

Choose Ye

²⁶"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse (ברכה וקללה) – ²⁷the blessing, if you listen (tish'ma, future 2nd person, command form of sh'ma) to the mitzvot of יהוה your God that I am commanding you today, ²⁸but the curse, if you do not listen (tish'ma) to the mitzvot of Adonai (יהוה) your God, but turn from the way I am commanding you today, to go after other gods you have not known" (Deut. 11:26-28).

Adonai (יהוה) has given us free moral agency which means that life and death decisions are up to us. We have the power to choose between being blessed (life) or being cursed (death). In today's Believing World the idea of God allowing us to be cursed is foreign, almost unfathomable. In today's *Torah* reading we are cautioned to *choose ye today* that is to *take a closer look: to sh'ma is to live and not to sh'ma is to die*. Last year on August 27, 2022, I preached a message called "*Done!*" (iPhone's Siri response to a request) on this *Parsha*. The Holy Spirit quickened that name to me. I shared this was a beautiful and precise demonstration of what *Adonai* is looking for from us. He wants us to *Naase v'Nishma*, that is, to do and to obey (i.e., to demonstrate that we heard Him by performing His desires *quickly* in obedience to Him). We should want to respond to what He has said to us (His Word) with the simplest of responses, *done!* The most complicated things in life, when studied and understood thoroughly and completely are inherently simple. The irreducible minimum of living for *Adonai* is to be able to respond to His Word with *done!* No ifs, no ands, and no buts. And no hesitation! Our first and final response once we are clear about what He has said is to be able to say: *done!*

There are certain Scriptural presuppositions (hypotheses) that are at the core of our *KS* ministry. One prominent tenet is the desire to *walk* out (not just *talk* about) His ways. Historically, *KS* people have been people of convictions, commitment, and trust. We do not *nickel-dime* one another in our affairs. We understand that *Adonai* is interested in the daily affairs of His people, and He is much more than capable in overseeing all matters concerning His flock, which He purchased with His own Blood. Here are some presuppositions that guide our congregation's path in establishing a foundation of many godly generations.

Kol Simcha Presuppositions

I. Concerning Adonai

- All Scripture is profitable and valuable for walking in His ways: *"¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for restoration, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the person belonging to God may be capable, fully equipped for every good deed"* (2 Tim 3:16-17).
- The Father (*Abba*), the Son (*Yeshua*) and the Spirit (*Ruach Elohim*) **DO NOT, CANNOT, AND WILL NOT CHANGE**, (*Eccl. 3:14-15*), (*Mal. 3:6*), (*Heb. 13:8*), (*James 1:17*).
- Messiah *Yeshua is HaTorah (the Word) made flesh* (*John 1:14*).
- Throughout His life *Yeshua* provided many examples of how to walk in the Father's ways (see *Luke 2:52*), He demonstrated: **Attentiveness, Obedience, Wisdom, Truthfulness, Loyalty, Patience, Gratefulness, Deference, Humility, etc.** *"All things work together for good in order to conform us to the image of His Son"* (*Ro. 8:28-29*). If *we lack character*, it is revealed immediately in *our attitude*.
- The Power to live the lifestyle comes from His Grace: Grace is the desire, and the power *Adonai* gives us to do His will (*1 Cor. 15:10, Titus 2:11, Eph. 2:8,9, Phil. 1:2; 2:13, Heb. 12:15, Jas. 4:16*).
- **Biblical Standards Grow Out of: Scriptural Principles, Godly Character, His Grace, and Scriptural Disciplines.** Our humanistic *society reacts harshly to these standards*, but **God's Wisdom is better than weapons of war** (*Eccl. 9:18*) and *KS* is a congregation striving to be part of His standard.

II. Concerning His Congregation

- In His sovereignty, *He has gifted His flock and its members individually*. In particular, He has given each person *one of seven motivational gifts detailed in Romans 12*. If every member has **1 basic motivational gift**, we are not all *gifted alike* nor do we have identical points of view. *The normal state of affairs in a congregation is that one's point of view will be shared by 14.28% (1 out of 7) and that 85.72% will have a different point of view (6 / 7)*.
- Marriage is a **Blood Covenant (B'rith) and NOT a Contract**
- Marriage is the union (*echad*) of the *spirit, soul, and body of one man with one woman*.
- There are Scriptural guidelines for sexual intimacy in marriage.
- The **home** (*and not the synagogue*) is the center of Messianic Life
- There is a **brutal war against children**: Satan's Hidden Agenda is: **To destroy the Godly seed** (*Gen. 3:15*)
- The stated goal of Humanistic Medicine is: *"Controlling human fertility ... by birth control, abortion and sterilization ... people must come to want fewer children"* (*The Health Care of Women, McGraw-Hill, 1975*)
- We must take *personal responsibility in medical matters*.
- Some reasons why **some women do not want more children**: Abusive and Intrusive Birth Procedures, Rebellious children, Financial Pressures, Husband's Attitude Toward Children and Medical fears.
- *The Strength of a Family is in the Number of Children they Have* (*Ps. 127: 4-5*)
- Education needs to be done primarily (*whenever possible*) at home – parents are responsible.
- *Apprenticeship* is in many cases more valuable than a college degree.

III. Concerning Finances in His People

- *Financial Freedom* is a goal for **EVERYBODY**.
- People need *to stop robbing God in tithes and offerings*: (*Mal. 3:7-12; Deut. 12:11, 17-18; 14:22*)
- There should be **NO DEBT** in the congregation, in business nor in the home.
- Some business **partnerships are Un-Scriptural**
- *Co-Signing* of Loans is *Un-Scriptural*

The month of *Elul* is around the corner. It begins next Thursday, August 17, 2023, when the sun sets. In God's system and in Jewish tradition *Elul* (the 6th month) is the month of repentance. As *Elul* and *Tishri* loom we need to **remember, review, and return** to His ways in areas where we have digressed from His path due to the *'cares' (stress & influence) of this world*. Some guiding principles include:

- **Everyone Has Blind Spots** – We can **lovingly exhort** one another into good works (*Luke 6:41-42*).
- **We need to ask one another about our blind spots and receive correction in the spirit of Adonai**. Marilyn and I have asked the congregation over the years to point out our blind spots – will you extend to us the same courtesy (to point out your blind spots)?
- **God will not change His standards for our situations**. We need to strive to do things God's way no matter what the price. Do not expect God to give an answer in prayer for something He has already specified in Scripture. We need to pray: *"Lord, give me the grace to do Thy Will"* (*Matt. 26:39, 42, 44*)
- **"The Torah of Adonai is Perfect restoring (converting) the Soul"** (*Psalm 19:8*)

Shabbat Shalom!