

Message 2026-01-10

Happy to Help

Avinu Malkhenu, I pray this morning that you will fill this room with your ruakh hakodesh, and that our eyes and ears will be opened to see and hear what you would have for us this morning. I pray our avodah is acceptable and pleasing to you, and that you are blessed in all we do.

I would like to continue from where we left off last Shabbat. The majority of this message was also formulated while I was composing last week's message, but there were several teachings from the Rabbi's Conference that I found helpful in refining things for today. I was once again reminded that we are not alone in our community because God is working in the similar ways all throughout the body of Messiah. That's because we are a part of God's global plan of redemption, and we are all working to fulfill a similar call and vision. It's not about us.

That's one of the great blessings about spending time with 100's of other Messianic Rabbis.

The topic of the teaching last week was vision, specifically passing vision on; from parent to child, from leader to leader, and from a leader to their community.

Once we understand and clearly articulate the vision, how do we pass that on to others, and how do we actually execute that vision?

Furthermore, what stands in our way, blocking our path? What gets us off track? What is it that prevents us from seeing a vision come to fruition? How do we maintain our joy in the Lord?

This scripture is one I would like you to keep in mind this morning.

So let us not grow weary of doing what is good; for if we don't give up, we will in due time reap the harvest.

Galatians 6:9 (CJB)

That is what I would like to spend some time on today.

בְּעִזּוּרַת הַשֵּׁם

Be'ezrat Hashem.

With God's help I hope these words are uplifting and encouraging this morning, and, even more importantly, I hope these words help us, in our avodah, to accomplish more efficiently what Adonai has called us to do.

Love Each Other

I'd like to start with a simple reminder, little children, to love one another because it is the Lord's commandment, and, if it alone is kept, it is sufficient.

13 Stay alert, stand firm in the faith, behave like a mensh, grow strong.

14 Let everything you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:13–14 (CJB)

The Way We Pass on the Vision

Are you Equipped for the Job?

There are a few things that are needed to accomplish a vision, to see it come to fruition:

- Plan to execute
- People to execute the plan
- Adapt and regroup

I'd like to once again bring our vision to mind.

The vision and purpose of Or HaOlam is working to bring Jewish people, and those grafted in, to their covenantal identity in Messiah.

Rabbi Shmuel shared with me the importance of the nuance of that statement. Our purpose is to work to bring people to their covenantal identity in Messiah. To me, that means that we have to be prepared to disciple people, and that is a serious, long term commitment.

Are We in a Place Where We Could Handle Adonai's Vision?

I think this is a question we have to be willing to honestly ask.

According to a comprehensive study of the Jewish community in Kansas City in 2021, there are over 28,000 Jewish people living here. That was about 1.7% of the population of greater Kansas City which was 1,698,000 in 2021. Today that would be estimated to be closer to 30,000 Jewish people. What percentage of that population could we accommodate?

Let's look at the observance in the Jewish community.

Jewish Religious Affiliation in Kansas City

- 44% Reform
- 18% Conservative
- 32% Secular
- 4% Orthodox
- 2% Other

Those two metrics, the population and the breakdown of what I will call observance, paint a pretty clear picture to me that we have some work to do.

Let's say Adonai brings in a relative sample from the Jewish community. Let's say 100 people come through our doors and they align perfectly with the statistics, could we handle 44 reform, 18 conservative, 32 secular, 4 orthodox, and 2 other Jews in our congregation?

How do we deal with that many people... and their families... and their people?

How do we deal with so many different traditions?

The majority of these folks would not be coming in even understanding their broad covenantal identity, how do we help bring them into their covenantal identity in Messiah?

How do we disciple them to walk in Yeshua's ways?

How do we bring them into our culture, our minhag, so that we can walk together in unity?

I have a hard time finding reasonable answers to those questions. Adonai will do what he chooses, but I also don't think he will give us more than we can handle. I do think finding those answers and developing solutions is the work that He has placed in front of us, and I do believe that Hashem is preparing us for this task. I think the time is coming soon when we will begin to see this come to fruition.

I don't find that daunting. It's just the work we have to do if we hope to accomplish our vision.

How is it Going?

The way we feel about how things are going usually has far more to do with our assumptions than with reality. What I mean by this is that when reality fails to live up to our assumptions, it is easy to feel disappointed about how things are going.

For example, let's say you really felt the Lord calling you to plant a garden. You hate gardening, but you love the Lord. So, you plant a garden. You till the soil and remove the rocks. You plant the seeds in neat rows, and you water and fertilize. The plants start to grow. You stand guard to keep all the birds and beasts away. You pull weeds. You take great care to do everything precisely how you should.

One morning you get up, and all of the plants are starting to wilt and brown. They're getting little, sickly spots all over them. It turns out some sort of plant disease has infected your garden. Everything dies.

