

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 "Yshua" — our Jesus.

Dear Friends,

At Thanksgiving this year I was reminded that it was 30 years ago during Sue's 'turkey break' from college that I proposed to her. If my memory is correct, I think she accepted. Fifteen years ago the Lord directed me to return to my parents' home to care for my Dad. Fifteen years later we are home caring for my Mom.

Some people, like me, like to reflect on different events from our past. First, it gives me a panorama of seeing how God used these events in my life. Second, I can learn from my mistakes and gain *wisdom* by reflecting. The philosopher Santayana once wrote that the generation that doesn't remember the past will live to repeat the same mistakes.

I've observed that when one generation covers up its mistakes, the next one repeats them. Sometimes our children need to know the mistakes we have made to at least give them a chance to not repeat them.

My Mom is the last survivor of her seven siblings. As we were storing some of our belongings in her attic a few weeks ago, we found some very old pictures. One displayed her father when he was an officer in the Polish Army

in the 1800's. There were other aged pictures of her family, but due to her poor eyesight Mom was unable to identify some of the people for us. I felt a hollowness inside: the very identity of people who were my relatives has been lost.

The writer of Ecclesiastes clearly understood this pattern of loss from generation to generation: "*There is no remembrance of men of old, and even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow*" (1:11). Think about it: There will be a time when you will not be remembered by anyone on earth.

The writer goes on, "*So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.*"

I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.

So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave

all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune" (2:17-21).

It might appear that the writer has a somewhat morbid sense of human events. He goes on to write, "*For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun*" (Ecc. 9:5,6).

But Jesus affirms that same wisdom when He tells all of us, "*Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.*"

*Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: **to trust in the one he has sent**' (John 6:27-29).*

Now that I've returned after 30 years absence to care for my Mom in the home in which I grew up, I feel like I've returned to the birthplace of wisdom in my life. A few days after we moved back, I was dis-

Equipping the Church to Go Back for its Future

cussing the different events² learned how *her* mother had going on around us with my son Mike. I asked him, "Do you know why Mom's children are so devoted to her?" "I don't know what you mean." he replied. "Mike, so many adult children have little appreciation for their aged parents. They have forgotten the difficulties their parents went through to correct and train them, to instill moral and ethical values in them." What you see in your uncles and aunt is loving appreciation for the sacrifices made by our parents."

Mom worked most of her life as a welder at an aircraft company; all four of her kids attended college, and she herself earned her GED at age 63! She was instrumental in developing the virtues and principles which have given each of us respect, joy, and satisfaction in our lives. We know and appreciate more than ever the teachings and corrections she imparted to us. The Book of Proverbs is right when it states, "*My son...do not forsake your mother's teachings.*"

I was the most difficult of all her children to raise. Maybe that's why our Father brought me home to care for her. I can look back and know that *I* wouldn't have wanted the job of 'mothering' me!

During our youth as we helped her cook or wash dishes in the kitchen, Mom passed along to her children a heritage. [My Mom *still* doesn't have a dish washer, as my son has discovered!] As we did those kitchen chores, we

fed so many people who came to her kitchen door during the Depression. She told us how her father, when he heard the news that his wife had died, dropped to his knees and thanked God for the years he'd had with her. We learned about his courage when my grandfather faced down racism at his church in the 1930's.

But one story was never told until February, 1997. Our heavenly Father had saved it for just the right moment:

Sue and I were doing a seminar at a predominantly African-American church in Birmingham, Ala. As I was speaking I felt a hand on my shoulder and the voice of my Mom's father, who'd died in 1950, spoke to me: "I'm proud of you. You're returning the kindness these people have shown to my family."

When the seminar ended that day, I called my Mom in Conn. and told her what happened. She responded, "God is good! In the 1920's we were starving on the farm and only the black farmers would give us food to eat." My Mom and I were thrilled to realize that God keeps accounts even over the generations. Read your Bible to see how often our Father keeps generational accounts. Could He be using *you* to repay a debt from your family's past?

As my son and I continued to talk, I shared what I believed to be the heritage that was now being passed along to him: a heritage of **kindness** and **concern** for oth-

ers. Mom's training instilled *Torah*, the Teachings of God, in our hearts. She taught us to do to others what we would want done to ourselves: "*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law [Torah] and the Prophets*" (Matt. 7:12).

This principle is the foundation for the *relational interconnectedness* evident in our family. My brothers, sister, and I received this wisdom, and we try to live it. Now it's time for the next generation to carry these values as the hallmark of their lives.

What is Wisdom?

The Bible tells us: "***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom***" (Prov. 9:10a).

- *Wisdom* is seeing life from God's perspective and principles. *Wisdom* causes us to scrutinize our lives in light of His Word. *Wisdom* seeks to please the Lord and to fulfill His purposes. *Wisdom* will always cause us to trust our Lord Jesus more and more.
- *Reason* is viewing life from our own perspective. Reason always results in: disillusionment, despair, and fear. Many of our problems are the result of leaning on our own reasoning rather than seeking God's wisdom.

Consider what the author of Ecclesiastes understood about the two paths people choose in life: "*To the man who pleases*

him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind" (Ecc. 2:6). Which person are you? Do you seek a way of life which is pleasing to your Father? Would you be considered wise in the ways of God?

Or, do you strive for those things which He must in time take from you and give to the one who does please Him? The writer of Ecclesiastes would call that "meaningless."

He also writes a profound conclusion about life: "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecc. 12:13).

Do you think that is just "Old Testament"? Jesus tells all of us, "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matt. 12:50). It would be ridiculous [meaningless] for anyone to call himself "Christian" and yet fail to keep the criteria established by Jesus for being one of His relatives.

How will you prepare for the end of the millennium?

In a few days 1998 will be coming to an end. With the arrival of 1999 there will be an ever-increasing focus on the end of the millennium. I am concerned that many of the Father's children will get caught up promoting the fear and anxiety that seems to be

escalating.

- What will you be doing about Y2K?

If the Lord is directing you to put aside food or money for yourself or to help others if the need should arise, please be obedient to that command. But I encourage you, if you truly are a child of the Father's, stay away from the fear-based hype surrounding Y2K. It is insulting to me to receive some of the fear-laden e-mail about Y2K from other well-meaning, yet untrusting Christians. These people still don't know or trust their heavenly Father. King Solomon was right when he wrote, "What the wicked dreads will overtake them, what the righteous desire will be granted" (Pro. 10:24).

Fear, like bitterness, has a power all to itself. Both are addictive and attract many converts. Trust enables us to quiet our hearts and be still.

As the millennium draws to a close, use this time for Godly reflection. Gain wisdom!

- If you have taught your children to put their confidence in wealth and worldly accomplishment, ask their forgiveness for your misguided teaching.

Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them, but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness.

The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but those who refuse to trust are trapped by evil desires.

(Prov. 11:4-6).

- Do all you can to enable your family to walk in loving-trust in the Lord Jesus. Teach them to call out to their loving Father for help. Train them to depend on Him. The Father loves us more than we can understand...He accepted the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.
- Train your children to be repentant before their Lord so that their prayers will be heard in heaven. Teach them that their sin hurts a relationship...one in which they are deeply loved.

"Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1,2; see 1 Pet. 3:12).

"Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord" (Prov. 16:20).

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Isa. 59:21; 64:4,5a

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