

Be Disciples!

Kehilah Portland Messianic Jewish Synagogue



489 Westbrook St. Unit 305F South Portland, ME 04106

Tel: 207-809-3104

Web: www.shalommaine.com Email: info@jewishheritagerevival.com

Services begin at 10 AM on Shabbat and are held at the Greater Portland Christian School Gym
1338 Broadway Ave. South Portland, ME 04016

Be Disciples

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Be Disciples

Introduction

The intent of the next six weeks is NOT to train you up to be disciples for you are doing that by attending this congregation. The focus of the next six weeks is to cause you to walk in and therefore Be Disciples.

What is a Disciple?

A follower or student of a teacher, leader, or philosopher. In this case we are speaking specifically of Yeshua and His teachings. As our leader / shepherd we are his talmidim (students)

What is Discipleship?

A disciple has been shown to be someone who follows the teachings, life, and aim of another until the person becomes like the master. Discipleship in the Messianic sense is **the process of making someone become like Messiah**. The disciple of Yeshua is to become like Yeshua in everything.

The first aspect of Discipline was seen in Sh'mot (Exodus) and Yitro's interaction with Moshe's:

Exo 18:13 The following day Moshe sat to settle disputes for the people, while the people stood around Moshe from morning till evening.

Exo 18:14 When Moshe's father-in-law saw all that he was doing to the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing to the people? Why do you sit there alone, with all the people standing around you from morning till evening?"

Exo 18:15 Moshe answered his father-in-law, "It's because the people come to me seeking God's guidance.

Exo 18:16 Whenever they have a dispute, it comes to me; I judge between one person and another, and I explain to them God's laws and teachings. "

Exo 18:17 Moshe's father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing isn't good.

Exo 18:18 You will certainly wear yourself out—and not only yourself, but these people here with you as well. It's too much for you—you can't do it alone, by yourself.

Exo 18:19 So listen now to what I have to say. I will give you some advice, and God will be with you. You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases to God.

Exo 18:20 You should also teach them the laws and the teachings, and show them how to live their lives and what work they should do.

Exo 18:21 But you should choose from among all the people competent men who are God-fearing, honest and incorruptible to be their leaders, in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

Exo 18:22 Normally, they will settle the people's disputes. They should bring you the difficult cases;

but ordinary matters they should decide themselves. In this way, they will make it easier for you and share the load with you.

Exo 18:23 If you do this—and God is directing you to do it—you will be able to endure; and all these people too will arrive at their destination peacefully."

Exo 18:24 Moshe paid attention to his father-in-law's counsel and did everything he said.

Exo 18:25 Moshe chose competent men from all Isra'el and made them heads over the people, in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

Exo 18:26 As a general rule, they settled the people's disputes—the difficult cases they brought to Moshe, but every simple matter they decided themselves.

Go back to the definitions I provided you earlier. Are the children of Israel not following the teachings of Moshe who in turn has received them from Adonai?

From there we see the next example of Disciple ship being done by the L'vi'im

Num 18:2 But you are to bring your kinsmen, the tribe of Levi, along with yourselves, to work together with you and help you—you and your sons with you—when you are there before the tent of meeting.

Num 18:3 They are to be at your disposal and perform all kinds of tasks related to the tent; only they are not to come near the holy furnishings or the altar, so that neither they nor you will die.

The L'vi'im were given the responsibility to serve the children of Israel in the tent of meeting, The Mishkhan and eventually the Temple...

Num 18:6 I myself have taken your kinsmen the L'vi'im from among the people of Isra'el; they have been given as a gift to Adonai for you, so that you can perform the service in the tent of meeting.

Here we read of the blessing given to the tribe of Levi and what they would ultimately be doing...

Deu 33:8 Of Levi he said: "Let your tumim and urim be with your pious one, whom you tested at Massah, with whom you struggled at M'rivah Spring.

Deu 33:9 Of his father and mother he said, 'I don't know them'; he didn't acknowledge his brothers or children. For he observed your word, and he kept your covenant.

Deu 33:10 They will teach Ya`akov your rulings, Isra'el your Torah. They will set incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar.

Go back to the definitions I provided you earlier. Are the children of Israel not following the teachings of Moshe who in turn has received them from Adonai?

Both examples are a “blueprint” for the path Yeshua would follow when He came and identified the

twelve who would come to follow Him.

What does Yeshua do?

- **Yeshua would teach as has been done by the Sages and Rabbis since Yeshua ascended in Parables.**

He used parables when communicating to a crowd. He also unpacked concepts in these stories to his disciples. A parable is similar to an analogy. We can use parables to better understand difficult or complex topics.

Attached with this handout is a list of 35 parables taught by Yeshua and recorded in the Gospels. Some are recorded in more than one of the Gospels and thus I highly recommend when reading one, you read all accounts of that parable. I had shared during a Tuesday evening Bible Study the importance of reading all recorded accounts of an event for each account may comprise different information, not contradicting the account, but offering insight, nuance and additional information.

In addition to the Parable, Yeshua would teach using Scripture. He would infuse such aspects in His teachings as:

- **It is written...**

Joh 6:43 Yeshua answered them, "Stop grumbling to each other!

Joh 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father—the One who sent me—draws him. And I will raise him up on the Last Day.

Joh 6:45 It is written in the Prophets, 'They will all be taught by Adonai.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

Quoting Isaiah 54:13

Thus as Disciples, we are to emulate, that is...

1. To strive to equal or excel, especially through imitation.

That who is teaching us. Yeshua actually expects us to excel and thus exceed what He did.

Joh 14:12 Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever trusts in me will also do the works I do! Indeed, he will do greater ones, because I am going to the Father.

- **Build Relationships**

The disciples had the unique experience of being able to be with Yeshua while he was on earth. During that time, it was not like school or a job where they showed up, nine to five, for Yeshua to disciple them. They would experience life together. They built relationships with each other in order to model an approach where they would build relationships with others.

The importance of relationship building is extremely important for it establishes a connection a bond. When a bond or relationship is established credibility is also established. We will explore this further in upcoming weeks.

- **Preparing Them To Be Equipped**

This is perhaps one of the most important things that Yeshua did for his disciples.

While Yeshua was on earth he filled the role that would be given to the Ruach Ha Kodesh. So, when Yeshua ascended, he instructed his disciples to wait for the Ruach before going out to fulfill the Great Commission.

He would send them out in pairs...

Luk 10:1 After this, the Lord appointed seventy other talmidim and sent them on ahead in pairs to every town and place where he himself was about to go.

Luk 10:2 He said to them, "To be sure, there is a large harvest. But there are few workers. Therefore, plead with the Lord of the Harvest that he speed workers out to gather in his harvest.

Luk 10:3 Get going now, but pay attention! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

There would be times they wouldn't succeed in what they instructed to do...