You put in a lot of effort, and it turned out miserably. God asked you to do something specific, and it turned out terrible. Here's the question though. Did anything actually go wrong?

It is easy to assume so. Your garden is objectively awful.

Maybe you didn't actually hear from God, or maybe you did something to anger Him. Maybe HaSatan attacked you.

God asked you to plant a garden. Why would God ask you to do something if he wasn't going to bless it? It's easy to feel disappointed. It's ok to feel unsatisfied with an outcome, but the outcome has nothing to do with the call. You assumed that meant that the garden would grow so that you could reap a great harvest, but that was not what He said. He said to plant a garden.

Your job was to obediently plant the garden. You don't know what God's purposes are in asking you to do something. You can ask God what you can do differently or ask Him to show you why it is going the way it is; that's natural. However, we have to be people who walk in faith, in emunah, and not be people who walk by sight.

7 for we live by trust, not by what we see.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (CJB)

שָׁכֹן עַל-פִּי אָמֹנוֹת אֲנָחָנוּ מִתְהַלְּכִים

So to revisit that last question, 'How's it going?' I think we need to understand that question is not for us to answer. We must be obedient to walk in the way God has shown us, and we must be humble enough to ask God how it is going. We cannot rely on our assumptions.

He is the only one who can actually tell us how it's going because only He knows His purposes. Our emunah must reside in God alone and not our assumptions.

What Blocks the Path

Yeshua talks about something similar to my garden story in a parable, a metaphorical story, about planting seed. A sower, in this case is someone who plants seeds, not someone who sews clothes.

"The sower went out to spread his seed. As he sowed, some fell beside the road and was trampled; and the birds of the air ate it up. And other seed fell on rock; when it came up, that seed withered away because it had no moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And other seed fell into the good soil; and when it

came up, it produced fruit a hundredfold.” While saying these things, He would call out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Lukas [Luke] 8:5–8 (TLV)

Yeshua goes on to explain this parable to his talmidim. The seed is the Word of God. The sowers are those of us who are trying to share the Word; fulfilling our vision. The different types of ground are the different types of people.

Here's what I would like you to notice. The sower had a job to do, and the sower is doing their job. The 'success' of their job, let's call it their ministry, has absolutely nothing to do with them beyond their obedience to do what they are called to do.

They are planting seed, but their success is due to the condition of the ground and other things that come up to hinder or destroy their work. Weeds and thorns and birds.

Yeshua says,

But the seed in the good soil are those with a praiseworthy and good heart, who have heard the word and hold it fast and bear fruit with patient endurance.

Lukas [Luke] 8:15 (TLV)

In this parable, Yeshua doesn't indicate that the workers need to be more particular about where they throw the seed, and he does not say they should be working to clear all the weeds and thorns and rocks and beating away all the birds. All of those things could help, but the workers call here is to plant seeds.

Of course I believe Yeshua also calls people to do the work of improving the quality of their soil, but he is calling His talmidim to do what they are called to do.

So I ask again, what are we called as a community to do? Our vision is to bring the Jewish people and those grafted in to their covenantal identity in Messiah. How much of our time is spent endeavoring to accomplish that vision?

What Gets Us Off Track

I think that one of the main things that contributes to growing wearing in doing good is spending time doing good that Adonai did not call you to do. Even worse, I think our empathy and compassion often convinces us to do 'good' that He has specifically told us not to do.

May that God equip you with every good thing you need to do his will; and may he do in us whatever pleases him, through Yeshua the Messiah. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Messianic Jews (Hebrews) 13:21 (CJB)

He gives us the strength to accomplish His will.

Helping People Who Don't Want Your Help

Our time is valuable and our energy is limited. If we spend all of our time focused on people who are unwilling to grow and change, we miss out on helping those who do. In other words, our actual mission and calling will never be realized when all of our time is expended (exhausted, wasted, spent) helping people who do not want to change.

We are commanded to carry each other's burdens, but we are not commanded to enable each other's bad behavior.

Who are some of those people we aren't supposed to help? There are many compiled lists with scriptures, and we aren't even going to try to unpack it all. That is what the Bible is for. Read it. However, for the purposes of today, here is a brief list.

Those who are:

- Lazy
- Dishonest
- Manipulative
- Ungrateful
- Selfish
- Chronic Complainier
- Unrepentant sinner

This is found throughout the Apostolic writings, especially the letters to the different communities, because they are dealing with people behaving in these ways.

We also find in Proverbs that we are told not to help these types of people because Adonai hates these things.

