



Will He Find Faith? Part 5

From Unbelief to Belief

By Barbara L. Klika, MSW

Undershepherd

Personal Life Coach

www.set-apart-ministries.org

September 2022

In answer to the original question in this series, **Will He Find Faith when He comes?** we have considered

- what faith is
- how it comes about
- what kind of assembly is best suited to transmitting faith to the next generation.

The focus here is on the development of faith: from unbelief to belief, what that looks like in family, and then what that looks like in an assembly, and finally what the preparation of people of faith is for those who are looking for His return to meet Him as His Bride.

An active individual and community prayer life is the lifeblood of an assembly. It is our privilege to “take it to the LORD in prayer” but it is also our responsibility to do so. Messiah told us to pray that “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10) which must indicate that His will ISN’T being done on earth and that we, His Body of Believers, need to be the conduit to exercise our authority to seek His will. Who else would ask?

I have observed that many people have never understood the differences between individual and corporate prayer. A group of people may certainly pray at the same time and their prayers are like individual pebbles being thrown into the stream. This is not bad, but it is not the same thing as when each one praying has come together and joined in prayer. When people are in corporate prayer, their intercessions interweave back and forth, as they listen together in the Spirit, and pray according as they are led toward a common goal.

This was quite a revelation for me as I grew up in a liturgically focused church, knowing only the focus of praying previously written prayers aloud together. When an intercessory prayer ministry was started in my Lutheran church back then, we found that many people really didn’t know how to proceed to pray.

They felt overwhelmed if too much info was provided and without direction if not enough information was given. Learning to pray relevant Scripture for each situation, and how to personalize Scripture references in prayer has been a great blessing which we would advise is desirable in an assembly.

There is a difficult situation too, in which we recognize that our Father has indicated that He does discern between those who come with clean hands and a pure heart and those who may have other motivations. Yes, this is a New Testament reference.

*We know that God does not listen to sinners,
but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.
(John 9:31)*

Here is where an assembly shepherd can be most helpful as they are personally familiar with and knowledgeable about what their sheep may need so that they CAN join together in effective prayer. Of course, it is also true that the person in that assembly who may be in need of help does need to be willing to be vulnerable and humble and listen to their leaders if there is a problem.

I have an entire series written on ***What Shepherds Need to Know***....because it has proven true that one cannot speak into the life of another unless they are willing to hear! Here, too, is where the long-term establishment of trust between members and leaders in an assembly comes into play. In Set Apart Ministries, we have a “pithy maxim” of “Pray, Stay and Don’t Run Away!” to address those difficult times when misunderstanding arises...and they WILL arise. **If all are willing**, it can be resolved through our common trust in Messiah IN each of us, not so much in our flesh!

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls,
as those who will have to give an account.
Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.
Hebrews 13:17 ESV

Somehow, people seem to think that shepherding/pastoral responsibilities are all glamor and prestige, and too often do not realize how difficult this process can be...answering your call to watch over the souls of the people in your assembly even when they resist...knowing you will have to account before our God of all that you do.

We do recognize, too, that there are leaders who take advantage of their authority in an ungodly way; and recognize that our God will deal with them in His timing. The harm some people have experienced in an assembly situation causes them to be especially sensitive and even sometimes find themselves unable to risk trusting another leader. We see this as a great loss both for that individual and for the assembly they try to join.

Yeshua/Jesus has prayed that we find “echad” or unity and when members of an assembly are still struggling with woundings from previous bad experiences it puts a wedge in that unity.

People that go from one assembly to another, believing they are experiencing unresolved pain and rejection as they go are like a branch grafted into the tree...but the graft doesn’t “take” and is pulled out. I believe that it leaves a scar, a wounding on the hearts of both those who leave and those who remain when it isn’t possible to resolve the concerns. This, too, is a barrier to that unity Messiah prayed for His Body to have.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:20-23

An assembly that finds a way to prayerfully address misunderstandings and differences is to be commended. The world calls it “conflict management.” It seems that people who are “hiding in the weeds” and not speaking their genuine concerns would also make it difficult to find that unity Messiah prayed for us to have. We see this as an area that the adversary wants to confuse and manipulate to bring about more separation...and despite prayerful efforts, we do see that some people are unable to enter into a resolution process.

