

IT IS ALL OR NOTHING – HALF-HEARTEDNESS WILL BLOW YOUR MISSION!

Ma'asei/Acts 20:24

Shabbat Shalom family,

The favour of Elohim and greetings to you in the Name of our Master and King, יהושע Messiah.

I was struck by a verse this week that challenged me to consider how our daily walk in Messiah, as proclaiming servants of the Most High, actually bears up under the heat of the daily pressures, trials and persecutions that we face.

Turn with me to:

Ma'asei/Acts 20:24 “But I do not count my life of any value to me, so that I might accomplish my mission with joy, and the service which I received from the Master יהושע, to bear witness to the Good News of the favour of Elohim.”

Without beating around the bush – I want to dive straight in to the question of endurance – and ask ourselves if we are in fact being steadfast in every way in serving our Master with joy, regardless of the circumstances that we find ourselves in? Sha'ul was not silent in bringing a stern message across in all his letters of how true service unto the Master calls for your all. In a message tonight called, **“IT IS ALL OR NOTHING – HALF-HEARTEDNESS WILL BLOW YOUR MISSION!”**

Sha'ul basically tells us that he was not concerned about what pressure he might face – he did not care if he was criticised, beaten, locked up, stoned or even killed – he had one mission in mind - and that was to be in the service of the Master יהושע that he had received - which was to bear witness to the Besorah (Good News) of the favour of Elohim.

He was not ashamed of that which he was to witness of:

Romiyim/Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Messiah, for it is the power of Elohim for deliverance to everyone who believes, to the Yehudite first and also to the Greek.”

As we consider the life of Sha'ul once he had been changed by Messiah, we see how focused this man was – he was a man on a mission – and in pursuing this very important mission, he did not argue with the Word of Elohim – he obeyed and did what was required and called for. In recognising the seriousness of his mission, he was not afraid of the journey that was ahead for him, as he, with great zeal, pressed on to the goal:

Pilipiyim/Philippians 3:14 “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of Elohim in Messiah יהושע.”

Sha'ul knew the cost – this once ‘persecutor of the Way’, became a great leader of the Way, as he forged ahead and encountered much persecution and trials, that he pressed through, never looking back – even in the face of death!

Sha'ul knew the cost - it cost him everything and he counted that cost and gladly accepted the cost and ran with fervency! He, in being a bondservant of the Most High, did not count his life of any value!!!! What does that mean?

To put it plainly – Sha'ul did not give thought to his own life as being any value to him, for he had died to self and now lived unto Messiah:

Galatiyim/Galatians 2:20 “I have been impaled with Messiah, and I no longer live, but Messiah lives in me. And that which I now live in the flesh I live by belief in the Son of Elohim, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Sha'ul was only focused on one thing – and that was to live by belief in Messiah – doing the will of the Master and not his own!

Too many people today easily shake off the need to be completely obedient and simply give a half-hearted attempt at worship, and will try to tick off a kind of ‘to-do-list’ that makes them think that once they have done the bare necessities that they can get down to doing what they want and like, as they think that they deserve something for themselves and often put their own life and selfish will in the way of living a complete surrendered service unto the Master יהושע.

Sha'ul was not lukewarm or half-hearted in his service in any way; nor did he go about his duty in a ‘casual’ manner by putting off what needed to be done for a later time – The Word was his life!

Please note that I am not in any way trying to esteem Sha'ul, but rather looking at his life that represents a man who ran with the light of the Truth, in order to bring esteem to the Master יהושע, and so as we look at his words, we too can learn a great deal in mirroring our lives against, not only Sha'ul's example, but also the many warriors of the faith who have gone before us and been recorded for us, in order to teach and train us unto righteousness!

Sha'ul – a man on a mission! And a ‘man on a mission’ is an active man; one that would not sit still and wait for something to happen; but rather is diligent in hearing, guarding and doing the commands of Elohim, who goes or stays at the command of His commander.

Let us consider some others who too were on a mission:

Noah acted upon the clear commands of Elohim, when everyone mocked him. Abraham heeded the commands of יהוה and obeyed when he was called out to the place which he would inherit as a possession. Mosheh – after a reality check in realising that trying to debate why he should or could not do what was commanded would not work, he obeyed and went on a serious mission to get Yisra'el out of Mitsrayim!

Yehoshua was commissioned as leader to take over from Mosheh – huge shoes to fill – and he was repeatedly told to be strong and courageous – because the road ahead was not an easy one – yet he went and fought the Good Fight!

Kěpha – he was a man with great zeal and his boldness, that often got him to act before thinking, was redirected by Messiah to feed and care for the sheep of Yisra'el.

