

Resolutions, Convictions or Preferences?

♪ ...*I delight myself in You, in the Glory of Your Presence...* ♪” (Overwhelmed, Weaver & Wickham, 2011)

We are in the most explosive information age, the most technologically advanced, and there seems to be no shortage of affluence. I am convinced that *Adonai's* message to us remains the same – to finish the course, maintain our bearings and keep our focus on Him. The first and greatest commandment is and continues to be “*The first is, ‘Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.*’³⁰ *And you shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.*’³¹ *The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these”* (Mark 12:29-31). Our *first love* and our *first priority* must be *Adonai*. The Lord is still looking for those that *delight in Him*. Not those who *delight in His system*, not those who *delight in His religion*, but those who delight *with Him and in Him* above all. Our heart should continue to be a heart that is entirely sold out to *Yeshua*.

Will the Lord let this wicked generation go unpunished? Is He going to *look the other way* in 2022 and spare our society of its sin consequences? Do you really believe that He will let our generation continue in its merry way, mocking Him, and making His Word and Savior of none effect? Think again.

Which of our *New Year Resolutions* will you and I actually keep this time around? I wish we would keep them all, but we do not seem to. Should we not at least keep the one that really count – to make *Yeshua* the Lord King of our life – with all of our heart, with all of our soul and with all of our strength?

I believe this will be a year of Scriptural Convictions. What is a Scriptural conviction? A conviction is a basic Scriptural principle that we purpose to follow, whatever the cost. Suppose someone says: *I have a conviction that I should try to overcome an overeating (or a drinking, pornography, smoking, cursing, or spending) problem.* Is this really a conviction? No! A conviction must be *seen in daily living*. The above statement is really a person’s *preference*. Or suppose someone else says: *I have a conviction that as a man I should lead my family spiritually, but in some situations this may change.* This is also a preference because convictions *must not change*. And if someone else says: *I have a conviction that some of the television programs that I watch are harmful for my and my children’s spiritual life.* Is this a conviction? Not quite – a conviction *MUST be consistent*. If it is harmful for children, you better realize that it is harmful for adults also. How about this one: *I have a conviction that I should not tithe.* What do you think about this one? This is an un-Scriptural conviction. Are we better than our father Jacob who paid tithes on everything: “... *and of everything you give me, I will faithfully return one-tenth to you*” (Gen. 28:22).

As we begin this pivotal new year in our life and congregation, we ought to examine ourselves first to see if in any way we have in any way *left our first love* (as shared in last week’s message). This is not just an evaluation of our motives, our work, our commitment, or even our suffering for His sake. Instead, this is a call at the deepest level possible to ask of us the question *Do I really love you Lord?* Do we (I) *get into the doing and living a Messianic Lifestyle in such a way that my deepest feelings of love get “masked” and wane?* If even a little bit of this has or is happening in us, we need (like the Messianic Community in Ephesus in the Book of Revelation) to repent and do the first works again. We love Scriptures such as Psalm 37:4: “*Delight yourself in Adonai, and He will give you the requests (desires) of your heart.*” We (I) tend to focus on the “*desires of my heart*” part instead of in the “*delight yourself in the Lord*” part. However, this in fact, a pre-requisite. Are you delighting in *Adonai* today? Are you delighting in *Adonai* right now? Are you concerned about Him: His feelings, His agenda, His commandments, His (abundant) life, His reputation, His character, or His desires for you as you are concerned about your own feelings and agenda, your freedom, your life, your reputation, your character or what you want? I confess that I find myself at times weak and unfocussed and lacking in *agape love* (genuine love) toward Him. I serve Him, I work for

Him, I obey Him, I do His bidding, I strive to live a true Messianic lifestyle, but I must ask: *do I delight in Him?* Perhaps if I *delighted more*, additional *desires of my heart would be fulfilled*.

What does it mean to do the first works again? I believe that speaks of the times when we first came to Him. O what great days were those! For many of you that came to the Lord after living in sin for a while, I am sure you remember those first days after you became a Believer. Internally, I was changed, and it showed. My life changed, my attitudes changed, my internals changed, and yes, I loved Him so much! However, for many of you that have been Believers a lot of your life or for you that came to the Lord in early childhood, there may not have been any *drastic* changes in belief, attitudes, and lifestyle. Maybe for you the first love years were not so pronounced. Regardless, we are all to return and repent and rededicate ourselves to first **Love Him**, second **Love Him**, and third **Love Him...** What a difference will such a resolution/commitment would make! It will literally bring about *"Life, and Life more abundantly."*

A new year is upon us. Maybe you have not made your **New Year's Resolutions** yet. If so, let's make some today, even now. Will you make it your priority and your New Year resolution to *"Love Adonai your God and His Son Yeshua with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength?"* I can't imagine anything more important than making Him the center of our universe. If so, our delight in Him will increase and as a consequence His delight in *Kehilat Kol Simcha* will also increase. Then, maybe, He will give US the desires of our hearts. *"Even so, Bo Yeshua Bo, Amen and Amen!"*

May this be your best day your and best year ever! Shabbat Shalom!