This can be an issue that presents further division and mistrust between members and leaders of an assembly, UNLESS all involved are committed and knowledgeable enough about one another to know who is really trustworthy in Messiah.

I do see, too, that both form and substance are important in prayer, and the necessity to stay aware that whatever our experiential prayer understandings might be, they also need to be in line with Scripture. Prayer is to be a loving communication with our God and Father, through the work of our Messiah, Yeshua/Jesus. There is a place for both established prayer patterns and spontaneous prayers as we see it. An assembly that teaches the importance of prayer is to be desired!

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Col 1:5

A critical factor in the ability of a community to be able to teach, affirm and grow faith seems to be their adherence to the principles put forth in the Whole Word. It is so easy for any of us to read into Scriptures with our modern understanding of words and lack of comprehension of the intended meanings and cultural context. This can lead to the idea that one can interpret Scriptures however seems best to an individual and be equally correct. Unfortunately, this fits all too well with the current “woke” type of thinking in which there is no plumb line to measure against. Having no general standard, except one’s own perceptions, is a wide-open door for the adversary to subtly influence people toward their own personal opinions and ability to assess Truth. It worked with Eve, and still does work today. An assembly that affirms YHWH, THE Almighty God, the God of Israel, is sovereign, and THE Source of all Truth is desirable. In Part 4 I addressed the prevalence of the “Higher Textual” or “Higher Criticism” perspective in denominational seminaries.

One well known bible teacher I spoke with had no idea at all that the OT/Torah IS the Foundation for the new and therefore, one should not try to take a meaning from the NT and read it back into the Old. (This seems to be like building a house, starting with the roof, and then trying to fit the basement and

first floor under it!) At the same time, it IS true that there are multiple themes and statements that are parallel between both parts of the Word.

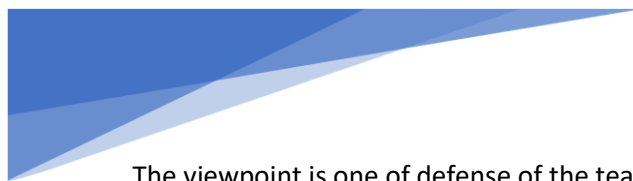
I had a WCN reader contact me at one point and said that it is not appropriate to consider the Hebrew meanings while studying the Greek NT text. Apparently, this individual did not realize that our Messiah IS the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and that the culture and language chosen by our Father to bring forth His Son IS Hebrew. If we disregard the foundations established, we run the risk of missing the target. (In Hebrew, the Word for God's Righteous Teachings, often translated as Law, is more functionally related to the idea of "hitting the mark" as in archery. The word for sin correlates to "missing the mark." It is HIS mark we are to aim for. I have long said that: "His grace is for when we FALL short, not for when we AIM short."

Doctrines: SOLI DEO GLORIA, Sola scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Solus Christus

There are five positions stating that **ONLY these things are relevant to the salvation process:**

- Glory
- Scripture
- Faith
- Grace
- Christ

We agree with the basic premise. These doctrines came about when the Great Reformers were writing to refute what they saw in the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) that was adding to what was needed to gain salvation. They grew out of the Protestant Reformation...the "protest" against the additions made by the RCC. The daughter churches of that reformation have maintained these positions quite staunchly until recent years....but the belief that salvation alone is the issue at hand seems to have remained quite deeply embedded.



The viewpoint is one of defense of the teaching on salvation... coming to a saving faith in our God.

At no point that I have found, is this the same thing as the sanctification process that is also found in the Word.

Sanctification is the logical process to which our God brings us, after having brought us from unbelief to belief, from no faith to faith. Long ago, while still in an institutional church, I had an experience some of you readers may also have had. Week after week, there was a wonderful inspiring sermon given,

basically inviting all the hearers to “Come and be a Christian with me!” I found myself saying, Yes, Yes! I have agreed! I AM choosing to be a Christian with you....but what comes next?

Indeed, I see clearly that it is the sanctification process that comes next! Once we have become part of the family of God, then we need to learn and walk in His ways, not our former ones!

This next aspect of the development of our faith then, is about the part of the journey that seems to be neglected, and even rejected.

How did it get lost?

Will He find faith that has grown from coming INTO faith to GROWING IN that Faith?