

The Gift of T'Shuvah

This week's *Torah* Portion is *Nitzavim-VaYeLech* (Deut 29:9-31:30), which means “*Ye Stand-And He Went.*” Moshe is delivering his last message to our people, and they are all standing in front of the Jordan as they listen:

“Today you are standing, all of you, before יהוה your Elohim - your heads, your tribes, your leaders and your officers - all the men of Isra’el, along with your little ones, your wives and your foreigners here with you in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water. The purpose is that you should enter into the covenant of יהוה your Elohim and into his oath which יהוה your Elohim is making with you today, so that he can establish you today for himself as a people, and so that for you he will be Elohim - as he said to you and as he swore to your ancestors, to Avraham, Yitz’chak and Ya’akov. But I am not making this covenant and this oath only with you. Rather, I am making it both with him who is standing here with us today before יהוה our Elohim and also with him who is not here with us today... When the time arrives that all these things have come upon you, both the blessing and the curse which I have presented to you; and you are there among the nations to which יהוה your Elohim has driven you; then, at last, you will start thinking about what has happened to you; and you will return to יהוה your Elohim and pay attention to what he has said, which will be exactly what I am ordering you to do today – you and your children, with all your heart and all your being. At that point, יהוה your Elohim will reverse your exile and show you mercy; he will return and gather you from all the peoples to which יהוה your Elohim scattered you. If one of yours was scattered to the far end of the sky, יהוה your Elohim will gather you even from there; he will go there and get you. יהוה your Elohim will bring you back into the land your ancestors possessed, and you will possess it; he will make you prosper there, and you will become even more numerous than your ancestors.” (Deut 29:9-14, 30:1-5 CJB)

In last week’s message we discussed that we are in the season of Repentance/*T’Sshuvah* (the Hebrew word that means “*to answer or turn around/return or repent*”). The Arroyo household has been experiencing this first hand. Repentance is a sort of death and rebirth – a death of the past life and the birth of a new life and a new creation: “*Therefore, if anyone is united with the Messiah, he is a new creation - the old has passed; look, what has come is fresh and new!* (2 Cor. 5:17)” This is a re-awakening from the sleep induced by sin, and manifests itself in the power of the Holy Spirit working in the heart of the believer who trusts in God’s salvation through *Yeshua*. Clearly *T’Sshuvah* is a gift from God and involves four basic steps:

1. Forsaking the sin: “*Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.*” (Proverbs 28:13)

2. Regretting the breach in your relationship with God and others: “*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O G- d, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O L-rd, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.” (Psalm 51)*

3. Confessing the truth before God and making amends (restitution) with others we have harmed: “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” (1 John

1:19) *“Therefore, openly acknowledge your sins to one another, and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16) “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24)*

4. Forgetting the past and moving forward with the L-rd: *“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Mashiach Yeshua” (Philippians 3:13-14)*

The formula for Repentance is: Remember + Review + Return

Remember means to bring back into our minds the fact that everything that we are and that we hope is because of our Savior, Messiah *Yeshua*. Without Him we were hopelessly lost and had nothing to look forward to. Scripture reminds us: *“¹¹Therefore, remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth... ¹²at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Isra’el. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God’s promise. You were in this world without hope and without God. ¹³But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah’s blood. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace - he has made us both one and has broken down the m’chitzah which divided us ¹⁵by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity (one new man) and thus make shalom.” (Eph. 2:11-15)*

Revue means to re-examine, re-analyze, re-study, reconsider, retrospect, critique, inspect, and to thoroughly reinvestigate WHAT He has done for us. In this the month of *T’Shuvah* we want to continue making progress toward making peace with God and with man (See Romans 5:1).

What, if anything, can stop the blessing of God in our lives? Is the working of the Father through His Messiah *Yeshua* subject to any deterrents? We know the answer: unbelief.

“⁵³When Yeshua had finished these parables, he left ⁵⁴and went to his home town. There he taught them in their synagogue in a way that astounded them... ⁵⁷And they took offense at him. But Yeshua said to them, “The only place people don’t respect a prophet is in his home town and in his own house.” ⁵⁸And he did few miracles there because of their lack of trust (unbelief, KJV).” (Matt. 13:53-58)

He said to them, “Because you have such little trust (unbelief, KJV)! Yes! I tell you that if you have trust as tiny as a mustard seed, you will be able to say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there!’ and it will move; indeed, nothing will be impossible for you!” (Matt. 17:20)

“¹Then Yeshua left and went to his home town, and his talmidim followed him...The only place people don’t respect a prophet is in his home town, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” ⁵So he could do no miracles there, other than lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶He was amazed at their lack of trust (unbelief, KJV)” (Mark 6:1-6). See also Mark 9:23-24, Mark 16:14, Romans 11:17-32, Hebrews 3:12, 19 and Hebrews 4:6, 11.

Unbelief stops the Lord’s blessings and prevents miracles. Unbelief makes us ineffective against principalities and powers because it keeps us *“being weighed in the balance and found wanting” (Dan. 5:27)*. *“...He could do no miracles there...” (Mark 6:5)* Unbelief causes *Yeshua* to want to rebuke us. Unbelief would have stopped Abraham from reaching the Father’s goals for him. Unbelief is keeping our people from being grafted into their own Olive tree. Unbelief leads to apostasy. Unbelief keeps us from entering our Shabbat rest and fall short of the mark. I agree with the father of the child in Mark 9:24 *“Lord, help thou my unbelief!”*

Return. *Yom Teruah* is around the corner – what shall we do? We should stop our falling short of the mark – it is time to start trusting the Lord, His *Ruach* and His Messiah *Yeshua*. We need to *“possess the land.”* No wonder Scripture states emphatically: *“without faith, it is impossible to be well pleasing to God...” (Hebrews 11:6)* Since truly many of us are operating in various degrees of unbelief – it is time to stop it! By His *Ruach*, we can obtain His help for our unbelief. Repent!