*16 There are six things ADONAI hates,
seven which he detests:
17 a haughty look, a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
18 a heart that plots wicked schemes,
feet swift in running to do evil,
19 a false witness who lies with every breath,
and him who sows strife among brothers.*

Mishlei [Proverbs] 6:16–19 (CJB)

Not going to lie, that seems kind of intense to me, and I'm not completely comfortable this. Who am I to judge the intentions of a person's heart? Who am I to judge at all? Adonai alone is judge, so we must try to be people who live according to His standards and not by what seems right to us.

In the third chapter of Titus, Rabbi Sha'ul offered Titus the following instruction for dealing with unrepentant and divisive people.

Warn a divisive person once, then a second time; and after that, have nothing more to do with him. You may be sure that such a person has been perverted and is sinning: he stands self-condemned.

Titus 3:10–11 (CJB)

In other words, we are told to respond to what a person does, their actions, and we are told to have limits. We know a person by what they do far more than by what they say.

This is not because we are unloving or unsympathetic. It is because it has been made clear that we are not who God is using to help that person change, and we need to get out of God's way and let him work in their lives.

Who Are We Supposed to Help?

That is an easy one to answer. We are supposed to help those who are willing to humble themselves and change.

Watch yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

Lukas [Luke] 17:3 (CJB)

Our continued help (and forgiveness) is directly corollated to that person's repentance. Repentance, teshuvah, is not just being sorry.

Step 1 - Regret. Realize the extent of the damage and feel sincere regret.

Step 2 - Cessation. Immediately stop the harmful action.

Step 3 - Confession. Articulate the mistake and ask for forgiveness.

Step 4 - Resolution. Make a firm commitment not to repeat it in the future.

Step 5 - Repair. Work to fix whatever damage your behavior has caused.

The only thing it takes to no longer be a 'person that you should not help' is teshuvah. Teshuvah is the greatest act of spiritual warfare a person can engage in. It fundamentally transforms your being and your status with Hashem, and it begins the process of transformation and restoration with others.

Quoting Proverbs, Ya'akov says,

"God opposes the arrogant, but to the humble he gives grace."

Ya'akov [James 4:6] (CJB)

You still have to make things right, and that might be a process.

D'var Torah?

Being Happy to Help

So let us not grow weary of doing what is good; for if we don't give up, we will in due time reap the harvest.

Galatians 6:9 (CJB)

How do we maintain an attitude of happiness while being a help?

How do we keep from growing weary while doing good?

How do we accomplish the vision that God has given to this community?

We have to be people who prioritize obedience over outcomes. Our success is not measured by visible results but by faithful obedience to God's call.

"Does Adonai take as much pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying what Adonai says? Surely obeying is better than sacrifice, and heeding orders than the fat of rams."

(1 Samuel 15:22, CJB)

We have to be people who walk in God's ways and not our own. We need to keep our eyes on the vision set before us. We need to ask ourselves how everything we do helps us accomplish the vision. We need to abstain from those things that God has not called us to and from continuing to help the people God has told us not to help.

When we persevere with joy, when we as a community stay aligned with God's calling and walk in humility and repentance, God supplies strength, sustains joy, and brings the vision to fruition in His time.

When we are doing what God has called us to do, he will give us the strength to do whatever it takes. We will not grow weary. We will have joy in our avodah, in our service. We will be truly happy to help.

As we close the service today, I would like to challenge you to take a few minutes to pray. Ask Adonai if there are areas in your life that you need to change? Are there attitudes or behaviors that are robbing you of joy? Are there areas where you need to make teshuvah? Living a life of service to Adonai is not easy, but it is the most fulfilling thing you can do. Be'ezrat hashem.

1 Moreover, understand this: in the acharit-hayamim will come trying times.

2 People will be self-loving, money-loving, proud, arrogant, insulting, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable,

slanderous, uncontrolled, brutal, hateful of good, 4 traitorous, headstrong, swollen with conceit, loving pleasure rather than God, 5 as they retain the outer form of religion but deny its power.

(2 Timothy 3:1–5, CJB)

Stay away from these people!

(2 Timothy 3:5, CJB)

Resources

- The Complete Jewish Bible
- Tree of Life Version
- Lexham Hebrew Bible
- Hebrew New Testament
- Kansas City Metro Area Population: Kansas City Metro Area Population (1950-2026) - Macrotrends
- 2021 Kansas City Jewish Community Study: <https://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/community-studies/kansas-city-report.html>
- 5 People God Commands You Not to Help: <https://youtu.be/41DWDcKI0zk?si=ASya7AIFD3zLZxAx>
- The People God Commands You Not to Help: https://youtu.be/Ztzl-ITZ7vl?si=-_xZ3ootl7mNe7b6
- 7 Types of People God Said You Must Not Help: https://youtu.be/uIy7dwcL3gE?si=8PGthDG4_G1UvsL1