

DO NOT LOSE HEART!

Luqas/Luke 18:1-8

1st of the 12th month 2014/2015

Shabbat Shalom all,

Ma'asei/Acts 14:21-22 “**And having brought the Good News to that city, and having made many taught ones, they returned to Lustra, and Ikonion, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the beings of the taught ones, encouraging them to continue in the belief, and that through many pressures we have to enter the reign of Elohim.**”

Sha'ul and Barnaba were bringing the Good News to the people in Lustra, and after Sha'ul healed a man who was disabled in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked, the people of the city thought that Barnaba and Sha'ul were the mighty ones of Lukaonia, and called them Zeus and Hermes. When Barnaba and Sha'ul had heard this they tore their garments and told the crowds that they were just men as they were, and that they were bringing the Good News so that they would turn from these worthless matters to the living Elohim. Not believing them the crowds were influenced by the Yehudim that had come from Antioch and Ikonion who sought to kill Sha'ul, and they won over the crowds and then stoned Sha'ul and dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead. While the believers were around his body, Sha'ul stood up and went back into the city, and the next morning he went with Barnaba to Derbe. And this is what is recorded prior to the two verses I have just quoted! What I want to highlight here is how Sha'ul and Barnaba never gave up spreading the Good News! And while being mocked, beaten and stoned, they strengthened the taught ones and encouraged them to stay in the belief and recognise that it is through many pressures that we have to enter into the reign of Elohim!

The narrow way that leads to life is hard pressed, but will you be encouraged to stay on it, or do the pressures of the world seem too much for you at times and you find yourself losing heart?

Tonight in a message called, '**DO NOT LOSE HEART!**', I want us to be strengthened to do exactly just that, as we hear the clear words of a parable that our Master gave regarding this! Please turn with me to **Luqas/Luke 18:1-8** (Read).

Here we are given a great parable of encouragement given to faithful hearers of The Good Teacher!

The Greek word for '**parable**' is παραβολή *parabolē* - **Strong's G3850** which means, '**a placing beside, comparison, parable, proverb, symbol, type**'. This Greek word is used in the LXX (Septuagint – Greek translation of Tanak) for the Hebrew word for '**proverbs**' – מִשְׁלֵי – '**Mishlē**', which comes from the root noun מָשַׁל *mashal* – **Strong's H4912** and means, '**a proverb, parable, a byword**', which in its primitive root form means, '**to compare, to represent, be like**', and comes from the root verb מָשַׁל *mashal* – **Strong's H4911** which means, '**to use a proverb, speak in parables or sentences of poetry**'. That is why we understand the words of Messiah when He spoke in parables by using terms such as, "**The reign of the heavens is like...**", or, "**The reign of the heavens shall be compared to...**".

A '**parable**' actually presents the truth very clearly by putting a fresh light on the matter, as it is often presented in a 'story' format that represents the message being given, using imagery known to the hearer, in order to illustrate and shed light on the result of past, current and even future events as determined by choices that are made.

Parables can only be understood by the attentive hearer and doer of the Word, while those who do not hear, in order to do, are never able to fully understand the teachings of our Master!

Marqos/Mark 4:33-34 “**And with many such parables He was speaking to them the word as they were able to hear, 34 and He was not speaking to them without parables. And when they were alone, He explained all to His taught ones.**”

Luqas/Luke 8:10 “**And He said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the reign of Elohim, but to the rest in parables, that ‘Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not understand.’”**”

Here in this clear parable of a pleading widow and an unjust judge, Messiah was making it a very clear call of perseverance that He was giving to His taught ones, and in doing so He tells us to make sure that we are always praying and that we do not lose heart! We live in a very unjust world that is ruled by unjust people, yet we have a King who is coming to Bring His Rule and Reign, of which we are to be faithful ambassadors of, right here and now; which in itself takes great courage and strength to stand upright in an unjust world! We are called to be persistent in our petitions with thanksgiving before Elohim and never lose heart! This parable teaches us that even while an unjust judge will give in to a persistent widow, we can have much more assurance from our Righteous Husband and King who is coming for us, and that He will come and bring justice as He certainly hears our persistent petitions and prayers done with thanksgiving! We are the Bride of Messiah and are not widowed, and this Truth gives us complete assurance that His Word is sure and all His promises are yes and amēn in Messiah! The clear question that rises from this parable that is given to teach us to not lose heart is simple – “who will be found to have lost heart?” Will He find belief/faith on the earth when He comes again? Will he find the faithful remnant who, despite the wickedness of the world, have held fast to His commands and teachings and have not lost heart in walking in His Torah?