Mar 9:14 When they got back to the talmidim, they saw a large crowd around them and some Torah-teachers arguing with them.

Mar 9:15 As soon as the crowd saw him, they were surprised and ran out to greet him.

Mar 9:16 He asked them, "What's the discussion about?"

Mar 9:17 One of the crowd gave him the answer: "Rabbi, I brought my son to you because he has an evil spirit in him that makes him unable to talk.

Mar 9:18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground—he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth and becomes stiff all over. I asked your talmidim to drive the spirit out, but they couldn't do it."

Mar 9:19 "People without any trust!" he responded. "How long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me!"

Mar 9:20 They brought the boy to him; and as soon as the spirit saw him, it threw the boy into a convulsion.

Mar 9:21 Yeshua asked the boy's father, "How long has this been happening to him?" "Ever since childhood," he said;

Mar 9:22 "and it often tries to kill him by throwing him into the fire or into the water. But if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us!"

Mar 9:23 Yeshua said to him, "What do you mean, 'if you can'? Everything is possible to someone who has trust!"

Mar 9:24 Instantly the father of the child exclaimed, "I do trust—help my lack of trust!"

Failure is only failure if you don't learn. Yeshua's goal was to raise up talmidim (disciples) who would be able to, with the help of the Ruach Ha Kodesh, go and make more talmidim (disciples). Thus, in order to get to the point Yeshua needed them to get to would only happen when they received the Ruach Ha Kodesh, yet the experience, the understanding they would acquire prior to that would be extremely valuable when they did function in the power of the Ruach, The Book of Acts records many of those moments.

One such transformation is that of Kefa (Peter) who cowered prior to Yeshua's resurrection and the coming of Shavuot.

Mat 26:69 Kefa was sitting outside in the courtyard when a servant girl came up to him. "You too were with Yeshua from the Galil," she said.

Mat 26:70 But he denied it in front of everyone—"I don't know what you're talking about!"

Mat 26:71 He went out onto the porch, and another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This man was with Yeshua of Natzeret."

Mat 26:72 Again he denied it, swearing, "I don't know the man!"

Mat 26:73 After a little while, the bystanders approached Kefa and said, "You must be one of them—your accent gives you away."

Mat 26:74 This time he began to invoke a curse on himself as he swore, "I do not know the man!"—and immediately a rooster crowed.

Mat 26:75 Kefa remembered what Yeshua had said, "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times"; and he went outside and cried bitterly.

Yet, this very same Kefa, immersed in the Ruach Ha Kodesh would stand up in front of everyone, including the religious leaders and proclaim Yeshua...

Act 3:11 While he clung to Kefa and Yochanan, all the people came running in astonishment toward them in Shlomo's Colonnade.

Act 3:12 Seeing this, Kefa addressed the people: "Men of Isra'el! Why are you amazed at this? Or why do you stare at us as if we had made this man walk through some power or godliness of our own?"

Act 3:13 The God of Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya`akov, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Yeshua—the same Yeshua you handed over and disowned before Pilate, even after he had decided to release him.

Act 3:14 You denied the holy and innocent one, and instead asked for the reprieve of a murderer!

Act 3:15 You killed the author of life! "But God has raised him from the dead! Of this we are

witnesses.

Thus Yeshua's instruction was now in action and would be unstoppable because through His disciplining, teaching, leading and through the power of the Ruach Ha Kodesh, nothing is impossible for God.

Mat 28:18 Yeshua came and talked with them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Mat 28:19 Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh,

Mat 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age."

Be Disciples

Foundation for Messianic Discipleship

Having established a basis for a structure in making disciples that Yeshua would emulate, we now focus on what resides in the structure.

A new talmid / disciple starts at the beginning just like any new student. The structure of the education system is one of progression. When a level of education and understanding is reached, the student moves on to the next phase / level / grade. They progress as their understanding develops and expands. This dynamic should be no different within the body of Messiah, though there is no formal grade level structure, there should be noticeable maturity in one's understanding as they read scripture and study, listen to teachings and begin to walk in their understanding.

Is this not the same dynamic as our education system?

Then shouldn't the results be noticeable?

Just as in the education system, everyone learns at a different pace and thus their understanding is at a different level than that of someone who may have started at the same time. Others may be further along after only a short time. Everyone learns at their own pace. Yet, there is an expectation in the education system that you should at a minimum have certain foundational basics. This is true within the body of Messiah as well.

1Co 3:1 As for me, brothers, I couldn't talk to you as spiritual people but as worldly people, as babies, so far as experience with the Messiah is concerned.

1Co 3:2 I gave you milk, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. But you aren't ready for it now either!

1Co 3:3 For you are still worldly! Isn't it obvious from all the jealousy and quarrelling among you that you are worldly and living by merely human standards?

Though everyone is at a different place in understanding, even Sha'ul experienced those that had not progressed to the point that they should have been at. What is missing here but a transformation.

Rom 12:1 I exhort you, therefore, brothers, in view of God's mercies, to offer yourselves as a sacrifice, living and set apart for God. This will please him; it is the logical "Temple worship" for you.

Rom 12:2 In other words, do not let yourselves be conformed to the standards of the `olam hazeh. Instead, keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds; so that you will know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed.

As believers were they not fully equipped?

Did they not have the Ruach Ha Kodesh residing in them?

Joh 14:26 But the Counselor, the Ruach HaKodesh, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach

you everything; that is, he will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Did they not have the Word of God?

2Ti 3:14 But you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, recalling the people from whom you learned it;

2Ti 3:15 and recalling too how from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which can give you the wisdom that leads to deliverance through trusting in Yeshua the Messiah.

2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is valuable for teaching the truth, convicting of sin, correcting faults and training in right living;

2Ti 3:17 thus anyone who belongs to God may be fully equipped for every good work.

Though believers at Corinth did not have Scripture from their youth, they did have access to it through the synagogue within their community for Yeshua's talmidim concluded the following for Gentiles...

Act 15:19 "Therefore, my opinion is that we should not put obstacles in the way of the Goyim who are turning to God.

Act 15:20 Instead, we should write them a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood.

Act 15:21 For from the earliest times, Moshe has had in every city those who proclaim him, with his words being read in the synagogues every Shabbat."

Sha'ul certainly believe the Ruach Ha Kodesh was present in believers at Corinth...

1Co 6:19 Or don't you know that your body is a temple for the Ruach HaKodesh who lives inside you, whom you received from God? The fact is, you don't belong to yourselves;

1Co 6:20 for you were bought at a price. So use your bodies to glorify God.

The Ruach Ha Kodesh and the Word of God were both present and available to believers in Corinth, though it was likely the trappings of the world were more enticing, maybe even more important. Yet, my emphasis here is not about why they are not where they are, but rather where they are at as professed believers in Messiah.

