

Kefa Asks About Forgiveness

In my last post, we learned that **Yeshua** asks **Kefa to Go Fishing Again**. He put his line in the **Sea of Galilee** and miraculously caught a fish with a gold coin in its mouth to pay the **Temple** tax for **Yeshua** and himself. Continuing in our chronological journey of **Kefa** in this post, the **talmidim** were sitting at **Yeshua's** feet as He was teaching them by asking several questions dealing with humility and honesty.

Immediately after teaching about the subject on the discipline of a wayward member of the **kehilah**, **Kefa** asks his question on the number of times they should forgive.

²¹ Then Kefa came up and said to Him, "Rabbi, how often can my brother sin against me, and I have to forgive him? As many as seven times?" ²² "No, not seven times," answered Yeshua, "but seventy times seven!" ~ Matthew 18:21-22 (CJB)

To further set the context of **Yeshua's** teaching, this event happens after **Yeshua** had taught them how they should pray in Matthew 6 and immediately follows by saying:

¹⁴ For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will not forgive yours. ~ Matthew 6:14-15 (CJB)

Because true repentance should involve turning from sin, some rabbis limited opportunities for forgiveness for a given sin to three times. So **Kefa** may have thought he was being generous by suggesting that he **forgive** his brother **seven times**.

Interpreters dispute whether **Yeshua** demanded forgiving one's **brother** seventy-seven times or seventy times seven (four hundred and forty times). I am not a Greek scholar, but what difference does it really make? Who would keep track of either one? **Yeshua's** point is that forgiveness should be unlimited when true repentance is present.

When we start living in an atmosphere of humility and honesty, we must take some risks and expect some dangers. Unless humility and honesty result in forgiveness, relationships cannot be mended and strengthened.

Kefa recognized the risks involved and asked **Yeshua** how he should handle them in the future. But **Kefa** made some serious mistakes. To begin with, he lacked humility himself. He was sure his brother would sin against him, but not he against his brother! **Kefa's** second mistake was in asking for limits and measures. Where there is love, there can be no limits or dimensions.

⁴ Love is patient and kind, not jealous, not boastful, ⁵ not proud, rude or selfish, not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. ~ 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (CJB)

Love **keeps no record of wrongs**. By the time we have forgiven a brother that many times, we are in the habit of forgiving.

In my next post, we continue our chronological journey of **Kefa** and learn he asks **Yeshua** what is in it for him?