

Check The Foundation of Your Faith

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September 1, 2017

Written for Wisconsin Christian Newspaper



Last month, I left you with the question of what the path back to His righteousness looks like for us today. The hour is late and the need is urgent so I write boldly. First, it involves an assessment of the foundation of our faith. Becoming a believer in Messiah Yeshua/Jesus Christ is so much more than just knowledge or intellectual assent! It is more than becoming a member of a church body or imitating what other believers do. All of these things are centered in our flesh and in our mind, will and emotions which is our soul. As Messiah Yeshua told Nicodemus, it is being born from above, not going again into your mother's womb in a physical sense. That which is flesh is only flesh, but that which is of spirit is spirit. One cannot either see or enter into the Kingdom of Heaven without being born anew of the spirit. (John 3:3-6)

If one professes belief because of flesh based motivation, such as feeling sorry for the trials Yeshua went through, or because it is what our family has always done, or perhaps out of a desire to be identified with a prestigious church, it is **not** an experience of being born from above, but of a modification of the soul understanding. There is no authority or spiritual power in it. Some people use the term "carnal Christian." (Carnal being of Latin derivative, meaning flesh.)

Anyone who has seriously studied His Word and chosen to walk after Him likely knows how high the standard is set and how difficult, impossible really, it is to meet that standard just in the strength of our flesh/soul.

Yet our God is not cruel that He would set a standard that is impossible for us to reach. (Deuteronomy 30:11-12) He made a way through the obedience of Messiah Yeshua to not only show the way, but to BE the way back to Him.

If we try, under only our soulish motivation, to walk after Messiah, we will fail. Some of us are quite stubborn and determined that we CAN do it! Or perhaps we are thinking that it is too small a matter, that we shouldn't "bother God" with our concerns, but rather buck up and make it so ourselves. Some get through this effort rather quickly, and see that it can't be done without His indwelling Presence, but many try to go it alone their whole lives. In my Lutheran background and where I stand today, I know there are those who do walk after Messiah through the indwelling Presence of His Spirit. I also have seen far too many who are content in knowing that they are outwardly doing just what their relatives have always done, content with a form of Godliness, but without His power and authority.

Examine your belief prayerfully and intently. What is the foundation?

Have you been persuaded by some emotional rhetoric or peer pressure to join in? Were you sorry for Jesus or horrified when you watched Mel Gibson's **The Passion of the Christ** and decided to believe then? Did you think that God "needs" you to do something for Him? Do you think that if you are a "good person" it is enough to please Him? If so, you are in danger of not being firmly rooted, but more like the seed that falls on stony or thorny ground, with soulish motivation.

Have you understood that God is calling you to Himself? Have you come to the end of your personal resources, realizing that only submission to God through the finished work of Yeshua is sufficient? It seems rare to me that people get to the place of full submission in a flash. More often, it seems that it is a gradual progression, trying and failing, and falling back into the soup of unbelief, before climbing the steps, going from faith to faith: establishing faith that leads and builds into more faith until it abounds in confidence in Messiah. (Romans 1:17)

If this isn't happening in your life and if the leaders of your faith community are not encouraging you to deepen your faith in this way then you may need to ask them about it, or consider if you are in the right place to be built up as part of the Living Stones and Royal Priesthood. Our Father warned through the prophet Ezekiel that He will deal with the shepherds who aren't caring for His sheep in His way! He also told us that there is not only the separation of the sheep from the goats, but also the separation of the sheep **from the sheep**. Though we may be able to fool others, and even ourselves, our Father will not be fooled by our outward soulish motivation. (Ezekiel 34) His character is twelve parts mercy and one part judgment but that judgment must ultimately come for the mercy to have any meaning.

If we don't discern between what is really of the Spirit and what is of the flesh, He will. He examines the shepherds as well as the people. What is not of Him will be burned up as chaff. He will welcome those who honor Him fully and send away those who do not. (1 Cor 3:13, Matthew 25:41)

For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Hebrews 10:26-28

Those who do not earnestly contend for the faith and teach and exhort their people to lean more fully into Messiah will answer to the One to Whom we must give an account.(Heb. 4:13) The author of Hebrews reminded us that it is a fearsome thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.

Oh, but only if you are NOT found in Him in the first place! Check your foundation!

Next time: Those who are truly founded in Messiah will want to live as one who belongs to Him: sorting out the profane from the holy/set apart and defining righteousness according to **THE** Source, not just any resource. (If you DON'T have this desire, it is another reason to go back and check your foundation!)

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