Believers in Corinth were still dealing with the elementary aspects of their faith. In some cases they had not even grasped some of the elementary aspects of Messiah.

Within this congregation, we touch on the elementary, but do not dwell on them for when you get to 10th grade it is assumed you already know how to read, write and do basic math. Here too, there should be certain expectations as to what you should already know as a believer in Messiah.

What is different here in this congregation and within the Messianic Movement is the manner by which even the elementary aspects are presented.

Heb 6:1 Therefore, leaving behind the initial lessons about the Messiah, let us go on to maturity, not

laying again the foundation of turning from works that lead to death, trusting God,

Heb 6:2 and instruction about washings, s'mikhah (laying of hands), the resurrection of the dead and eternal punishment.

Heb 6:3 And, God willing, this is what we will do.

Heb 6:4 For when people have once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, become sharers in the Ruach HaKodesh,

Heb 6:5 and tasted the goodness of God's Word and the powers of the `olam haba—

Heb 6:6 and then have fallen away—it is impossible to renew them so that they turn from their sin, as long as for themselves they keep executing the Son of God on the stake all over again and keep holding him up to public contempt.

In other words, the writer of Hebrews is conveying a visual dynamic of not laying the foundation again. Not going through the elementary, that which every believer should know at a minimum.

- Works that lead to death (Sin / Transgression)
- Trusting God (Faith)
- Instruction about washings (Mikveh and Ritual Cleaness)
- S'mikhah (laying of hands) (Prayer and Anointing)
- The resurrection of the dead
- Eternal punishment (Judgment)

Unfortunately today, some of these fundamental basics as conveyed by the writer of Hebrews are not elementary today because (in my opinion) they are not taught in the context they are intended to be taught in.

Last year we spent an entire summer, our “Summer of Faith Tour” on the very subject of Trusting God at a time when many people's faith was being challenged.

This year, we spent 18 weeks with an emphasis on Torah and its many facets, including T'shuvah (repentance), Holiness and Righteousness. What did I say at the end of this time?

“We have finished laying a foundation, Where do we go from here?”

It is important to lay a firm foundation where I should not have to go back and relay it as Sha'ul was having to do in Corinth. Whether you “got it” or not the first time is ultimately your responsibility.

If there was something you didn't understand...ask questions!

If there is something you are still confused about...ask questions!

You do know you have the ability to listen to the sermon again as well have access to the notes. Whether your preferred method of learning is by hearing or by reading, there is no excuse, because both are available on our web site.

Sha'ul had an expectation for believers at Corinth. I too have an expectation for those who attend this congregation.

So, if we have established a foundation of the elementary aspects of our faith,..

“Where do we go from here?”

Our journey is both forward and down.

Forward in that we are to travel the path Adonai has set for us...

Psa 119:35 Guide me on the path of your mitzvot, for I take pleasure in it.

Psa 119:105 ¹ (*Nun*) Your word is a lamp for my foot and light on my path.

The gate on the path is narrow not wide...

Mat 7:13 "Go in through the narrow gate; for the gate that leads to destruction is wide and the road broad, and many travel it;

Mat 7:14 but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Our direction is also down in that we are not to remain on the surface of Scripture that is the P'shat, the plain and simple understanding, what it says is what it means, for if you have been hear long enough you know that the literal representation is not always the intended meaning. Here you have been confronted with Hebrew Idioms, Allusion, Parallelism and Word Play. Thus if you are solely relying on the p'shat, you are lacking in so many ways and ultimately remain in the elementary aspects of Scripture.

We are required to dig down into Scripture, to search and ultimately to understand. This is how you will grow further into maturity.

In what aspects will we grow?

- By digging into Scripture and the Moadim, your understanding has been multiplied exponentially. I know mine has, and what I have learned I have shared with you.
- By studying the Parshah week in and week out, year after year you are not building your foundation again but refortifying it by digging into that which most believers rarely encounter. Each year people encounter something they didn't encounter the year before. In this congregation we call those “Ah ha” moments. Year in and year out. Who says repetition is mundane and boring. If anything, as it pertains to Torah, it is revealing and life changing.

In doing all this are we not taking the path of Yeshua's instruction of His talmidim.

Luk 24:44 Yeshua said to them, "This is what I meant when I was still with you and told you that everything written about me in the Torah of Moshe, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled."

Luk 24:45 Then he opened their minds, so that they could understand the Tanakh,

Luk 24:46 telling them, "Here is what it says: the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day;

Luk 24:47 and in his name repentance leading to forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to people from all nations, starting with Yerushalayim.

Luk 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.

Is this not the foundational aspect I have shared with you as well as the digging down into Scripture that I have also conveyed?

What is prominent here?

Yeshua is taking the Tanakh (Torah, Prophets and Writings) and assembling the pieces of a puzzle that reveal in greater detail the purpose of Messiah. He revealed more than just what resided on the surface of Scripture. He connected dots, filled in blanks and applied color to that which appeared as only black and white.

In school, if you do not have the foundation of basic math, you will not succeed when it is time to take Algebra, Geometry or Calculus. You will not advance.

Is this not same in the body of Messiah? If you have not established a foundation you will always be drinking milk.

Mat 7:7 "Keep asking, and it will be given to you; keep seeking, and you will find; keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

Mat 7:8 For everyone who keeps asking receives; he who keeps seeking finds; and to him who keeps knocking, the door will be opened.

Be Disciples

Know What You Believe

I have a saying that many of you have heard me share with you. Yes it is one of many, but this one is not just a pithy (concise and forcefully expressive) but practical. I hope you consider it not to be whimsical, but helpful because today there is so much confusion, not just in the world but within the body of Messiah.

Know what you believe.

Why you believe it.

Be able to defend /support what you believe

We have seen at times where there is uncertainty of understanding that would lead to the pursuit in order to attain certainty and clarity.

Consider this progression...

Those that were taught by Yeshua directly received instruction from what I would call the source of our faith. The Living Word, opened the minds of those through the Written Word.

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Luk 24:47 and in his name repentance leading to forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to people from all nations, starting with Yerushalayim.

Luk 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.

Those who were there received the same message, the same instruction from the one who was sent to deliver the message.

There is no conflict here because God cannot contradict Himself or He would be a liar

Rom 3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? What is the value of being circumcised?

Rom 3:2 Much in every way! In the first place, the Jews were entrusted with the very words of God.

Rom 3:3 If some of them were unfaithful, so what? Does their faithlessness cancel God's faithfulness?

Rom 3:4 Heaven forbid! God would be true even if everyone were a liar!—as the Tanakh says, "so that you, God, may be proved right in your words and win the verdict when you are put on trial."

What do we see early on after Yeshua's ascension?

