

Yeshua Instructs His Emissaries on Their Mission ~ Part 2 To Be Like Yeshua Means – To Affirm Others

In my last post, we began to look at the instructions Yeshua gave to His emissaries on their initial training mission. In this post, we continue to explore the instructions He gave as recorded in Matthew 10:11-16.

"When you come to a town or village, look for someone trustworthy and stay with him until you leave. When you enter someone's household, say, 'Shalom aleikhem!' If the home deserves it, let your shalom rest on it; if not, let your shalom return to you. But if the people of a house or town will not welcome you or listen to you, leave it and shake its dust from your feet! Yes, I tell you, it will be more tolerable on the Day of Judgment for the people of S'dom and 'Amora than for that town! Pay attention! I am sending you out like sheep among wolves, so be as prudent as snakes and as harmless as doves." ~ Matthew 10:11-16

Where to Stay

Each pair of emissaries would enter a ***town or village*** and ***stay*** in a ***trustworthy*** person's house (that is, the home of a Believer who had invited them to lodge there during their ministry). The command to ***stay*** until they left the city cautioned them never to offend their hosts by looking for "better" lodging in a home that was more comfortable or socially prominent. To remain in one home would not be a burden for the home owner because the emissaries' stay in each community would be brief. Yeshua instructed the emissaries to depend on others while they went from town to town preaching the Gospel. Their purpose was to blanket Galilee with Yeshua's message, and by traveling light they could move quickly. Their dependence on others had three other good effects:

- It clearly showed that the Messiah had not come to offer wealth to his followers;
- It forced the emissaries to rely on God's power and not on their own provision; and
- It involved the villagers, making them more eager to hear the message.

Staying in homes was an excellent approach for their short-term mission; this was not to be a permanent way of life for them. Yet the faith and simplicity that this way of life portrayed would serve them well in the future.

As the emissaries entered a ***household***, they were to bless it with their peace. At this time, people believed that blessings could be given as well as taken back. The emissaries would bless the household upon entering. ***If the home deserves it*** (that is, had accepted them and their message), then the blessing of peace would remain upon that house. But if the household ***is not*** (that is, did not accept their message), then the blessing of peace would ***return to*** the emissaries, who would then leave that house. The peace returning from that house also indicated judgment to come (10:15). These words mean that those who would receive the emissaries also would receive the Messiah. Those who cared for God's emissaries would receive blessing in return. We will learn later in verse 40 that Yeshua says: ***"Whoever receives you is receiving me, and whoever receives me is receiving the One who sent me."***

Shake the Dust Off Your Feet

The emissaries should also expect rejection, such as Yeshua had faced in Decapolis (8:34). Yeshua further instructed that ***if the people*** did not ***welcome*** them (that is, take them in and offer hospitality) and refused even to ***listen to*** them, then they should ***shake its dust from their feet*** as they left. Shaking off dust that accumulated on one's sandals showed extreme contempt for an area and its people, as well as the determination not to have any further involvement with them. ***Dust*** was so common on highways that it came to signify that which clings to one's life (such as sin). To shake the dust off one's feet was a gesture of total repudiation. Pious Jews shook dust from their feet after passing through Gentile cities or territory to show their separation from Gentile influences and practices. When the emissaries shook the dust from their

feet after leaving a **Jewish** town, it would be a vivid sign that they wished to remain separate from people who had rejected Yeshua. Shaking off the dust of a place, Yeshua said, would be a testimony against the people. Its implications were clear and had eternal consequences. The act showed the people that the emissaries had discharged their duty, had nothing further to say, and would leave the people to answer to God.

We should not take this verse to mean that if one member of a family refuses to accept Messiah, we should abandon effort to the other members. Nor should we stop ministry to others in a community if there are some who reject our words. Yeshua was saying that if the emissaries were rejected by nonbelieving Jews, they should treat those Jews the same as nonbelieving Gentiles. By this statement, Yeshua was making it clear that the listeners were responsible for what they did with the Gospel. As long as the emissaries had faithfully and carefully presented the message, they were not to blame if the townspeople rejected it. Likewise, we are not responsible when others reject Messiah's message of salvation, but we do have the responsibility to share the Gospel clearly and faithfully. It's up to the Ruach HaKodesh to convict them of their sin and accept Yeshua as their Savior. We can just plant and water the seeds of faith.

Judgment Is Coming to Those Who Don't Confess Yeshua as Lord

God had destroyed the cities of **S'dom** and **'Amora** by fire from heaven because of their wickedness (Genesis 19:24-25). To Jews, the judgment of these cities was a lesson not only in punishment of great evil, but also in the finality of divine judgment. Those who reject the Gospel will be worse off **on the Day of Judgment** than the wicked people of these destroyed cities who never had heard the Gospel at all.

Be As Prudent as Snakes & As Harmless As Doves

The emissaries would go out with the message **like sheep among wolves** (the "wolves" were the enemies of the Believers - in this context probably the Jewish religious leaders). The solution? **Be as prudent as snakes and as harmless as doves.** These words may have come from a local proverb. The Egyptian symbol of wisdom is a **snake**, which has great skill in avoiding danger. They were also to be **harmless as doves**, that is, to be sincere and to have pure intentions. Harmlessness can become no more than cunning without the balance of innocence. However, innocence can become naïveté or even ignorance if not balanced with prudence. Yeshua's followers would need both to be prepared for the battles that lay ahead. They would need to be unafraid of conflict but also able to deal with it in integrity. Yeshua warned them that the Gospel would not be warmly welcomed in all places. At times there would be outright antagonism, as Yeshua describes in the following verses.

In my next post, we will continue to explore Yeshua's instructions to the Emissaries in Matthew 10.