As we have noted – Sha’ul – a man willing to face death in the face for the sake of the Kingdom message – was not afraid of the firing line and was bold enough to even take on Caesar.

How about the man from the country of the Gadarenes – the man who was healed from an unclean spirit? He was told by Messiah to go home and proclaim all that the Master had been done for him; and he proclaimed in the Dekapolis and what we may be able to tell from the effect of this man’s witnessing of יהושע, is that a crowd of about 4000 were gathered to hear Him and were fed by the 7 loaves of bread and a few fish.

Abraham said “**here I am**” when called to sacrifice his son! (Bereshith/Genesis 22:1-2)

Mosheh said “**here I am**” when יהוה called to him from the burning bush (Shemoth/Exodus 3:4)

Shemu’el said “**here I am**” when יהוה called (Shemu’el Aleph/1 Samuel 3:4)

Yeshayahu said “**here am I, send me**” when he heard the voice of יהוה ask whom he should send (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 6:8)

יהוה has called and His word has gone out – where are you when He calls? Can you confidently say, “Here I am”, or is there still much of your own life that you count as being of more value than to be living on a mission for the King?

We have been called!!!

Kēpha Aleph/1 Peter 1:13-16 “Therefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, set your expectation perfectly upon the favour that is to be brought to you at the revelation of יהושע Messiah, 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts in your ignorance, 15 instead, as the One who called you is set-apart, so you also should become set-apart in all behaviour, 16 because it has been written, “Be set-apart, for I am set-apart.”

We have been called and we have been entrusted with the Good News – we have this treasure in clay vessels so that the excellence of the power might be of Elohim and not of us; and no matter what we face we shall not be in despair, nor be destroyed – even in death!

Yes we are the clay and as we know clay is very breakable – yet He has chosen us and called us and entrusted us with His treasure – that is the Light of His truth:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, so that they see your good works and praise your Father who is in the heavens.”

I always love this imagery of clay or earthen vessels having the Treasure of his light that we are to proclaim, as it always makes me think of Gid’on and his 300 men who had been given rams horns, empty jars and torches for inside the jars:

Shophetim/Judges 7:19-20 “And Gid’on and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, as they had but newly posted the watch. And they blew the ram’s horns and broke the jars that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the ram’s horns and broke the jars, and held the torches in their left hands and the ram’s horns in their right hands for blowing. And they cried, “For יהוה and for Gid’on!”

To shine the light that was in their hands the jars had to be broken; and so too do we need to recognise that we do not count our lives of any value, so that we might shine the Light of The Torah before men, and proclaim the shofar sound of deliverance! Gid’on and his 300 men against 1000’s – and with jars, torches and ram’s horns – it may not make sense in the world’s eyes – but then again it doesn’t need to!

The shining of His Light and the blowing of the Shofar is our witness to the world of who is the True King, as we guard His Word and keep His Sabbaths and Feasts. To be on an all-out mission we must be willing to be broken in proclaiming the Besorah as we shine the Torah that lights our path and leads us in victory, and enabling us to reach the goal of the belief/faithfulness to His Word – and that is the deliverance of lives!

How passionate are you about telling people the Truth – even if it means there will be a whole lot of tears and weeping?

The truest kind of compassion that we ought to have toward others is to be a humble servant of the Master and not be ashamed to speak up and declare the Truth – even if it hurts! – for that which is sown in tears will result in rejoicing:

Tehillim/Psalm 126:6 “He who goes on and weeps, bearing seed for sowing, shall indeed come in with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves.”

Sha’ul warned the people day and night and would not miss a moment’s opportunity to speak about the Kingdom! The prophets too, could not keep quiet – Yirmeyahu said he tried but it was in his heart like a burning fire shut up in his bones and he became weary of holding it back – he was helpless to hold back the Truth – even though it sounded like all he spoke was violence and ruin!!!

As you go through the book of Yehezqel you will find that the Word that came to him each time – the Word that he was to proclaim – was mostly words of rebuke against the rebellion of the people and nations – always with the goal of turning people back to the Torah of Elohim in order to walk in the Truth!

Sha’ul was no different – and while many like to twist his words – we find that many of his letters were very stern words, rebuking words and equipping words. In fact as you read not only Sha’ul, but also Kēpha, Yoḥanan, Ya’aqob and Yehuḏah you soon find that their words are as fiery, if not more, than some of the prophets of old!