Act 2:42 They continued faithfully in the teaching of the emissaries, in fellowship, in breaking bread and in the prayers.

Act 2:43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many miracles and signs took place through the emissaries.

Act 2:44 **All those trusting in Yeshua stayed together and had everything in common;**

Act 2:45 in fact, they sold their property and possessions and distributed the proceeds to all who were in need.

Act 2:46 Continuing faithfully and with singleness of purpose to meet in the Temple courts daily, and breaking bread in their several homes, they shared their food in joy and simplicity of heart,

Act 2:47 praising God and having the respect of all the people. And day after day the Lord kept adding to them those who were being saved.

There appears to be no division here at this time. Those who Yeshua taught remained close to His teaching. At this time there had been great unity as we read in Acts 2:47, thus the message of Messiah was being transmitted as was originally taught and received in kind, that is the same way as it was transmitted.

Yet, we read later on of different teachings occurring that begin to cause division within the Body of Messiah as it grows beyond the borders of Y'hudah.

Act 15:1 But some men came down from Y'hudah to Antioch and began teaching the brothers, "You can't be saved unless you undergo b'rit-milah in the manner prescribed by Moshe."

Act 15:2 This brought them into no small measure of discord and dispute with Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba. So the congregation assigned Sha'ul, Bar-Nabba and some of themselves to go and put this sh'eilah (question) before the emissaries and the elders up in Yerushalayim.

Something new had come into the conversation that was not relevant at the time of either Yeshua's teaching or that of the talmidim we encountered in Acts 2. A curve ball had been thrown at Yeshua's witnesses – Gentiles.

When there is conflict, there must be conflict resolution. Acts 15, known as the Council at Jerusalem, addresses the Goy question and that of circumcision. Discussion would ensue...

Act 15:4 On arrival in Yerushalayim, they were welcomed by the Messianic community, including the emissaries and the elders; and they reported what God had done through them.

Act 15:5 But some of those who had come to trust were from the party of the P'rushim; and they stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the Torah of Moshe."

Act 15:6 The emissaries and the elders met to look into this matter.

Act 15:7 After lengthy debate, Kefa got up and said to them, "Brothers, you yourselves know that a good while back, God chose me from among you to be the one by whose mouth the Goyim should hear the message of the Good News and come to trust.

Act 15:8 And God, who knows the heart, bore them witness by giving the Ruach HaKodesh to them, just as he did to us;

Act 15:9 that is, he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their heart by trust.

And not just discussion but testimony, evidence provided to further define the “What do you believe” aspect I am sharing with you today.

Act 15:12 Then the whole assembly kept still as they listened to Bar-Nabba and Sha'ul tell what signs and miracles God had done through them among the Gentiles.

And more testimony...

Act 15:13 Ya`akov broke the silence to reply. "Brothers," he said, "hear what I have to say.

Act 15:14 Shim`on has told in detail what God did when he first began to show his concern for taking from among the Goyim a people to bear his name.

Act 15:15 And the words of the Prophets are in complete harmony with this for it is written,

Act 15:16 ' "After this, I will return; and I will rebuild the fallen tent of David. I will rebuild its ruins, I will restore it,

Act 15:17 so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, that is, all the Goyim who have been called by my name,"

Act 15:18 says Adonai, who is doing these things.' All this has been known for ages. (Quoting Amos 9:11 - 12)

Ultimately leading to conflict resolution in “The Letter” and the reasoning behind the letter

Act 15:19 "Therefore, my opinion is that we should not put obstacles in the way of the Goyim who are turning to God.

Act 15:20 Instead, we should write them a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood.

Act 15:21 For from the earliest times, Moshe has had in every city those who proclaim him, with his words being read in the synagogues every Shabbat."

How do you resolve your own conflict? Whether being conflicted by what Scripture says or by what others say about Scripture and a certain position they may believe?

Discussion: What are some of the challenges you face today and thus confront what you believe? When confronted, how do you handle such an encounter?

Be Disciples

Know The Soil You Plant Into

I believe it is important as Disciples to have an awareness of whom you are witnessing to and where they are at in their beliefs. I say this because not everyone who hears the message of Messiah receives it the same way. First, if everyone who did hear about Messiah and received, that is embraced His Message to us, our life would be so much easier. Yet, this is not the case and we are challenged as believers in Messiah by those who have not received and embraced His message.

Second, the message of Messiah is equated to a seed being planted into us, providing us with an imagery we can understand. There are many factors that are involved when it comes to whether a seed planted will take root and flourish.

A Third aspect in being Disciples is in how you cast your seeds, that is the sharing of the Message of Messiah. Do you grab a handful and scatter without purpose or intent or do you take a single seed and plant it with precision. Once you have determined how you distribute your seed (The Message of Messiah) then you must consider the type of ground you are planting into. Has the ground been prepared or does it lay unprepared.

These aspects I am sharing come from Yeshua's parable pertaining to the "Sower and the seeds"

Mat 13:1 That same day, Yeshua went out of the house and sat down by the lake;

Mat 13:2 but such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there while the crowd stood on the shore.

Mat 13:3 He told them many things in parables: "A farmer went out to sow his seed.

The farmer intends to sow his seed and their desire is to yield the largest crop possible utilizing the least amount of resources, hence being profitable.

Type 1: The Path side

Mat 13:4 As he sowed, some seed fell alongside the path; and the birds came and ate it up.

In order to understand this parable there are two elements we must first define.

1. What does the seed represent?
2. What do the different kinds of ground represent?

Yeshua answers both of these questions for His talmidim.

Mat 13:18 "So listen to what the parable of the sower means.

Mat 13:19 Whoever hears the message about the Kingdom, but doesn't understand it, is like the seed sown along the path—the Evil One comes and seizes what was sown in his heart.

The seed is the message pertaining to the Kingdom. Thus the seed is a Kingdom seed.

The ground in this case, the ground of the path side. Ground not intended for sowing seed. It is unprepared for growing anything. Its purpose is as a walkway, not a field for growing. So the seed remains on the surface exposed. The message of Messiah remains on the surface, influenced by the world and thus never takes root.

Type 2: Rocky Ground

Mat 13:5 Other seed fell on rocky patches where there was not much soil. It sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow;

Mat 13:6 but when the sun had risen, the young plants were scorched; and since their roots were not deep, they dried up.

Yeshua's response:

Mat 13:20 The seed sown on rocky ground is like a person who hears the message and accepts it with joy at once,

Mat 13:21 but has no root in himself. So he stays on for a while; but as soon as some trouble or persecution arises on account of the message, he immediately falls away.

The rock ground, like the pathway is not intended for growing crops. Yet unlike the pathway where the seed remains on the surface, the rocky ground roots can work their way into gaps between the rocks ultimately taking root. However the ground is not prepared, tilled to where the seeds roots can spread out and truly take root.