Keep praying and do not lose heart, but hold firm to the belief with committed works of righteousness! This parable was given to us so that we should not lose heart. What does it mean to lose heart? To put it simply, it could be understood as 'becoming discouraged'. Who of you have been discouraged lately? Perhaps you have found yourself becoming discouraged due to the choking worries of this world and deceit of wealth, as pressure to meet needs seems beyond your ability and reach? Perhaps you have been discouraged due to circumstances that do not seem to change as you would like them to?

Perhaps your continued persistent prayers have been discouraged and reduced to nought due to you not seeing any answers? Have you found yourself discouraged by the response of many to your proclamation of the Truth and found that your ability to walk set-apart is being hindered by the criticisms and slanderous words of others, be it from close family, friends or even colleagues at work? We all need to be reminded of this parable that we should hear from time to time, in order to defeat any discouragement that may be trying to creep in to one's life.

Sha'ul makes a bold statement in his letter to the Corinthians wherein he uses the clear phrase, "we do not lose heart", twice, in:

Qorintiyim Bět/2 Corinthians 4:1 "Therefore, having this service, even as we received compassion, **we do not lose heart**"

Qorintiyim Bět/2 Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore **we do not lose heart**, but even if our outward man is perishing, the inward man is being renewed day by day."

If anyone had reason to be discouraged it certainly could have been Sha'ul, if we consider the things that he had suffered – he was imprisoned, flogged, beaten, shipwrecked and more, which you can read of in **Qorintiyim Bět/2 Corinthians 11:23-29** – and yet here he can make a bold statement – 'we do not lose heart!'

I don't think any of us come close to the experiences Sha'ul had and yet strange and sad as it is, many today become easily discouraged. He tells us in:

Galatiyim/Galatians 6:9 "And let us **not lose heart** in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

The Greek word translated as 'lose heart' is ἐκκακέω *ekkakeō* – Strong's G1573 meaning, 'lose heart, grow weary, exhausted, become faint' and comes from two words: 1 - ἐκ *ek* – Strong's G1537 which means, 'from, from out of' and is used as a preposition denoting the origin or point from where the action proceeds; and 2 - κακός *kakos* – Strong's G2556 meaning, 'evil, wicked, bad things, loathsome, wrong'.

To lose heart speaks of growing weary of doing good as a result of wickedness and evil being present in one's life, or as a result of being involved in doing that which is wrong and loathsome in the sight of Elohim as measured against the clear plumb line of His Word.

The Greek word for 'grow weary' is ἐκλύω *ekluō* – Strong's G1590 which means, 'to loose, grow weary, faint, to weaken, relax, exhaust, become feint hearted', and comes from the two words 1 - ἐκ *ek* – Strong's G1537 which means, 'from, from out of', as discussed already and 2 - λύω *luō* – Strong's G3089 which means, 'to loose, to release, dissolve, annul, break, take off, unbind, untie'. In other words, 'to grow weary' is to break off from one's called for set-apartness and in a manner of speaking, relax oneself from guarding the Torah that is to be upon their hearts and in their mouths, as compromise seems to be an easy reprieve from impending pressures, and this we are to guard against and ensure that we do not grow weary in doing good! The idea of doing good implies walking in the commands of Elohim and doing the 'good works' prepared beforehand for us to do! To do good is to be functional, according to the clear design of the Torah of Elohim, as opposed to being dysfunctional and cease from doing what is good, by doing that which is bad and evil!