This modern concept of ear tickling massage therapy does not work - it does not turn people back to the Torah – only the plain Truth, spoken clearly, works. We have this Truth and therefore have a responsibility to be on a mission – for how will they who do not know get to know if we who know do not proclaim the Good News???

Romiyim/Romans 10:13-15 “For “everyone who calls on the Name of יהוה shall be saved.” 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one proclaiming? 15 And how shall they proclaim if they are not sent? As it has been written, “How pleasant are the feet of those who bring the Good News of peace, who bring the Good News of the good!”

We have been commissioned and sent to ‘serve’ – when I think of this we recognise that we serve our Master through obedience and when we bring forth the Kingdom message through serving Him with our all; we are in a way – serving a notice of the Truth and as ‘officers of the court of Elohim’ we in fact are required to serve a summons to the lost. This could be received as positive or negative – dependent upon the response – if the response to this summons is acted upon through repentance from dead works in order to turn to and call upon the Master יהושע, and walk in His Torah then we clearly see a deliverance of lives (the goal of our faithfulness) and the accusations on the summons is wiped clean; however if the response is a negative one and there is a refusal to turn to the Truth, then the summons to appear still stands as the unrepentant sinner will be delivered up and be judged according to their works at the second resurrection; and if their name is not in the Book of life they will suffer the second death!!!

The summons to court is in our hands, as we carry the Kingdom message – and we need to proclaim it with urgency – so that many may have their sentences blotted out while there is still hope!

Sadly many do not see this urgency that I am speaking of; and it is high time that we all get back to the reality that the Word is the Truth and it is living and working – and it is clear – ‘black and white’ so to speak – there are no grey areas with the Word. Sadly the man-made traditions, and theological interpretations that are taught as dogmas of man, have produced far too many acceptable ‘grey’ areas in interpretation that only leave the masses in a huge mess of confusion, where they are no longer able to discern between the set-apart and the profane or the clean and the unclean. As a result of this so many are as children, tossed and borne about by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men, in cleverness, unto the craftiness of leading astray – which we should guard ourselves against by maintaining the truth in love (that is living in fervent obedience to His commands and walking in His Torah).

As we consider the prophets of Scripture, we are able to clearly recognise that no matter their backgrounds or the circumstances they found themselves in, they knew exactly where they stood and proclaimed with a steadfast boldness. The Apostles, Sha’ul and many of the early believers were the same – they would not back down or settle for a compromised state at all, and were steadfast in their focus of the Truth and walking the Torah of Truth, being unhindered by circumstances, good or bad, pressing forward in the true purpose and direction that the Word teaches us to walk in, and Sha’ul encouraged Timotiyos with the following words:

Timotiyos Bet/2 Timothy 1:12-14 “For this reason I also suffer these matters, but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to watch over that which I have entrusted to Him until that Day. 13 Hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in belief and love which are in Messiah יהושע. 14 Watch over the good deposit that was entrusted to you, by the Set-apart Spirit dwelling in us.”

Watch over and guard the good deposit!!! This is done by being faithful and trustworthy with His Word, guarding to do all He commands, without compromise! Sadly we find that true trustworthiness has been cast aside by most and even by some who claim to walk in the Torah. And when one casts aside trustworthiness, in turning a deaf ear to that which ought to be done, for the sake of selfish compromise, then the ear is often turned to ‘falsehood and lies’ that simply tries to flatter the wrongdoer through a twisted belief if justifying disobedience:

Tehillim/Psalm 12:1-2 “Save, יהוה, for the kind one is no more! For the trustworthy have ceased from among the sons of men. 2 They speak falsehood with each other; They speak with flattering lips, a double heart.”

Whenever trustworthiness is cast aside or discarded for ‘grey areas’ of compromise then the service unto the Master is compromised: Sha’ul tells us in:

Romiyim/Romans 12:1 “I call upon you, therefore, brothers, through the compassion of Elohim, to present your bodies a living offering – set-apart, well-pleasing to Elohim – your reasonable worship.”

A living sacrifice – that is “a counting our own lives of no value” – and our reasonable worship can only be reasonable and pleasing to Elohim if it is totally set-apart – anything less is not pleasing to Him – half-hearted service will blow your mission! Kalëb who crossed over the Yardën with Yehoshua is a great example of a man who went all out! He was 80 years old and saw all the people of his generation, besides Yehoshua, die for disobedience – yet he carried on and in forever recorded as a man who followed יהוה completely!

Running with fervency for the truth may be very tiring, yet we must be consistent, as Kalëb was – part time obedience is an abomination to יהוה!

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Master, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Master.”