The hearer of the message of the Kingdom receives it, yet there is no real foundation for them to grow. This is where many fall short when it comes to "Making Disciples" Their roots are desiring more nourishment yet are being deprived. When the root doesn't receive what it needs, the plant dies.

Type 3: Good Ground that is not prepared

Mat 13:7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

Yeshua's response:

Mat 13:22 Now the seed sown among thorns stands for someone who hears the message, but it is choked by the worries of the world and the deceitful glamor of wealth, so that it produces nothing.

Here we have another influence of the world yet different from what I had alluded to earlier. The world pursuits intermingle with the pursuit of the Kingdom. The worries of the world take precedence over the promise of the Kingdom. Ultimately the worries of the world win out because the seed that has flourished has been strangled by the weed of the world.

Type 4: Good Prepared Ground

Mat 13:8 But others fell into rich soil and produced grain, a hundred or sixty or thirty times as much as had been sown.

Yeshua's response:

Mat 13:23 However, what was sown on rich soil is the one who hears the message and understands it; such a person will surely bear fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirty times what was sown."

This ground is prepared and ready for the seed you are intending to plant. There could be many reasons why a person is ready to receive the Message of Messiah. Needless to say, you need to be aware of some of the signs, some of the questions that you may be confronted with.

“There is something different about you?”

“I am starting to question some things!”

To name two. There are so many more signals that someone may be ready.

- Could Adonai be preparing them for you?
- Is this your Divine appointment?

Mat 13:9 Those who have ears, let them hear!"

Now consider the question that is posed by Yeshua's Talmidim.

Mat 13:10 Then the talmidim came and asked Yeshua, "Why are you speaking to them in parables?"

Mat 13:11 He answered, "Because it has been given to you to know the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but it has not been given to them.

Mat 13:12 For anyone who has something will be given more, so that he will have plenty; but from anyone who has nothing, even what he does have will be taken away.

Mat 13:13 Here is why I speak to them in parables: they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding.

Mat 13:14 That is, in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Yesha`yahu which says, 'You will keep on hearing but never understand, and keep on seeing but never perceive,

Mat 13:15 because the heart of this people has become dull—with their ears they barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, so as not to see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and do t'shuvah, so that I could heal them.' (Isaiah 6:9 - 10)

Mat 13:16 But you, how blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear!

Mat 13:17 Yes indeed! I tell you that many a prophet and many a tzaddik longed to see the things you are seeing but did not see them, and to hear the things you are hearing but did not hear them.

Adonai, through Yeshua has revealed the mysteries of the Kingdom and we are beneficiaries of those who came before us. We have the benefit of being able to read the accounts, the parables, the experiences and thus are able to glean from them. Unfortunately, the wisdom that is transmitted is not always embraced in the manner it is intended to be embraced.

The parable of the “Sower and the Seeds” is intended, in my opinion, to cause us to think first before we convey the Message of Messiah that is the Kingdom Message. Our efforts in sowing this message should be measured rather than random.

Consider name recognition. The Name Jesus is extremely well known throughout the world...

It is counted thus; in 2017, 98% of world population already heard of Jesus, in 2000 it was 95%, in 1950 it was 85%, in 1500 it was 40%, in 1000 it was 32%, in 500 it was 25%, in 300 it was 10%, etc, you take a total average.

<https://www.quora.com/How-many-people-heard-about-Jesus-so-far>

I am not certain of their methodology in how they attained their results, but I can speak from my own experience, even as a young child I had heard the name Jesus. If it were merely about hearing His Name, there would be no issue. Yet, it is not simply hearing His name or even knowing His name exists. It is about knowing Him.

Have you ever tried to force a relationship upon someone?

How has that worked out for you?

Chances are your success rate in forcing relationships is low. The person you are thrusting your opinion upon is hesitant, even resistant to you imposing yourself into their life. Now consider what you are doing when you introduce Yeshua into someone's life who is not prepared. RESISTENCE!!!

Ultimately, it comes down to a cliché that I do embrace “work smarter not harder” It is not about the number you have shared the message with, but the number who have come to embrace the message.

In internet advertising you have these two terms – “impressions” and “click throughs”

Impressions are the number of times your advertisement have been shared and thus assumed to have been seen. “Click throughs” are the number of times someone has seen your advertisement and have acted upon it by clicking on it, taking them to your desired landing page. An acceptable click through rate in internet advertising is 3%. That is 3 out of 100.

Would you rather have less impressions and more click throughs? In order to do that, you must focus

on the person and where they are at in their walk.

The first thing, before all else is pray. Ask Adonai who you should seek. Who is he preparing for you.

Second, learn to read other people. Listen closely to their words, their actions. What are they saying without coming out directly to say it.

Third, tailor your message to the person. It is not a one size fits all message. Years ago Jeri and I were between churches and went to this one church and it was just before July 4th. The pastor was talking about going up to the lake to witness to people. Then he said something that has resonated with me ever since. "You cannot witness to a Catholic as you would to someone who isn't Catholic" Then I started thinking about those words and concluded "if that is true, then you cannot witness to a Jewish person you would the same way you would witness to _____"

Know the ground you are planting your seed into.

Be Disciples

Developing Relationships First

What is relationship?

The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected.

Thus a relationship is a means of being connected. There are different types of relationships, thus not all relationships are the same.

- Familial Relationships
- Romantic Relationships.
- Friendship Relationships
- Professional Relationships
- Casual Relationships
- Relationship With Yourself.

All are different in their own way and thus each serves a specific purpose in your life.

They dynamic each type of relationship is framed by how it is defined. In the majority of cases it is best to keep each relationship category separate rather than to intermingle. You have heard the warning “It is not good to mix business with pleasure” Two very distinct relationships with two very distinct roles in one's life.

Equally as challenging is a Family and Professional relationship dynamic. Speaking from my own experience, at one time working with my father and then with my brother, there were insetting dynamics that ultimately complicated both relationships.

Thus there are time when we develop relationships they need to be separate and distinct from other relationships.

Where would a relationship with other believes fall?

The most appropriate relationship would be that of Familial. This is how the body of Messiah is to be viewed, how it is to function, how it is to be demonstrated.

Even in a family based relationship not everyone is as close as you would expect a family relationship to be. Though when we think family relationship, we visualize one of closeness. All you need to do is look at your own family dynamic and the challenges we face with those close to us.

I believe there would have been challenges within the Relationships between those of the twelve chosen by Yeshua. We read of their final selection upon replacement of Judas...

Act 1:12 Then they returned the Shabbat-walk distance from the Mount of Olives to Yerushalayim.

