debt he owed the king. Can somebody be that silly? I think so. We do the same thing. Psychology serves us to excuse ourselves very well. We blame it on our father, mother, brothers, economics, race, neighborhood, upbringing, etc. We say, *"If only my father had been a better godly man, I would be a better spiritual believer today."* *"If only my mother had taught me this or that I'd be able to overcome..."* *"If only my youth leader were more dedicated, if the ladies prayed more, if only, if only, if only..."* We look at our own failures and rather than saying: *'I have failed'* we say *'Somebody out there owes me.'* So what do we do? We go around throwing people in jail. Even though we believe salvation is by grace, if *Yasser Arafat* came through the door and repented, we would forgive everything and extend him the right hand of fellowship, forgetting all he had done in the past. That is, until the moment he graduates and becomes a believer and is baptized into the kingdom of G-d—any mistake he makes from then on, he pays for it. I guess sanctification is by works, the way we do it... We are so ready to forgive sin, but we are so judgmental when a believer fails. So we are doing the same thing and that is why we cannot forgive each other, because we never understood what the Atonement means. We never understood the beauty of the grace of G-d. So what do we do instead? We take every offense done to us and we turn it into a stone. And with cement of our bitterness we begin to build a prison around us. And because bitterness is addictive everyday we need a greater dosage than the day before. And even though people make mistakes, we make them bigger and bigger and bigger every time because we need a bigger stone until we have a jailhouse built around us. And when are finished building that jailhouse, we have no more room for G-d in our lives. That is why G-d knows that the only alternative to break through is to have the torturers brought in. The worst sin is not murder, fornication, adultery, sedition, or even blasphemy, although those are serious sins. The worst sin is pride because it forces G-d to push us away and resist us (James 1:6). Any sin you commit, if you humble yourself, G-d draws near. But pride is like bad breath, everybody notices it, except the one who has it. Have you not sat by someone with bad breath and you ask yourself the question *"How come they do not notice it when it is so obvious?"* Such a person has no frame of reference. Everything has been impregnated with that foul smell, so they themselves cannot tell. When pride takes over, G-d can no longer bring conviction of sin unless he enlists the help of the specialists in the area of pride. Who are these? Satan and his demons, those are the torturers. People begin to go downhill, downhill, and downhill until finally they come to their senses and reflect that *'in my Father's house there is plenty of food to eat, and here I perish of hunger, I better get up and return to my Father's house...'* When we analyze every tragedy that sits across from us in counseling sessions they all go back to a point where a decision between (1) humbling themselves and calling their actions sin before Almighty G-d, or (2) explain/justify it away. And without failure, every major scandal or bad situation goes back to the point where a person decides to get themselves up to the throne of the Most High and chooses to call his sin a *"NO SIN."* And then what happens? The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 5:8-10 that we must humble ourselves and come under the mighty hand of G-d. And everything that we do not put under the mighty hand of G-d is fair game for whom? The devil as a roaring lion that will devour us, that's who. And perhaps they make it into the kingdom without an arm an eye, etc. *Yeshua* spoke about these that make it into the kingdom. What a

tragedy? How much of this could we not prevent? That is why G-d who loves us so dearly and who desires fellowship with us will stop at nothing, even to turn us over to the torturers until we come to our senses. That answers the question: he turns us over to torturers because of pride. Why does that hurt so much in our lives today? Because we are too proud to forgive. We are like people who if we are told to be at the airport at 9 AM, show up late at 9:01 AM and miss the plane. But when someone arrives 55 minutes late, also missing the plane, we justify ourselves and brag about our being “better” by saying “*shame on you, you are late! 55 minutes late! You are late, late.*” What’s the difference 1 minute or 55 minutes, we both missed the plane! The reason why this is still hurting is because we refuse to apply the grace of G-d to those that hurt. We haven’t understood what it means to lose our lives, so we can gain freedom. And we do not wish those people well. We want them to pay the consequences of the debt.

