

Favor Zion Ministries
“Now is the set time to Favor Zion”–Psalm 102:13

September 2007
Tishrei 5768

Shalom Haveirim
Blessings and Joy to you- my friends,

Oy- it is September already! Cooler nights, schools are in session, traffic (especially in Bawlmore) is heavy, and the three Fall Feasts are seemingly suddenly here. Its not that I'm unprepared- I'm just surprised, once again, how few & fleeting are the days of life and the seasons.

Rav Hillel, the teacher of Gamliel, the teacher of Paul, is most famous for saying:

*If I am not for me, who will be
If I am only for me- what am I?
If not now, when?*

If not now, when? As we grow older, we experience more things for the last time, and less for the first time. We complete some things for the last time. However, whatever we find our hand to do, let us do it with wisdom in the strength of the Lord and in His might.

Fall Feasts

The September fall feasts represent the three “R’s”: reflection, repentance and recommitment. I think that’s a bit where the “oy” comes from. Those three words demand honesty, and they call for courage. A process, as Diane reminds me that need not be morose. Therefore, I remind you and me once again, that the reflection must contain gratitude.

Gratitude, along with a hefty dose of Biblical perspective, is what we need. If I reflect on the past year through the filter of the world, I’m going to be bummed! Why, because like the wisdom related in Proverbs 30:15-16, there’s never “enough” of some things.

In America, money is one of the never enough things. I just read a book, Richistan, describing the wealthiest Americans. It is an insightful and easy read on how wealthy people think; give to charity, and watch out--how some might choose to influence the political process. One thing is certain those with one

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million dollars would be more comfortable if they had two million, and those with three million would be more satisfied with six million.

For those of you who have attended one of our Passover Seders- the Communion Connection- or if you have celebrated Passover traditionally at home, you know that one of the most rollicking and fun parts is singing the "Dayaynu."

Dayaynu means it would have been enough. While it is an upbeat, almost barroom ditty, the message is one of thanking God for each miracle of the Exodus, and pilgrimage to Israel. The core belief expressed is that any one of those miracles; from freedom achieved, to giving us the Torah, to leading us to Israel, to providing Messiah "would have been enough". So how thankful we are that all of Abba's provisions are given for us to enjoy. If we focus on Him and seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, He will grant us the desires of our hearts, and all these things will be added unto us. (Matthew 6:33)

I am truly thankful for some non-liquid assets in my life; the love of my family, the times of celebration, having the pleasure to teach and share, and the support and prayers of you, my friends.

We reflect on this passing year through eyes of faith and thanksgiving. There are a few places (some large, some small) where we "missed the mark" during the year. Missing the mark is a nice Hebraic way of saying we've all sinned and fallen short of His glory. (Romans 3:23) This is a good season to repent, and to ask forgiveness. As we confess our missing the mark, Yeshua is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

We sin because of what we do, say and think, and we sin because of opportunities we didn't take. Hillel's adage, "if not now, when?" reminds us that today is the day of salvation, and that we are given the choice daily to follow Yeshua. I am aware that it takes courage to follow Him. It is the determined deliberate application of Scripture. Mere rules and rote traditions leave me mired down and uncreative. Each situation we face is unique and each requires wisdom and prayer.

Its like dealing with kids with their different personalities, I love ours equally, but I need to deal with them uniquely and individually. God deals with each of us individually too. If I hesitated to hear and be obedient to His voice in my rush to do evil, I reflect on how and why it happened. Then I repent and ask His forgiveness.

Sometimes I forget it is the little foxes, which spoil the vine. It is far wiser to handle a situation early on, when it is small. This is more neglect than a "sin", but it's a good example of neglect leading to bigger problems.

Our yard in Myersville was an acre, and just mowing whatever grass grew was enough. When we moved to Baltimore, Diane and I decided that we wanted a “nice” lawn. I dug it up and reseeded. I seeded again and weeded, and I fertilized in moderation (in deference to the Chesapeake Bay). After a few seasons we had a nice lawn! It was “so far so good”. But, I wasn’t diligent in going out and uprooting the crabgrass. I fell for the idea that the good grass left unattended would strangle out the weeds and crabgrass, and would maintain itself beautifully, even indefinitely. I forgot all about “entropy” the scientific fact that left alone any system falls to its lowest energy state.

Weeds can enter family life too. Children need our constant attention. The Bible says to speak about God to them when they rise up, and when they lie down. Look for ways of engaging them and speaking the truth in love, including when you go on walks or are just hanging out. Left alone and without guidance kids will make dumb choices.

Marriages need tending. Ministries need prayer. Business requires diligence. Left alone a small squeak in the car will lead to a major repair job, and left alone a lawn will grow a lot of crabgrass. A lot of crabgrass!