Act 1:13 After entering the city, they went to the upstairs room where they were staying. The names of the emissaries were Kefa, Ya`akov, Yochanan, Andrew, Philip, T'oma, Bar-Talmi, Mattityahu, Ya`akov Ben-Halfai, Shim`on "the Zealot," and Y'hudah Ben-Ya`akov.

Act 1:20 "Now," said Kefa, "it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his estate become desolate, let there be no one to live in it'; and 'Let someone else take his place as a supervisor.'

Act 1:21 Therefore, one of the men who have been with us continuously throughout the time the Lord Yeshua traveled around among us,

Act 1:22 from the time Yochanan was immersing people until the day Yeshua was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection."

Act 1:23 They nominated two men—Yosef Bar-Sabba, surnamed Justus, and Mattityahu.

Act 1:24 Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen

Act 1:25 to take over the work and the office of emissary that Y'hudah abandoned to go where he belongs."

Act 1:26 Then they drew lots to decide between the two, and the lot fell to Mattityahu. So he was added to the eleven emissaries.

Yet this very relationship dynamic that was first established by Yeshua and continued after His ascension also had a unique dynamic.

Mat 10:1 Yeshua called his twelve talmidim and gave them authority to drive out unclean spirits and to heal every kind of disease and weakness.

Mat 10:2 These are the names of the twelve emissaries: First, Shim`on, called Kefa, and Andrew his brother, Ya`akov Ben-Zavdai and Yochanan his brother,

Mat 10:3 Philip and Bar-Talmi, T'oma and Mattityahu the tax-collector, Ya`akov Bar-Halfai and Taddai,

Mat 10:4 Shim`on the Zealot, and Y'hudah from K'riot, who betrayed him.

Yet, not all twelve received the same attention. There were three that Yeshua would focus on and thus bring them with Him at ever instance. There were times that Yeshua did select a few and only that few.

Mat 17:1 Six days later, Yeshua took Kefa, Ya`akov and his brother Yochanan and led them up a high mountain privately.

Thus, the Transfiguration as it is called was one moment when Yeshua only brought Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan, yet not the other nine, whom He had chosen.

This was not the only occurrence where Yeshua would single out these three of His selected talmidim.

- Yeshua took Ya'akov and Yochanan to Kefa's home (Mark 1:29 - 31)
- Yeshua took Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan when they went to heal the Synagogue leader. (Mark 5:21 - 24)
- Yeshua took Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan to the Garden when He prayed. (Matthew 26:36 - 46)

Why did Yeshua only take Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan?

I am not going to speculate as to what others may believe as to the why Yeshua focused on Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan in these specific situations and not include the others.

Yeshua was most certainly showing them things He wanted them to specifically witness. Is there a reason for this? I believe the answer is found in the Book of Acts. In reading about the actions of Yeshua's talmidim, you will notice that of the twelve selected, only Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan are mentioned.

Yes Sha'ul is seen throughout Acts, yet is not one of the original twelve, nor is Bar-Nabba.

Ultimately, I believe Yeshua, in focusing on Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan was ultimately preparing them for a leadership role within the Messianic Community.

The Book of Acts offers an account of Kefa's powerful messages (Acts 2:14 - 41 & 3:11 – 26)

- Kefa and Yochanan heal the lame beggar (Acts 3:1 – 10)
- Kefa and Yochanan are brought before the Jewish council (Acts 5:17 – 42)
- Kefa and Yochanan go to the Samaritans (Acts 8:14 – 17)
- Kefa goes to the home of Cornelius (Acts 10)
- Kefa and Ya'akov lead the council at Jerusalem (15:1 – 21)

None of the other disciples are mentioned in the Book of Acts, leading us to believe that the fact Jesus spent more time with them was preparing them for more responsibility than the rest.

What can we glean from the actions of Yeshua, who had many following Him, yet there were three whom He identified and thus further prepared for roles that required greater insight?

The roles of Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan were unlike that of the other talmidim. Their roles were unlike that of many of the followers who would be later identified for leadership roles. We don't hear of the succession plan for Kefa, Ya'akov (who's death is recorded in Acts 12:1 - 5) and Yochanan. Yet we do know there would be people who would take their place.

If I were to identify the distinction between Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan in relation to the other nine I would convey that they are experiencing a more intense training, let's call it Yeshua's Management

Internship Program. Not everyone is management material, yet Yeshua identified these three individuals for greater responsibility.

Outside of the Gospels for only Yochanan of the three has one. Yet, when you look at all the other writings conveying the New Covenant Writings, Kefa is credited with two letters, Ya'akov a letter and Yochanan three letters, Revelation and the Gospel bearing his name.

The roles of these three men, hand selected by Yeshua and further identified as the primary leaders of this movement within the Jewish community would facilitate some of the most profound moments recorded in Scripture. Kefa, not Sha'ul was the first person to introduce the Gospel of the Jewish Messiah to the Goy, the nations. They would address the Jewish leadership regarding Yeshua and a most powerful encounter involving Kefa and Gamli'el.

Before you even consider sharing the Gospel with someone, consider your relationship with that person first. Similar to our lesson last week pertaining to which soil are you planting the seed of the Gospel message, consider the relationship of the person you are interacting with.

Each relationship has its own dynamic and thus your message requires its own tailored presentation as well. Consider these questions for further thought...

- Who are your three?
- Who are the individuals you are pouring your life into at a deeper level than anyone else?
- Who are the individuals you are taking places in ministry that you don't take anyone else and who are you giving more responsibility?
- Who is in your inner circle?

Be Disciples

Putting Everything Into Practice

The premise for what I am about to share is taken from an article entitled “Standing in God's Way” (*excerpts italicized*) written by C. Bruce White back in 1987. What he wrote back then is still prominent today.

The information I have shared with you thus far has brought us to this point. Taking everything you have learned and putting it into practice. Taking that which is on the page and thus making it practical. What better way to do so then through an actual example. Acts 11:1 – 18:

We read of the emissaries residing in Y'hudah (Judah) hearing about what is transpiring with the Goyim (Gentiles) non-Jews who are receiving the Word of God.

Act 11:1 The emissaries and the brothers throughout Y'hudah heard that the Goyim had received the word of God;

Act 11:2 but when Kefa went up to Yerushalayim, the members of the Circumcision faction criticized him,

Act 11:3 saying, "You went into the homes of uncircumcised men and even ate with them!"

Their initial reaction is one of puzzlement when Kefa comes to visit them. “You went into the home of a Gentile?” This may seem to be a minimal issue, yet at the time, it was something that just did not happen. We even see Kefa convey this very point.

Act 10:28 He said to them, "**You are well aware that for a man who is a Jew to have close association with someone who belongs to another people, or to come and visit him, is something that just isn't done.** But God has shown me not to call any person common or unclean;

Yet, what the Goyim are experiencing now, the Jewish people experienced years prior when in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) on Shavu'ot...