With Messiah telling us the parable of the persistent widow so that we should always pray and not lose heart, we are able to recognise some significant signs that one is losing heart. Basically the two main signs that one is losing heart are:

1 – Lack of persistent prayer!

Yes – this is a sure sign that one is losing heart! When your prayers become less and less and almost non-existent! How often do you find it hard to pray? This is a sure sign of losing heart, as our Master equates persistent prayer with not losing heart, so if one is not praying fervently then this is a sign of one losing heart and becoming discouraged! How is your prayer life? A true set-apart one of the Most High is characterised by a fervent prayer life.

Eph'siyim/Ephesians 6:18 "praying at all times, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching in all perseverance and supplication for all the set-apart ones"

What we must take note of here is that this instruction given to us here by Sha'ul, to pray at all times, is directly after having instructed us to put on the complete armour of Elohim, which clearly represents for us or need to be 'dressed in Torah' and serve as a faithful set-apart and royal priesthood – then we are able to pray as we ought to. Neglecting to walk in The Torah by hearing, guarding and doing it, will render one's attempts at prayer useless and is even seen as abominable in יהוה's eyes:

Mishlě/Proverbs 28:9 "He who turns away his ear from hearing the Torah, even his prayer is an abomination."

Qolasim/Colossians 4:2 "Continue in prayer, watching therein, with thanksgiving"

The Greek word translated as 'continue' is προσκατερέω *proskartereō* – Strong's G4342 which means, 'to attend constantly, continually devoting oneself, stand ready'. With this 'continued readiness' in prayer we take note that to be able to stand ready and continually devote oneself to prayer implies a continual devotion to hearing, guarding and doing of the Torah, always armed in the Torah and enabled to stand, stand and stand!!! Once again I ask 'how is your prayer life?' And when I ask that I am also asking at the same time, 'how is your continued devotion to set-apartness?'. If there is any compromise in your life then the sure sign of losing heart will become visible and one's ability to pray continually with thanksgiving will become greatly hindered!

Tas'loniqim Aleph/1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 “**Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in all circumstances give thanks, for this is the desire of Elohim in Messiah יהושע for you.**”

No matter the circumstances give thanks and pray without ceasing!!! If you cannot pray then the sign of you losing heart is clear! How is your prayer life – are you losing heart and have become discouraged by your circumstances?

2 - Growing weary in doing good

I have already discussed what this means and just want to make it clear that this is another sure sign that one is losing heart! Another example of growing weary in doing good is when people forsake the assembly of ourselves together; in other words forsaking the attending of and participating in the life of the assembly:

Ib'rim/Hebrews 10:24-25 “**And let us be concerned for one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging, and so much more as you see the Day coming near.**”

When you start neglecting to gather and assemble as we should, and neglect to encourage one another and stir up love and good works as you grow weary in doing what the assembly does, then there is a sure sign that you may be losing heart and in danger of allowing discouragement to cripple your set-apartness! The early assembly did not find it a burden to meet daily! They met at every opportunity they had, while not neglecting the called for set-apart gatherings – and this is what must be stirred up once again in the body – something that many have grown weary in doing! Fellowship and the assembling together on a daily basis is designed to encourage others as well as ourselves. While this may not be practically possible today, what is possible is the daily encouragement we can be to one another, as technology today has given us the means to do so, and we should not grow weary in encouraging others daily, while doing our utmost to never neglect the called for gatherings of this assembly!!!

Lack of persistent prayer and growing weary in doing good are clear symptoms that one is losing heart, but where there is peace in prayer and joy in doing good what could possibly cause you to become discouraged and lose heart?

While we hear the call to not lose heart, we do recognise various reasons that cause people to lose heart and become discouraged. Among many reasons there may be for losing heart, they could most probably be categorised under the following two main reasons why many lose heart:

1 – Tribulations, sufferings, trials:

Listen to what Sha'ul writes in his letter to the Ephesians:

Eph'siyim/Ephesians 3:13 “**I pray therefore, that you do not lose heart at my pressures on your behalf, which is your esteem.**”

Sha'ul was concerned that those in Ephesus might 'lose heart' or be discouraged over his sufferings! I mean if it were possible to become discouraged and lose heart over his sufferings, how much more over their own? How often do you get discouraged by another's trials and sufferings and think that it is not fair and find yourself losing heart on behalf of the trials of others? In His Parable of the Sower, יהושע Messiah warned that some would lose heart over trials and suffering:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 13:20-21 “**And that sown on rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21 yet he has no root in himself, but is short-lived, and when pressure or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.**”

How often the soil of our hearts simply becomes rocky because we don't water it through prayer and fellowship!!!