So, I’m rooting out crabgrass, and I’m replacing worldly thought with Biblical truths. I am fighting a real fight of faith as I have opportunities to speak about the need to support Israel and the Messianic Believers in the Land. I had hoped by now my messages of blessing the Messianic Believers in the Land, both Jew and Arab, and blessing Israel as a Biblical mandate, would have been so pervasive that it would be the automatic response of every follower of Jesus. Well, I’ve found hoping that is like thinking my tall perennial grasses would flourish enough to overtake the weeds and crabgrass, without my constant work to water, fertilize the good seed and uproot the noxious weeds from my lawn. I need to water the good seeds of God’s Word plus uproot the lies of the evil one. Sitting back and letting things go- will lead to poverty. Proverbs 6:10 paraphrased states, “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands and whack, poverty.” Poverty in the Kingdom is *totally* missing the mark.

I am recommitting to advancing the Kingdom. I am recommitting to improving the ministry, which you are supporting. I am recommitting to being in His presence where there is fullness of joy and that His joy is my strength. While much is good and much is in place, more of His love, more of His power, and more of His presence in every aspect of my life is the cry of my heart, today.

My hope is that you will be joining me in this season of reflection, repentance and recommitment. Could I ask you to consider recommitting to upholding *Favor Zion* in prayer, and supporting us with your giving?

Updates & Personal Notes

Last week I visited with Ramzi and his family in Atlanta. Many of you have asked me how they are doing, after their restaurant folded. Ramzi, Pat, and their four children really are people who trust God. Being in their home is always uplifting. The hospitality and love, the way the things of God are not add-ons, but an integral part of every conversation and decision makes for a special peace.

Ramzi is teaching at a local driving school. Pat is looking for work now that all of the children are in school. Their four children are in four different schools so their day starts early. Ramzi has had opportunities to share the truth of Scripture and the love of Yeshua with many of his students. Pat volunteers at a local Crisis Pregnancy Center. Let's continue to pray for this couple and family. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. I will be going back to visit them at the end of October.

On our Colorado vacation, Diane and I (Dan, Pascha and Keira) stayed with my cousins, Tyler and Maddi, who are originally from Brooklyn. Reconciliation with this side of my family began when I was at a Colorado Promise Keepers meeting a few years ago. It really took off when they asked me to do the Memorial unveiling at the funerals for my Orthodox Aunt and Uncle. There were opportunities to speak naturally, and in a meaningful depth, about the ways of the Lord. We so much enjoyed their hospitality and plan is to see them on the East Coast this fall.

Diane has a few more weeks off before school starts again in earnest. We continue to grieve her mom's death. She has ministered to her family as well as received ministry in the process of working through issues with her sisters, and fellowshiping with them and her dad. Every family has areas of need, including ours. Your prayers for wisdom and strength really do avail much- so please continue to pray for us, especially Diane.

Our youngest daughter, Jenna, will graduate college a semester early- this December! Do I need to say more? Please pray for her, as she prepares to leave the cloistered environs of Goucher College.

Family is one of the assets I reflect on and am grateful for, so please join me in praying we can all be together for the fall Levitical celebrations. It is not very easy to coordinate schedules and distances.

We plan to hear Asher Intrater from Israel speak at the El Shaddai Congregation in Frederick Maryland on September 12, after eating a traditional Erev Yom Tov meal together. (Erev Yom Tov means the evening of the Holy Day) A traditional meal contains apples and honey to signify a sweet year and we look at (but don't really eat) fish heads to help us see that we're the head and not the tail. Traditions do change, but the Bible mandates hearing the sound of the shofar,

gathering for the Day of Atonement, and celebrating the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles with the Lulav (boughs of palm, willow and myrtle) and goodly fruit, the Etrog.

Trip to Israel in 2008

We have been a tad disappointed to learn that a major Church, which was planning to join us on the next trip to Israel has backed out. We are still planning to go – so if you would like to be part of our '08 trip, please let me know. We now have extra spaces available!

The Bible warns us not to grow weary in well doing. One of my motivational gifts is an exhorter, or an encourager to others. I so enjoy helping people navigate the shoals of sin and discouragement and sail on to paths of righteousness, joy, prosperity and peace in the Ruach haKodesh, Holy Spirit.

Would you pray for our success now? Pray for success- yes, it's very Biblical and much needed. In Genesis chapter 24 Abraham entrusts his servant with a vital mission and in verse 12 we read the servants prayer: "O Lord God of Abraham, please give me success this day and show kindness to my master Abraham".

My prayer is similar, "God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob, God of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachael, and Leah, grant me success today to Advance the Kingdom of your son Yeshua, our Messiah. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen

Beloved, thank your spiritual and tangible expressions of love and exhortation.

Rabbi Ted

P.S. Until we print new donor response cards, please include your phone number with your contribution so our records are complete.