Act 2:1 The festival of Shavu`ot arrived, and the believers all gathered together in one place.

Act 2:2 Suddenly there came a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Act 2:3 Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on each one of them.

Act 2:4 They were all filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and began to talk in different languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

Act 2:5 Now there were staying in Yerushalayim religious Jews from every nation under heaven.

At that time there was also significant confusion for what had transpired.

Act 2:6 When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered; they were confused, because each one heard the believers speaking in his own language.

Act 2:7 Totally amazed, they asked, "How is this possible? Aren't all these people who are speaking from the Galil?"

Act 2:8 How is it that we hear them speaking in our native languages?

Kefa, having been prepared for greater responsibility by Yeshua as was conveyed in the previous lesson in "Developing Relationships First" would stand up and convey one of the most profound messages captured within the New Covenant writings, addressing the many questions.

Act 2:14 Then Kefa stood up with the Eleven and raised his voice to address them: "You Judeans, and all of you staying here in Yerushalayim! Let me tell you what this means! Listen carefully to me!

Act 2:15 "These people aren't drunk, as you suppose—it's only nine in the morning.

Act 2:16 No, this is what was spoken about through the prophet Yo'el:

Act 2:17 'Adonai says: "In the Last Days, I will pour out from my Spirit upon everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

A number of years would pass from this most profound moment in time whereby the Jewish people had experienced the partial fulfillment of a promise conveyed through the Prophet Yoel (Joel), as conveyed by Kefa.

Here we read of Philip traveling to a city of Shomron (Samaria), what were once the Northern Tribes of Israel in order to share the Good News of the Word, the Message of Messiah, the Gospel.

Act 8:4 However, those who were scattered announced the Good News of the Word wherever they went.

Act 8:5 Now Philip went down to a city in Shomron and was proclaiming the Messiah to them;

Act 8:6 and the crowds were paying close attention to what Philip said, as they heard and saw the miraculous signs he was doing.

Act 8:7 For many people were having unclean spirits driven out of them, shrieking; also many paralytics and crippled persons were being healed;

Act 8:8 so that there was great joy in that city.

I trust you are seeing a pattern here, as has been outlined by Yeshua...

Act 1:6 When they were together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore self-rule to Isra'el?"

Act 1:7 He answered, "You don't need to know the dates or the times; the Father has kept these under his own authority.

Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you; **you will be my witnesses both in Yerushalayim and in all Y'hudah and Shomron, indeed to the ends of the earth!"**

At this point in time, we are witnessing the realization of Yeshua's instruction, if not prophecy that the message of Messiah would originate in Yerushalayim, spread throughout Y'hudah, extend beyond its borders first to Shomron (Samaria). This is where the Good News has gotten to thus far.

We now come to the point where Kefa has returned to Yerushalayim and would be confronted by members of the circumcision faction of the Messianic community. Yes, this was an issue within the Messianic community as is later addressed in the Yerushalayim council in Acts 15.

Act 11:4 In reply, Kefa began explaining in detail what had actually happened:

Act 11:5 "I was in the city of Yafo, praying; and in a trance I had a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being lowered by its four corners from heaven, and it came down to me.

Act 11:6 I looked inside and saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, crawling creatures and wild birds.

Act 11:7 Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Kefa, slaughter and eat!'

Act 11:8 I said, 'No, sir! Absolutely not! Nothing unclean or treif has ever entered my mouth!'

Act 11:9 But the voice spoke again from heaven: 'Stop treating as unclean what God has made clean.'

Act 11:10 This happened three times, and then everything was pulled back up into heaven.

Act 11:11 "At that very moment, three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where I was staying;

Act 11:12 and the Spirit told me to have no misgivings about going back with them. These six brothers also came with me, and we went into the man's house.

Act 11:13 He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Yafo and bring back Shim`on, known as Kefa.

Act 11:14 He has a message for you which will enable you and your whole household to be saved.'

Act 11:15 "But I had hardly begun speaking when the Ruach HaKodesh fell on them, just as on us at the beginning!

Act 11:16 And I remembered that the Lord had said, 'Yochanan used to immerse people in water, but you will be immersed in the Ruach HaKodesh.'

Kefa is recounting an experience to those who have confronted him about the Goyim, Gentiles receiving the same Gift of Adonai that they had. Sharing aspects of the dream / vision he had on three occasions.

Act 10:15 The voice spoke to him a second time: "Stop treating as unclean what God has made clean."

Act 10:16 This happened three times, and then the sheet was immediately taken back up into heaven.

Act 10:17 Kefa was still puzzling over the meaning of the vision he had seen, when the men Cornelius had sent, having inquired for Shim`on's house, stood at the gate

Kefa was puzzled by the dream that he had received. However, his puzzlement would not remain for the meaning of the vision was revealed.

Act 10:28 He said to them, "You are well aware that for a man who is a Jew to have close association with someone who belongs to another people, or to come and visit him, is something that just isn't done. **But God has shown me not to call any person common or unclean;**

Act 10:29 so when I was summoned, I came without raising any questions. Tell me, then, why did you send for me?"

Thus, Kefa would be made known of what Adonai had in mind for his visit to the home of Cornelius. When he would encounter him, Kefa knew what he believed and was now coming to understand why he believed it for the Ruach Ha Kodesh revealed the meaning of the vision.

We witness Kefa being directly involved in the two most prominent moments pertaining to Adonai fulfillment of His promise. He was present on Shavuot (Acts 2) and was used instrumentally in conveying to the crowd of people what was transpiring. Yeshua had conveyed to the people after His resurrection to wait for the promise.

Act 1:4 At one of these gatherings, he instructed them not to leave Yerushalayim but to "wait for what the Father promised, which you heard about from me.

Kefa was also instrumental in revealing the Gospel message to Cornelius, the first recorded Gentile and those in his home who would hear the message of Messiah, accept it and then be blessed in receiving the Ruach Ha Kodesh. He may have challenges along the way in terms of understanding, yet those challenges were resolved. He did not stand in the way of what Adonai had called him to do.

We stand in God's way when we fully understand what the Bible says on a particular topic, but will not conform to its teaching.

Yet, Kefa came to an understanding as to what Scripture conveyed as to the promise that would be poured out upon those who would come to believe and was able to express this profound promise of Yo'el (Joel) 3:1 – 2

Joe 3:1 "After this, I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions;

Joe 3:2 and also on male and female slaves in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

As was conveyed in the lesson "Know What You Believe" Kefa follow these very steps.

- He knew what he believed.
- He knew why he believed it.
- He was able to defend his belief.

Thus, he did not stand in the way but embraced, that is conformed to the teaching of Scripture.

One might fully understand a teaching in the Bible yet in their pride and / or arrogance say it is not necessary to obey this teaching of Scripture.

