

The Commands of Yeshua ~ Part 21

In my last post, we explored Yeshua's calling us to fulfill the Great Commission. In this post, we will explore His commands to feed His sheep, demonstrate the power of God, and pray that God would send more workers into the harvest.

Calling ~ Part C

"Therefore, brothers, try even harder to make your being called and chosen a certainty. For if you keep doing this, you will never stumble." (2 Kefa 1:10)

4. Feed My Lambs

"After breakfast, Yeshua said to Shim'on Kefa, 'Shim'on Bar-Yochanan, do you love me more than these?' He replied, Yes, Lord, you know I'm your friend.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.'"
(Yochanan 21:15)

Yochanan records an intimate, private conversation between Shim'on Kefa and Yeshua. It was a moment of restoration, reconciliation, redemption, and commission. Kefa had failed Yeshua, abandoned Him at His arrest, and then three times denied even knowing Him.

But here, in this moment, Yeshua was opening Kefa's eyes to a new calling - to care for those who needed the counsel and compassion of a spiritual leader. As the Good Shepherd, Yeshua has a multitude of followers today that need care and attention. A host of directives in the Brit Hadashah call us to care for one another; to serve one another; to consider others above ourselves; to take care of the weak, the young, and the vulnerable. And we are commanded, like Kefa, to do our part in ministering to them.

Kefa understood the importance of caring for the sheep and little lambs of Yeshua. He later wrote:

"Therefore, I urge the congregation leaders among you, as a fellow-leader and witness to the Messiah's sufferings, as well as a sharer in the glory to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is in your care, exercising oversight not out of constraint, but willingly, as God wants; and not out of a desire for dishonest gain, but with enthusiasm; also not as machers ["big deal"] domineering over those in your care, but as people who become examples to the flock. Then, when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive glory as your unfading crown." (1 Kefa 5:1-4). This may reflect partly what Yeshua commanded in Matthew 28:20 to make talmadim, ***"teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."*** Certainly this would mean feeding them spiritually, but the term "feed" also included caring for, guiding, and shepherding. It means far more than preaching to them; it means loving them.

Although this command was directed to Kefa, it applies to all of us in that we are to be concerned with the welfare of one another, make talmidim out of new Believers, serve others, and teach and equip others for ministry. We, too, can feed and care for Yeshua's sheep as we care for one another.

Application: To feed lambs is to make every effort to care for our brothers and sisters in Yeshua, to counsel them, guide them, share biblical truths with them, pray for them, and walk beside them. Are you caring for others or most often just caring for yourself? How are you investing in the lives of others? Who are you walking alongside to encourage in the ways of the kingdom? Do not neglect the sheep of the Good Shepherd.

5. Demonstrate the Power of God

"As you go, proclaim, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is near,' heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those afflicted with tzara'at [skin disease], expel demons. You have received without paying, so give without asking payment." (Matthew 10:7-8)

Some would say these commands are not for us today, that they were specifically for the talmidim who were sent out to demonstrate the power of the Besorah. It is not difficult to accept that the first half of the command is valid, to preach; but it is the last half many have trouble with.

The key is in hearing from the Master. As you proclaim the Besorah, various situations may arise. It will be up to you to know how the Master is directing you. He did not ask us to heal the entire world or cast demons out of everyone in the world, but He did ask us to take the Besorah to every creature in the world. These other actions need great spiritual discernment. Yeshua has not changed. His power is no different now from what it was then. We cannot presume what the Lord wants us to do, and we cannot limit what we allow Him to do through us. To Him be the glory, in whatever we accomplish through Him. God is not limited by physical constraints and neither are His people when they act in obedience to their Lord.

Application: Let the Lord lead you to use His power and strength to impact those in need around you. Some situations may truly call for a demonstration of God's power in order for the Besorah message to penetrate the hearts of the hearers. Others may only need a quiet invitation to respond to Yeshua's love. Ask the Spirit to give you clear discernment and an awareness of His presence to lead and guide your actions to bring Him the glory and the praise in every situation.

6. Pray for God to Send Out Workers

"Then he said to his talmidim, 'The harvest is rich, but the workers are few. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers to gather in His harvest.'" (Matthew 9:37-38)

This command is another one that reveals to us the character of God. Kefa wrote: ***"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some people think of slowness; on the contrary, he is patient with you; for it is not his purpose that anyone should be destroyed, but that everyone should turn from his sins."*** (2 Kefa 3:9) God does not want anyone to perish and spend eternity apart from His presence. His desire for all mankind is to bring them to repentance and a restored relationship with Him so that they will not have to die in their sins.

Sha'ul explains God's strategy: ***"Everyone who calls on the name of Adonai will be delivered. But how can they call on someone if they haven't trusted in him? And how can they trust in someone if they haven't heard about him? And how can they hear about someone if no one is proclaiming him? And how can people proclaim him unless God sends them? As the Tanakh puts it, 'How beautiful are the feet of those announcing good news about good things!'"*** (Romans 10:13-15)

The message of the Besorah is not a gift to be hoarded but a gift to be shared openly with others. When we pray for God to send out laborers, we are, at the same time, offering our lives into His service where He has placed us. This command reveals to us the heart of God in order for us to align our hearts with His. We, too, should have a heart for the lost, a heart to share the Besorah, a heart to help the lost find their way home to God.

Application: When you pray this prayer for God to ***"send out workers to gather in His harvest"*** whom does God bring to mind? Maybe a family member, an old friend, a people group or tribe who have not yet responded to the good news? Have you shared the Besorah with them?

Remember always the words of Yeshua: ***"If you love me, you will keep my commands."*** (Yochanan 14:15)

In my next post, we will conclude this mini-series on the character traits that Yeshua expects us to possess concerning our calling by exploring His commands to watch and pray; be ready for His return; and, not to worry about how to witness.