



CHAVURAT HAMASHIACH

SYNAGOGUE SABBATH MESSAGE

Moshe's Testimony

A d'rash for parshat Yitro
Shemot (Exodus) 18:1-20:23(26)

By Rabbi Reuel Dillon

Our experiences with God, and as a result, the testimonies we have to share, are something that Adonai uses to change the world. We never know how sharing our personal testimony and experience with God can change someone's life in a way we never expected. All too often though, when it comes to family we become fearful, which keeps us from sharing the Good News. But, in parshat Yitro we see that Rabbenu Moshe (our Rabbi Moses) was a good example in this and took the opportunity to share his testimony with his father-in-law Yitro. Remember, Yitro was not a worshiper of the God of Yisra'el, and most likely was a pagan Priest. So, you could imagine how hard it would be to share your testimony with someone like that.

In Shemot (Exodus) 18:8-12 we read, "Moshe told his father-in-law all that HaShem had done to Par`oh and to the Mitzrim for Yisra'el's sake, all the hardships that had come on them on the way, and how HaShem delivered them. Yitro rejoiced for all the goodness which HaShem had done to Yisra'el, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Mitzrim. Yitro said, "Blessed be HaShem, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Mitzrim, and out of the hand of Par`oh; who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Mitzrim. Now I know that HaShem is greater than all gods because of the thing in which they dealt arrogantly against them." Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God. Aharon came with all of the Zekanim of Yisra'el, to eat bread with Moshe's father-in-law before God".

Through Moshe sharing his faith, through sharing his God and his Deliverer with his father-in-law, Yitro was converted to placing his faith in the God of Yisra'el as he proclaimed, "Now I know that HaShem is greater than all gods". And, before this Moshe shared his testimony with the Egyptian Nation, and through Moshe Adonai rocked that Nation. Moshe also shared his testimony with his people Yisra'el, and with Adonai's help he moved an entire nation into a direct relationship with the God of Yisra'el.

One of the great powers of our testimony is simply sharing with our friends and family how God changed our lives. From this little seed Adonai can do His wonders. During each season of Pesach as we observe the seder we each remember the time of our lives when Adonai heard our cry and redeemed us and saved us with an outstretched arm. If we know Messiah Yeshua, each one of us has testimony to share. The sharing of our own personal exodus from Egypt is a great way to inspire others to also trust in God.

Just as Moshe was ready to share with Yitro, we should always be ready and willing to share our testimony with people. Granted, there will be times when the Spirit of God will directly give you the words to say...in these cases all you have to do is be willing to open your mouth with the intent to share. In Mattityahu (Matthew) 10:18-20 Yeshua tells us, " Yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Goyim. But when they deliver you up, don't be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you".

But, other than spontaneous inspiration, we should have something that is prepared that we have committed to heart that we can share with people. We should be ready in season and out of season to share our testimony. 2Timothy 4:1-4 states, " I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all patience and teaching. For the time will come when they will not listen to the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside to fables".

We should have two kinds of prepared testimonies to share. The first one we should have is our testimony in a "nutshell". This is a version of our testimony that can be shared quickly when there is not much time or when you can tell someone's attention span is short. The second type of a prepared testimony would be a more expanded version that we have committed to heart to share when you sense you have more time to spend with someone. Kefa Alef (1Peter) 3:15 exhorts with the following words, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, with humility and fear".

What do you share? Just be honest. None of us were born Angels, none of us are pure as the driven snow...share how rotten you used to be...most of these people love to hear good gossip anyway...and if it is about yourself...it is kosher. Just share how God has changed you and is changing you for the better, share the shalom that Adonai has given you, share how He has empowered you in life, and make sure to pass on His love to the person you are speaking with. Share the Message of the Good News, how He loves you and me so much that He was willing to send His son to a place where He knew people would abuse him and finally kill him for the sake of our salvation. Share how Yeshua The Messiah willingly did this because he shared his Father's love for us and wanted to redeem us from our sin and our rotten state of being.