Kefa's did not let himself get in the way either. He did not elevate himself and thus putting himself in a position that we saw Yeshua address directly, pertaining to the leadership of the Jewish Community

Mat 15:12 The talmidim came to him and said, "Do you know that the P'rushim were offended by what you said?"

Mat 15:13 He replied, "Every plant that my Father in heaven has not planted will be pulled up by the roots.

Mat 15:14 Let them be. They are blind guides. When a blind man guides another blind man, both will fall in a pit."

Yeshua identified the P'rushim as blind guides and prideful leaders.

Mat 23:5 Everything they do is done to be seen by others; for they make their t'fillin broad and their tzitziyot long,

Mat 23:6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues,

Mat 23:7 and they love being greeted deferentially in the marketplaces and being called 'Rabbi.'

Mat 23:13 "But woe to you hypocritical Torah-teachers and P'rushim! For you are shutting the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces, neither entering yourselves nor allowing those who wish to enter to do so.

Let's define a few words...

- **Pride:** *a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired.*
- **Arrogance:** *Making claims or pretensions to superior importance or rights; overbearingly assuming; insolently proud.*

In the confines of their heart and the actions of their life they withstand God.

- **Withstand:** *remain undamaged or unaffected by; to resist.*

It should be our prayer that everyone in the body of Messiah would be able to say, "If I understand what the Lord would have me do, I am going to do it."

In order to do something one must be informed and not just having the facts, but understanding them, embracing them and thus not withstanding God.

- **Ignorance:** *lack of knowledge or information.*

Ignorance, though sounds like a very demeaning term when used on someone, in its direct and intended meaning it conveys that the person lacks information. They are lacking of the knowledge which leads to understanding, thus enabling action.

Another word that gets blown out of proportion is prejudice.

- **Prejudice:** *is an attitude of ignorance.*

Let's define prejudice in this manner. It is the attitude of ignorance whereby one lacks information and therefore understanding.

Thus this attitude of prejudice is (as conveyed by the definition for attitude is *a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.*

Though the person is lacking further information and thus have settled their position, in many ways they are not willing to entertain new information that would further clarify a matter. We see this all too many times among believers in Messiah.

When many have been confronted with Scriptural truths addressing Church tradition, there is enormous push back relating to the Scriptural truths and thus defending Church tradition. The same is also true within the Jewish community pertaining to the truth and therefore reality of Yeshua.

In the case of the Church, such traditions that have become sacred are the holidays, Christmas and Easter, Sunday as the day of worship and is sometimes identified as the “Christian Sabbath”. Yet, what is truly unfortunate is that none of these things are truly supported by Scripture. One might say “the Christmas story is in Scripture, it is Luke chapter 2.” Luke chapter 2 is identified as “The Christmas Story” accounting the birth of Yeshua, yet in no way does it justify the Church tradition of Christmas.

The same is true for Easter, the account of the Resurrection of Yeshua. As with Christmas, there is so much history associated with its origination that this document is neither the place nor time to explore further. The point being and in relation to our words there is a prejudice (an attitude of ignorance) that of lacking knowledge and therefore understanding based on what is found in Scripture that remains present to this day. In many ways there is a lack of desire to understand that which is supported by Scripture, yet embracing traditions. Yeshua conveyed this very same thing to the P'rushim (Pharisees)

Mar 7:1 The P'rushim and some of the Torah-teachers who had come from Yerushalayim gathered together with Yeshua

Mar 7:2 and saw that some of his talmidim ate with ritually unclean hands, that is, without doing n'tilat-yadayim.

Mar 7:3 (For the P'rushim, and indeed all the Judeans, holding fast to the Tradition of the Elders, do not eat unless they have given their hands a ceremonial washing.

Mar 7:4 Also, when they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they have rinsed their hands up to the wrist; and they adhere to many other traditions, such as washing cups, pots and bronze vessels.)

Mar 7:5 The P'rushim and the Torah-teachers asked him, "Why don't your talmidim live in accordance with the Tradition of the Elders, but instead eat with ritually unclean hands?"

Mar 7:6 Yeshua answered them, "Yesha`yahu was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites—as it is written, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me.

Mar 7:7 Their worship of me is useless, because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines.'

Mar 7:8 "You depart from God's command and hold onto human tradition.

This is equally true in the Jewish community, yet from a different perspective. From the Jewish perspective it is not about replacing aspects that are supported by Scripture, but in denying the truth that the events documented in the New Covenant writings are not supported by Scripture (the Tanakh)

Nothing else proclaims to mankind our ignorance more loudly than prejudice. We see this prejudice further with the presentation of the Gospel. For such a verse is emphasized in Church, on their websites and in their literature.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting,

When promoting the Gospel, this is where they end, yet the verse does not end here. In the English, there is a comma, indicating more. Here is the totality of this verse and the one that follows:

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile.

Rom 1:17 For in it is revealed how God makes people righteous in his sight; and from beginning to end it is through trust—as the Tanakh puts it, "But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust."

Even in the presentation of the Gospel a prejudice is present. The history of replacement theology, still emanates today, thus minimizing the significance of the Jewish people in God's narrative. This is not lost in New Covenant writings, but ignored in its presentation.

How many times are we ready to lay the ax to somebody because of something we have heard, before investigating the facts or the context?

Much of what is against God's will in the lives of people is due to ignorance.

God's will is simply what He has revealed through His Word, Scripture – Torah, The Prophets, The Writings (The Tanakh) and yes the Brith Hadoshah (The New Covenant) The focus towards the New Covenant is either “all or none” The emphasis by the Church is the New Covenant, with little emphasis placed upon the Tanakh the foundation.

When we withstand the Bible's message, we withstand God by rejecting the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We can have the same assurance that the information revealed to us is just as valid as Peter's information.

Kefa did not stand in the way of Adonai but boldly proclaimed God's truth to anyone and everyone, including those he was confronted by when news of the Goyim receiving the Word of God and the Ruach Ha Kodesh traveled throughout Y'udah. The disciple Kefa had become, prepared by Yeshua for moments such as this was rewarded for the fruit that would be seen.

Act 11:17 Therefore, if God gave them the same gift as he gave us after we had come to put our trust in the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who was I to stand in God's way?"

Act 11:18 On hearing these things, they stopped objecting and began to praise God, saying, "This means that God has enabled the Goyim as well to do t'shuvah and have life!"

Kefa shared what he believed, why he believed it and thus defended his position that caused others to see, understand and embrace.

When God's will had become clear to them, they accepted it.

These were men who wanted to glorify God, not stand in His way.

When we know what God wants us to do and we do not do it, we stand in His way.

As His disciples, prepared to do great things and even greater things than had already been done, our primary responsibility is...

Luk 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.

The question is...are you?