Trials can take different forms and come in many shapes and sizes! Both יהושע Messiah and Sha'ul spoke of those things that are peculiar to set-apart believers – and that is – ridicule, ostracism and even physical abuse from the world. We even sometimes have brothers sin against us and many lose heart because of this. But there are also the trials of sickness and death, frustrations at work and home, all of which can take their toll on us if we do not handle them as we should. Ya'aqob tells us to count it all joy when you fall into various trials and let endurance have a perfect work, so that you be perfect and complete, lacking in naught; however this is often not the case with most and many give up and lose heart when faced with great trials and sufferings! How do you handle trials? Have you lost heart in the midst of tough circumstances and trials!

2 – Lawlessness, rebellion, sin:

The second main reason for many losing heart is due to lawlessness, rebellion and sin!

Mattithyahu/Matthew 24:12 “**And because of the increase in lawlessness, the love of many shall become cold.**”

In a world that does not submit to the perfect Torah of Elohim, many become discouraged and lose heart as they conform to the world instead of being transformed by the renewing of their minds daily. Lawlessness or rebellion is simply a lack of a proper fear, respect and reverence for יהוה, in both **attitude** (which is toward יהוה's Word) and **obedience** (which is doing יהוה's will). If you don't have the right attitude toward יהוה you certainly won't live out His Word. You know what – lawlessness is contagious – so watch out! For when people demonstrate a lack of fear, reverence and respect for יהוה's Word, it often discourages even the most faithful and encourages them to become unfaithful:

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 15:33-34 “**Do not be led astray, “Evil company corrupts good habits.” 34 Wake up to soberness, righteously, and do not sin, for some do not have the knowledge of Elohim. I speak this to your shame.**”

If you are hanging out in the wrong crowds – it will affect you – get into fellowship with other believers and be strengthened in doing good for them!

I believe that it may be the case that more believers are **'losing heart'** because of lawlessness and rebellion rather than tribulations and trials, simply because of the company they keep and the neglect for building strong set-apart assemblies/communities – as they would rather indulge in the pleasure of the world for six days and fellowship, almost out of a duty, for one, which at times is even seen as a burden for them to do so faithfully!

Sha'ul stands out for us as one who, despite having faced and endured the worst trials and living in possibly the most lawless of cultures, could still say, **"We do not lose heart"**. How?

As mentioned earlier he said in:

Qorintiyim Bět/2 Corinthians 4:1 **"Therefore, having this service, even as we received compassion, we do not lose heart"**

As having received compassion, he did not lose heart!!! As a result of the great compassion that he received, he could continue and be steadfast in not allowing any circumstance discourage him from the Truth and the clear call of witnessing the Good News of the Reign of Elohim! The Greek word used here for **'compassion'** is ἐλεέω *eleeō* – **Strong's G1653** which means, **'to have pity or mercy on, show compassion'**, and comes from the root word ἔλεος *eleos* – **Strong's G1656** which means, **'mercy, compassion, pity'**.

This Greek word for **'compassion'** - ἐλεέω *eleeō* – **Strong's G1653** is the word used in the LXX (Septuagint) as the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word חָנַן *ḥanan* – **Strong's H2603** meaning, **'show favour, be gracious to, dealt graciously with, given to them voluntarily, shown favour'**, from which we get the Hebrew noun חֵן *ḥen* – **Strong's H2580** meaning, **'grace, adornment, favour, gracious'**. The root ἔλεος *eleos* – **Strong's G1656** is used as the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word translated as **'loving commitment'**, which is חֶסֶד *ḥesed* – **Strong's H2617** and means, **'goodness, loving-commitment, kindness, deeds of devotion, faithfulness'**.

