

The Commands of Yeshua ~ Part 27

In my last post, we looked at the caution of not being afraid when we suffer and holding on to what God has given us. In this post, we will look at His commands to beware of false prophets; not worrying about our life; and, taking heed of how we live out our righteousness.

"I have come so that they may have life, life in its fullest measure." (Yochanan 10:10b)

Cautions ~ Part E

8. Beware of False Prophets

"Beware of the false prophets! They come to you wearing sheep's clothing, but underneath they are hungry wolves!" (Mathew 7:15)

Here Yeshua warns us of those who present and portray themselves as godly but are quite the opposite. They want to be accepted as spiritual leaders among God's people, but they have evil intentions and selfish desires. In time their fruit will make clear their evil heart because division, discord, strife, hurt, confusion, manipulation, and accusation follow them wherever they go. They may not stay long in any one place as their deeds find them out. Yet they continue on their destructive path deceiving, manipulating, and destroying God's people.

Something as simple as questioning the character and integrity of the pastor, constantly causing division during business meetings, bringing unjust accusations against godly leaders, teaching corrupt theology or doctrines to teenagers, pressuring or manipulating the kehillah to go in unhealthy directions, and more - all have the same end to destroy the kingdom of God one kehillah at a time. Web sites, books, radio programs, traveling preachers, conference leaders, and visitors should be vetted through wise and godly people to protect the body from wolves and subversive agents who can dash the faith of the unsuspecting, the gullible, and the young in the faith among your members.

Application: Do not easily accept new people into leadership, but test them to see if people are drawn closer to God through their work and ministry, or if they are drawn closer to the new person instead. See if they point people to Yeshua or to themselves. Do they cause people to question authority and become harsh or critical of others, or do they become more loving and supportive of the leadership? Be wise in how you accept outsiders in your midst. Your blind acceptance may lead to the demise of your kehillah. Loyalty to a person should never supersede loyalty to the body of Yeshua.

9. Don't Worry About Your Life

"Therefore, I tell you, don't worry about your life - what you will eat or drink; or about your body - what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?" (Mathew 6:25)

If there was ever a command that brings great comfort, it is this one. With economic downturns, catastrophic natural disasters, violent crimes, child molesters, unscrupulous money managers, health scares, worldwide outbreaks of disease and terrorists, and, political leaders devoid of any moral conduct, we can easily and rightfully be paralyzed with worry about life and what the future may bring.

What a relief to be confidently able to trust our life into the hands of someone who truly loves us and who possesses the genuine power to intervene, protect, and guide us through life. Also, what a contrast between the thief who ***"comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy"*** and the Good Shepherd who ***"lays down his life for His sheep"*** (see Yochanan 10:10-11).

Exchanging worry for trust is not always easy. Some people believe that unless they worry, they are not doing anything productive to solve their situation. But worry means you do not trust God to be able to handle your situations. Yeshua promises to provide His people with all that they need - the basics of food and clothing - and after that, everything else is a bonus. The more time you spend trying to take care of your own needs, the less time you have to focus on your ministry to others. Do what you can, and leave the rest to the Lord.

Application: Do you obsess over the latest 'tech toys' or what your neighbor just bought? Why? What is the point? How often do you have a spiritual fast and spend time in prayer that you would have spent cooking and eating? How you spend your time and what you think about most often reveals what is most important in your life. Yeshua wants you to know He plans to take care of the details of your life so you can concentrate on things that are more important. How are you spending the time God has given you?

10. Take Heed

"Be careful not to parade your acts of tzedakah (righteousness) in front of people in order to be seen by them! If you do, you have no reward from your Father in heaven." (Matthew 6:1)

Yeshua had elaborated on this point earlier when He said, **"For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!"** (Matthew 5:20) The righteousness of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim was based on external ritual and formal routine. It focused on gaining the applause of men and the recognition of the kehillah because of their public show of piety and self-denial. On the outside they looked like model citizens. But on the inside they were empty, self-serving, and full of selfish ambition (see Luke 11:39).

Entrance into Yeshua's kingdom requires a righteousness that begins on the inside and works to impact every aspect of one's life. It is not for show or approval of mankind but seeks to serve God alone. The aim of this righteousness is not an enhanced reputation in the kehillah but to seek and find God Himself.

Those who seek man's approval, recognition, and affirmation will be the ones who declare before Yeshua on the Day of Judgment, ***"Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we expel demons in your name? Didn't we perform many miracles in your name?"*** (Matthew 7:22) Yeshua will look into their hearts, and He will see that they have already received their rewards. They had the places of importance at the receptions and the seats of honor at the banquet tables. They got what they were looking for. But because they were not looking to please God, Yeshua will say to them ***"I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!"*** (Matthew 7:23)

Yeshua provides this correction for His disciples: ***"But you, when you do tzedakah, don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Then your tzedakah will be in secret; and your Father, who sees what you do in secret, will reward you."*** (Matthew 6:3-4). We can choose to be recognized and honored by the people around us, or we can choose to be recognized and honored by God who sees all that we are doing. The wise person always chooses to honor God and seeks His blessings and approval.

Application: Our heart and our actions need to be the same; otherwise our service is for show and cannot bring glory to God. Take time before God today to let His Spirit evaluate your heart before Him. Ask Him to help you honor Him instead of trying to impress others around you.

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

In my next post, we will begin to wrap-up this series on the Commands of Yeshua.