Mosheh never backed down from Pharaoh; Dani'el would not stop praying to יהוה, even after a law was passed that forbid him to do so; Yosēph refused the continued temptations of Potiphar's wife, and was willing to suffer imprisonment for righteousness:

Our ultimate example is our Master – as יהושע responded to the Devil's temptations with a clear, "It is written..."

What we are to recognise is this – no matter the season, we must be willing to be able to stand steadfast in the Truth and proclaim His Kingdom and shine the light of His Kingdom through the witness of our obedience to His Truth, doing the good works of the Torah without any form of, or pathetic fleshly excuse for, compromise – this is true consistency.

This is an endurance call – keep on – it is worth it!

Ya'aqob/James 1:12 "Blessed is the man who does endure trial, for when he has been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which the Master has promised to those who love Him."

When Ya'aqob wrestled with the Master, he would not let go and as a result his walk was changed! How about you? As you cling to the Word is your walk continually being changed from esteem to esteem?

So many today want to proclaim with their lips a service unto Elohim, yet they do not really want their lives to change – especially when they are clearly confronted with the need to change; so they would rather loosen their grip on the Truth for a brief moment thinking they will get a handle on it latter again – all for the sake of the selfishness of the flesh that counts their own lives as something more than being submitted to total obedience. Truth is then compromised, and some, in doing this on a regular basis, eventually are not even convicted in their conscience that they are doing wrong as they have allowed an ulterior standard of assumed obedience that allows room for their own flesh to have precedence over simple obedience – mostly because they are unwilling to stand up and take a stand for the Truth in fear of causing others to become offended by a called for obedience to יהוה! Many will justify their compromised actions as being acceptable in their own eyes – and if this is the case then their eyes are not fixed on Messiah!

Sha'ul realised that in having chosen to follow Messiah, he now had no other choice but to obey, and as a bondservant of the Most High Elohim and Redeemer, he was now under obligation to do what is commanded – and do nothing else for self!

In Ma'asei/Acts 20:20 he says that he goes "bound" in the spirit to Yerushalayim not knowing what may meet him there. The word used here for 'bound' is **δέω deō** – **Strong's G1210** meaning, **'bind, tie, knit, be in bonds, fasten with chains, out under obligation, to be in subjection to (law and duty), to be bound to one (husband or wife)'** and this word also implies **'being under the authority of another'**.

Sha'ul was 'bound' to the יהושע Messiah, our Husband and Kinsman Redeemer and therefore as Messiah is our Head, Sha'ul was clearly saying that he was under the authority of The Word of Elohim; and this implies that he would do none else but walk as such, giving no room for the flesh and have the ability to proclaim with boldness and truth, and that he did not count his life as being of any value to him – so that his mission in Messiah was not hindered!

How do we 'not' count our lives as being of any value to ourselves?

By being a bondservant by choice and obey the Master – this of course is out of a loving response to His proclaimed release of our sins –and is not done simply as a duty alone – but rather as our loving duty! At the year of release (every 7 years) servants were set free, yet if a servant did not want to go free he could choose to stay with his master, after which the master would pierce his ear with an awl to the doorpost and he would serve his master forever.

At the proclaiming of our release at the Yobel, we hear the call and choose to become a bondservant of Messiah forever, and so our ears are 'pierced' by the continual hearing of His Torah, recognising that they are the commands for our lives which we choose to live faithfully by in Him! Messiah no longer calls us servants but friends, so that we can know about our Master's business – HE is still our Master – and we still obey – even though He calls us friends – Abraham was called friend of Elohim – and he never stopped obeying and neither do we!

Mattithyahu/Matthew 10:39 "He who has found his life shall lose it, and he that has lost his life for My sake shall find it."

Galatiyim/Galatians 2:20 "I have been impaled with Messiah, and I no longer live, but Messiah lives in me. And that which I now live in the flesh I live by belief in the Son of Elohim, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

When we do not count our lives of any value to self, and 'lose' our lives for Messiah's sake, dying daily to self then we shall find true life in Messiah and give our all –

"IT IS ALL OR NOTHING – HALF-HEARTEDNESS WILL BLOW YOUR MISSION!"

Let us not be a people who 'blow' our mission, but rather give our all unto our Master and King, serving Him with joy, amēn! I have briefly mentioned some of the names of the mighty faithful that we see in Scripture – let us learn from their witness we have, to do the same and give our all unto Him! Maybe you have blown your mission many times over through compromise – well receive this 'summons' today and call on Messiah and let Him clean you up, giving you strength to faithfully take up His mission in the service he has given you, in order to bear the witness of the Good News of

יהושע Messiah

Shalom!