Question 4

How can a debt be paid by going jail? Why does it say go to jail until you pay? Because an unpayable debt can only be dealt through grace. So the king very wisely was putting him in jail where he would have no one to blame until one day he would come to his senses and say: “*unless I accept the gift, I will never get out of here.*” G-d allows us to go downhill and to be hurt, and face the consequences of our wrongdoing until we come to the point where we can harm and do damage to no one but ourselves and we say “*L-rd will you forgive me please, I need to get out of here.*” The only way to deal with grace is by accepting it, admitting we need it and applying it. I want to challenge you today to apply this grace to others that have hurt you. The Holy Spirit is illuminating your conscience right now and is showing you the person that hurt you so badly. Also, there is someone that is more difficult than forgiving someone else, that is, you. Will you forgive yourself today? You are going to stay in a jail until you realize that there is no way you can pay for any sin except through Messiah’s grace. You have to forgive yourself the same way the L-rd has forgiven you.

Question 5

Why is deputy-2 never released from jail by the king? Because the king did not put him in there. Only deputy-1 was in a position to release them. Do you realize that there are people today that are in a spiritual jail because you and I are keeping them there? {Be tender to the Ruach at this moment.} Maybe someone reminds you, “*do you remember so and so?*” And immediately a spiritual indigestion begins in you. “*Do you know that they are trying to come back to the L-rd?*” “*Umm,*” you say, “*I’ll wait until I see it.*” “*He sends you regards.*” “*Not him, he is a manipulator...*” What are we saying? “*I have a judgment here against that person, and that person is going remain in jail because he owes me...*” There are people, even here in our congregation, who will never reach their highest potential because someone is holding a mortgage, a spiritual judgment on that person and their ministry. Sadly, there are people here who also need to forgive themselves... The L-rd already forgave you. Do not let the devil bring defeat in your life! You have to defeat him with the Atonement, the word of your testimony and because you love not your life (yourself) even unto the death. That means you will not you’re your own self in the flesh ANY LONGER. From now on you are prepared to say, “*That may have been so and so in the flesh, but in Messiah, everything was made new.*” This means you are free. You see, it is your jail, not G-d’s. Are you going to empty your jailhouse today? Your inward man may say, “*But sin doth abound.*” However, Scripture said, “*Where sin doth abound, grace doth much more abound.*” Do you realize that such a painful experience could become your life message? That the most painful thing in your life can become your greatest asset? What was the greatest evil ever perpetrated by man? The death of Messiah. But Messiah wrapped grace on this sin and as a consequence it has become to us the greatest event of all time, our forgiveness. “*But I am not Yeshua, you say.*” Look at Stephen in Acts 7 (I’ll review his death). He forgave *Sha’ul*, among the crowd and because *Sha’ul* was forgiven, *Yeshua* could meet him on the Road to Damascus, and then this same *Sha’ul* became the great *Rabbi Sha’ul* of the *B’rit Chadasha*. He had the opportunity to become one of the authors of Scripture because Stephen never put him in jail. There might be a “*Sha’ul*” in your life that needs to be

forgiven today, and be set free. That is why Scripture says, “*Bless them that curse you.*” We do not curse, but we might say, “*I hope you get what is coming to you...*” What’s the difference? When we bless them, we remove the jurisdiction that the devil has to use them against us! The devil cannot use demons to agitate them to hurt, whom? Ultimately US! The devil cannot and will not understand grace. You pay the consequences of putting people in jail regardless. {Please be sensitive to the Ruach.}

There are two circles inside of us, the circle of emotions and the circle of convictions. Anger and bitterness are emotions. You cannot fight them back with good feelings and love because emotions have no substance. When there is smoke in the kitchen, you do not get garbage bags to bag the smoke. Smoke has no substance. You walk away until the smoke clears and then come back. Maybe you try and feel good about it. You cannot feel good about something terrible that was done to you. But this is what you can do. You can make an entry in the circle of convictions. You can say that today you made the decision to forgive, and that becomes the conviction. And every time the emotion of bitterness assails you, you can say to yourself and to Satan, look, on this date I forgave that person. I bless them. As you do that you will see that person flourish and be restored. And one day you will have the pleasure and joy of having that relationship restored. From now on, we know no one according to the flesh... all things are made new...

And we have overcome Satan by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony; and by the fact that we no longer love ourselves (our lives) even unto the death.

ⁱ Adapted from Ed Silvano, 1992