Why I am mentioning this is to highlight the clear relationship that Sha'ul is presenting to us, in giving us the clear reason why we should not lose heart!

For more info on the unique relationship between חֵן *ḥen* and חֶסֶד *ḥesed*, I encourage you to go and read the article, **'UNDERSTANDING GALATIANS'** on our website (<http://atfotc.com>), as I explain more in depth on the clear connection between these two words.

What we must recognise is that grace/favour is only extended on the basis of the Loving-Commitment of יהוה *YHWH* to His Covenants of Promise that we are brought near and grafted in to by the blood of Messiah. Because of the ἐλεέω *eleeō* – **Strong's G1653** – that is the **'compassion'** that we have received from Elohim, based on His commitment to His Covenants with Abraham, Yitsḥaq and Ya'aqob, that He does not break, we must be equipped and encouraged to not lose heart – and this takes an active faith that does not waver in compromise!

In sharing his boldness in not losing heart, Sha'ul reminds us that we have this treasure in earthen vessels, as we carry the very knowledge and light of His Truth in a broken world, yet we must take courage that this world cannot destroy the sure deposit that Elohim has put inside us by His Spirit, and therefore we must be encouraged to not become discouraged and find ourselves losing heart! He says that while being hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; being perplexed, but not in despair; being persecuted, but not forsaken; being thrown down, but not destroyed; that he was always bearing about in the body the dying of the Master יהושע *Yeshua*, that the life of יהושע *Yeshua* might also be manifested in our body.

How hard pressed have been? How much persecution have you faced (even from family)? How perplexed have you been – that is to say, "how often have you been at a loss"? How many times has it felt like you have been thrown down by what you feel has been dealt to you unfairly?

Messiah said that **"...the gate is narrow and the way is hard pressed which leads to life, and there are few who find it."** (**Mattithyahu/Matthew 7:14**).

In closing please read with me what Sha'ul wrote to the Galatians:

Galatyiym/Galatians 6:7-9 **"Do not be led astray: Elohim is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he shall also reap. 8 Because he who sows to his own flesh shall reap corruption from the flesh, but he who sows to the Spirit shall reap everlasting life from the Spirit. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not grow weary."**

My hope is that none of us will lose heart and grow weary in our service and worship unto our Master, Husband and King, יהושע *Yeshua* Messiah! But if you do ever find yourself 'losing heart', go and read **Qorintiyim Bět/2 Corinthians chapters 3-5** and you will find the secrets to not **'losing heart'** and realise that the treasure you have inside your frail container is in the hands of our Wondrous Maker!!!

Perhaps you have found yourself in a place where you have felt like giving up or have been found to be 'losing heart' of late. Maybe your prayer time has not been as persistent as it should or you have grown weary in fellowshiping and doing good toward others.

Perhaps trials have got the better of you or you have found yourself mixing in the wrong circles and have been rebellious toward יהוה.

Appreciate the wonderful covenants of Promise that we have been grafted in to by the Blood of our Master and Elohim, יהושע Messiah, and have your eyes fixed on Him as you look, by faith, at what is not seen so that as you look at that which is seen you will not be affected by varying circumstances and not lose heart!

Do not lose heart, for Elohim is coming to do right by all means to His chosen ones – the ones who are crying out to Him day and night and are not losing heart but are standing firm in the belief – a belief that He expects to find when He comes again!

How will you be found – DO NOT LOSE HEART!!!

Whatever pressures, trials, battles, persecutions and troubles you have or are facing, know that as you stay in the Master and do not lose heart, you will not be crushed or in despair, nor shall you be forsaken or destroyed!

So, as Sha'ul encouraged and strengthened the believers in Lustra and Derbe, I encourage you also, to be strengthened in our Master and continue in the belief, and know that through many pressures we have to enter the reign of Elohim.

DO NOT LOSE HEART!

יהוה bless you and guard you; יהוה make His face shine upon you and show you favour; יהוה lift up His face to you and give you Shalom!