

Yeshua MISHPACHAH

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"— our Jesus.

Dear Friends,

The name **Demolishing Strongholds** provokes unusual reactions. Most people follow the recommendations and pray, putting their faith in the name of Jesus. These are finding wonderful healing and joy. Others read the book and for some reason seem hindered from praying or doing anything else about their problem. Still others, when they see the spiritual cause behind the pain and suffering in their past, refuse to pray because they are convinced that Jesus can never heal their hurt. We sense it is almost some form of vengeance: "I don't want healing until the person(s) who hurt me pays for all the pain I have suffered." This is an unusual book....

God Put Seven Needs In Us

Some of you have inquired about the nature of the book and how it relates to our ministry of restoring the early Church. The Jewish people who comprised the early Church readily understood the spiritual forces that affected their lives. With their thorough knowledge of the Book of Genesis they were familiar with God's creation of man. They could understand the needs He instilled in man and desired to meet in accordance with His will. These needs are:

1. God Created Us with Dignity (Genesis 1:26a, 27; "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.")

2. God Created Us with Authority (Gen. 1:26b "and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.")

3. God Created Us to Receive Blessing and Provision (Gen. 1:28,29 "God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.")

4. God Created Us to Be Secure (Gen. 2:8,9 "Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the

middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.")

5. God Created Us to Have Purpose & Meaning (Gen. 2:15,19 "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.... Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.")

6. God Created Us with a Sense of Freedom & Boundary (Gen. 2:16,17 "And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.")

7. God Created Us to Experience Intimate Love and Companionship (Gen. 2:18 "The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Gen. 2:20b,21-25 "for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had

taken out of the man, and he² with Him enables our marriage and family relationships to become evermore Christlike. This ever-increasing love of Jesus then pours over into our intimate relationships within a home fellowship, and from there into our congregations and other areas wherever God's people interact throughout the week.

God created in us specific needs in these seven areas. All strongholds that are built in our lives are a result of seeking to meet one or more of these needs *outside of the will of God*.

Our ministry continues to grow in terms of the increasing number of people who are contacting us. We are working with several home fellowships who desire to incorporate the relational facets of the Hebraic early Church. The *relational focus* is in almost diametrical opposition to the program agenda that seems so manifest in the small group and mega-church movement today. (Our book **Restoring the Early Church** addresses this situation in depth, with a number of practical, biblical solutions.)

1 - Your Relationship With Jesus

Below is an excerpt on the importance of Jesus and the nature of our walk with Him as it would have been understood by the Hebraic early Church. The diagram describes the priorities of the early believers. Each position as the arrows go outward is dependent on the work of Christ. In other words, our relationship with our Lord Jesus, and I do mean an active, viable relation, is vital. The grace of our relationship

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:4,5).

"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40).

The heart-cry of God throughout the Old Testament expresses a longing for a relationship with His people. The essence of the New Testament is the same. Quoting from Deuteronomy, Jesus reiterated the greatest commandment (see Matthew 22:37-40, above). Everything in our Christian life — everything about knowing God and experiencing Him, everything about knowing His will — depends on the quality of our love relationship with God. If our relationship with Jesus is not right, nothing in our life will be right.

Consider the promise of Romans 8:28, quoted so often by Christians: *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* This promise is condi-

tioned on the love of His people. God hasn't changed. The ten commandments affirm the same promise: *"but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments"* (Exodus 20:6).

Weigh these verses as you consider your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ:

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ...But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:3,7). In what ways are you, on a daily basis, "walking in the light" as Jesus did? Light cannot be hidden, and your "spiritual brightness" should be readily apparent as you walk!

"But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did" (1 John 2:5,6). *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps"* (1 Peter 2:21). Jesus, in loving obedience to the Father, demonstrated a denial-of-self lifestyle.

Suffering With Jesus

Our fellowship must first be with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. If we claim to be in Him, we must walk as Jesus did — a path of suffering. Suffering is not a popular concept in this culture. Yet the early Jewish believers recognized that the world in which we live is an arena of suffering. Hebrew scholar Philip

Sigal emphasizes the ancient³ Hebrew doctrine of suffering as a precedent for salvation. The mystery of God's covenant relationship with Israel can be seen in the balance of the miraculous interventions of God when He delivered His people, and the concealment of His presence during other times of persecution and duress. God's silence did not mean that His covenant had been canceled. He had reasons beyond their — and our — scope of understanding for why He chose not to rescue.

So, too, we cry out to God in our painful struggles. Are there times when you have persevered in prayer with faith and trust, only to feel as though the heavens are brass? This is part of the mystery of God for us: can we by faith cling to His promises of never forsaking us even when it seems He is not responding to our need? The power of our testimony intensifies its impact on others when they see that God has not only sustained us in the midst of the fire, but has actually brought us to the point of thanksgiving for the suffering because of the glory God receives through us.

For years a friend had struggled with a debilitating illness. Then her husband became seriously ill and was unable to work. Hospital bills accumulated. She had been asked to speak to a large group of women about her testimony of God's sustaining power, but couldn't quite "bridge the gap": she saw herself as a "victim" of adverse circumstances. She was unable to envision herself as a participant in a process of refinement that could strengthen and encourage others who face similar trials. Depending on how her pilgrimage was

presented, her hearers could empathize with the pain and thank God that they hadn't faced such trials. Or, they could give glory to God if thankful joy characterized her presentation. God had indeed healed the sting of the events, and had granted her the privilege of joining Him in the cup of suffering to bring glory to God and comforting hope to fellow sufferers.

This latter concept is illustrated in 2 Corinthians 1:3-6: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer."*

The Lord empowers us to endure the night of affliction through His grace because as we walk in the light of trustful obedience, His blood cleanses us, enabling us to follow "in His steps." The Bible tells us that Jesus "learned obedience from what he suffered." (Hebrews 5:8b) Paul notes in Romans, *"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."* (v. 5:3-5)

Are you able to see the difference between relief that God

has carried you through a difficult circumstance, and gratefulness for the opportunity to have passed through the fire for the sake of His sanctifying work in you? Have seeds of compassionate hope sprouted that you can extend to others facing trial? Unlike us Gentiles, the Hebrew early Church didn't ask God "Why?" Through the suffering, they sought to know Him better and to cooperate with the changes He wanted to make in them. Pray for God to lead you into this level: for His glory to be praised and for the joy set before you!

Suffering is not only an indispensable part of our relationship and walk with the Lord Jesus, but also a vital facet of our relationship with the Heavenly Father: *"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us"* (Romans 8:15-18).

As a final thought, consider Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16:16-40). They accepted their circumstances with joy — *"praying and singing hymns to God."* (v.25) They were an unexpected witness to the other prisoners who were listening to them. What did God do? He sent an earthquake to free them, resulting in the jailer and his whole family accepting salvation. Wonderful, wasn't it??? Now think about all the times you are unintentionally being

observed by bystanders. Are⁴ you exuding the same joyful trust that defies circumstances and gives praise to God your Savior? It is when we are not "trying to be Christian" that folks get to really see Who He is in us!

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

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