We don't have to worry about having a perfect testimony or worry about if we covered all the official steps that are taught to people when it comes to evangelism. Although these things can certainly be helpful when sharing...It is just amazing what Adonai can do when we even try...which is usually the problem for most of us, that is, when we don't even try share. Earlier on, before Moshe learned a few things about Adonai, he certainly tried to avoid sharing his testimony as he probably felt like many of us do. In Shemot (Exodus) 4:10 he complains to Adonai saying, "Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before now, nor since you have spoken to your servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." And, if we continue to read about this account we quickly see that Adonai isn't too impressed with such an excuse. For Shemot (Exodus) 4:11-14 states, "HaShem said to him, "Who made man's mouth? Or who makes one mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Isn't it I, HaShem? Now

therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you shall speak." He said, "Oh, Lord, please send someone else." The anger of HaShem was kindled against Moshe...".

Sometimes we may think that what we have to share or say to someone is not that impressive, or we become embarrassed to share or maybe even ashamed because we don't consider ourselves to be effective communicators of the message. 1Corinthians 1:25-29 says, "For God's "nonsense" is wiser than humanity's "wisdom." And God's "weakness" is stronger than humanity's "strength." Just look at yourselves, brothers - look at those whom God has called! Not many of you are wise by the world's standards, not many wield power or boast noble birth. But God chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise; God chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the strong; and God chose what the world looks down on as common or regards as nothing in order to bring to nothing what the world considers important; so that no one should boast before God".

What you may consider to be small, unimpressive, or un-impactful, can be used of Adonai in a powerful way. Adonai can take faith like the size of a little tiny mustard seed and make it expand in a way that you couldn't imagine. In Mattityahu (Matthew) 13:31-32 our Master Yeshua teaches us, "...The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is smaller than all seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches". In Luke 17:6, "The Lord said, 'If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you would tell this sycamore tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you". And, in Mattityahu (Matthew) 17:20, "He said to them, "... For most assuredly I tell you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you".

With just a little bit of faith Adonai will move mountains for us, indeed whole nations can be moved. Our God is known for taking little things in our life and greatly expanding them to use them for His glory. In Mark 6:34-44 we read, "Yeshua came out, saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. When it was late in the day, his talmidim (disciples) came to him, and said, "This place is deserted, and it is late in the day. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They asked him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give them something to eat?" He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go see." When they knew, they said, "Five, and two fish." He commanded them that everyone should sit down in groups on the green grass. They sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves, and he gave to his talmidim to set before them, and he divided the two fish among them all. They all ate, and were filled. They took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and also of the fish. Those who ate the loaves were five thousand men".

If we really understand what we have in our possession, that is, the Message of the Good News, we not only are not embarrassed or ashamed, but we will be excited to share The Message. In Romans 1:15-16 the Emissary Sha'ul says, "So, as much as is in me, I am eager to preach the Good News to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Messiah, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Yehudi (Jew) first, and also for the Yevanit (Greek)". And, if we don't think that Adonai or

Yeshua The Messiah is important enough to share with people what does that say about our relationship with him? Think about it for a moment, if you have news that is important or that is exciting to you...you usually don't hesitate to share with people...do you? Shouldn't it be the same with the message of The Good News and the testimony that Adonai has given to each one of us who knows His son Yeshua, our Messiah?

Yeshua takes this business of sharing our testimony so seriously that he has some heavy words to share regarding this matter. In Mattityahu (Matthew) 10:28-33 he says to us, "Don't be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehinnom. "Aren't two sparrows sold for an assarion? Not one of them falls on the ground apart from your Father's will, but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore don't be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone therefore who confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven".

After we have shared our testimony we should be cautious not to blow our witness by either being a hypocrite or by living in ways that are contrary to the God we claim to serve. For this also carries great consequences. In Mattityahu (Matthew) 18:4-7 Yeshua tells us, "Whoever therefore humbles himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever receives one such little child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him that a huge millstone should be hung around his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea. "Woe to the world because of occasions of stumbling! For it must be that the occasions come, but woe to that person through whom the occasion comes!"

Let us walk before our Father in Heaven with the reality that He is watching us from above, He is hearing the things we are saying, and is watching our witness moment by moment. This life is short, so let us redeem the time and seize the moments Adonai gives to us now to share our testimony. "For the time will come when they will not listen to the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth...". Just like Moshe, if we comprehend the great salvation that has come upon us, we should be excited to share. By ourselves we can't change the world or move our Nation, but just like Moshe, b'ezrat HaShem (with the Help of Adonai), we can do amazing things if we just exercise a little bit of faith.

Shabbat shalom!

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