

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,

"Is anyone else up there?" This was the question voiced by a man who found himself clutching a limb as he dangled desperately off a cliff. When he cried out to God for help, he heard, "Let go!" In distrust he shouted back, *"Is anyone else up there?"*

As Sue and I continue to seek ways in which to share the Hebraic message cross-culturally, we are becoming increasingly aware of a pattern of the human sinful nature that has no cultural limits: a *seething, unspoken bitterness toward God* that people refuse to face. Among the Native people it displays itself as *"passive aggression."* In the Anglo culture we call it *"insolence"* or *"sulking."* This type of bitterness comes across not as outright rebellion or rage, but as a more subtle resistant spirit or attitude.

No matter what we call it or how it manifests itself, this silent prison keeps so many from the victorious freedom God promises in His Word. The root cause in any people group is the same:

A personal or societal injustice has occurred some time in the past.

The steps these people take will determine the course of their a lives: a path of freedom, or a prison of the living dead.

Rick Joyner, who has a wide audience in the Christian community, has written: "It is time for the sons of Zion to rise up against the sons of Greece as prophesied in Zechariah 9:13. The religion of secular humanism

was born out of the ancient philosophies of Greece. It is time for those who are born of God to understand that these philosophies are enemies of the cross and have no place in the church ...One area of great concern is the 'psychologizing of the gospel,' which has resulted in *perpetual obsession with our wounds.*"

Behind the wall in which people protect themselves from emotional hurt are many *self-made* prisoners who long for love, intimacy, and relationships that will be there during the tough times. *Their bitterness is their prison wall.* Bitterness causes such grave injustice because it *defiles* so many others who are not the cause of the pain.

Foundation #1 to Freedom: God is Sovereign

The prison begins to be built when the hurt and offended person fails to recognize that the Lord, as part of His sovereignty, *permitted the injustice to occur.* He could have stopped it, but He didn't. The failure to come to grips with God's sovereignty in the midst of tremendous emotional hurt is the first step in personal prison construction. Instead of turning to God, the wounded seek other ways out of their pain, be it addiction, withdrawal, or wrongdoing.

This wrong focus has caused so many today to seek psychological help and to doubt the power of our Lord to heal them. Rather than getting to know and trust the Sovereign God of the Bible, they seek out human tech-

niques to ease their pain. The pain may subside for a while, but the sufferers are never free.

Foundation #2 to Freedom: God is Just

How do you think the parents of the baby boys Herod killed felt? Do you think they accused God of being unfair? A critical truth about God that accompanies His sovereignty is that He is a *just God.* To consider Him otherwise, no matter what your hurt is, locks your prison door.

Consider Job's response when he heard that he had lost all his children and possessions: *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing*" (Job 1:21,22). There is an important lesson here: Don't accuse God of injustice.

Wounded people who understand God's sovereignty and justice can be healed and live a blessed life. Instead of questioning God's justice, they call on Him for the grace needed to deal with the hurt. Those who fail to take this important step focus instead on the person(s) who caused the hurt.

The bottom line is that the God of the Bible, Who is both just and merciful, can permit awful things to happen to people. When a person or culture truly comes to grips with this truth, they can turn to this same God for power—the grace to forgive.

They can let God be Himself and stop asking, “Is anyone else up there?”

Justice is not only a legal term, although many of our laws come from God’s concept of justice. The foundation for all forms of biblical justice is found in Matt. 7:12: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” To live justly, you must determine that your actions reflect what you would want others to do to you. Everything in the *Torah* and everything spoken of by the prophets is summed up in living justly before God. In the course of life, we all do wrong to others. To receive forgiveness, we ourselves must forgive.

To what destination does a life of justice lead? Stop and think a moment about the verse that follows Matt. 7:12: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it” (v.13). To seek justice is the way through the narrow gate, and few find it. Biblical justice entails self-sacrificial regard for other people. Often, both the risk and the cost are high. Bitter, unforgiving people cannot walk the path of justice; they will never enter the narrow gate.

The Just Follower of Jesus Has the Power to Forgive

I became a follower of Jesus 23 years ago after reading the Bible through twice from front to back. I remember I concluded back then, “The first sign of truly being a Christian is a readiness to forgive others.” That thought hasn’t changed; in fact, it’s grown stronger.

Justice isn’t just passing judgment on right and wrong. If it were, we would all be found guilty and end up in hell. Justice embraces mercy, even when a

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person doesn’t deserve it. Justice can extend forgiveness even when it is not sought. Both Jesus and Stephen, in the face of gross injustice, could cry out, “Father, forgive them.” Justice always asks, “How would I want to be treated in the same circumstance?”

The Bible doesn’t depict God as “fair”, but as just and merciful. Yet, so many embittered people judge God by their concept of *fairness*: He’s not playing by the rules. Fairness evaluates everything in terms of personal cost or gratification. Anything that takes too much effort to attain is considered “unfair”: the cost is too high. When we don’t get what we think we deserve, we call it “unfair.”

As a child I learned a lesson in justice. When I squirted my brothers with a water pistol, they squirted me back. I complained to my parents and they responded with a just reply, “If you’re going to squirt others, don’t complain when you’re squirted back.” When we passed food to others at the dinner table, we were also learning the rudiments of justice.

Justice is a personal responsibility: “In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” Far from seeking gratification, justice is concerned with the welfare of others. Consider the justice behind our laws. Traffic laws keep people from recklessly speeding and hurting each other. Criminal laws keep others from wrongfully appropriating our property. Tort laws require the wrongdoers to be financially accountable for their actions. Biblical justice covers far more than can be governed by laws, however.

In many ways, God’s just

requirements for us remove interpersonal tension and permit us to grow in love for each other. Justice is foremost a *personal responsibility*, that is, it requires you to know and to live within the relational freedom and boundaries that are prescribed in God’s Word.

Some parts of the Bible are designed by God to be *preventative*—enabling us as we obey them to not offend others. Others are *corrective*, in that when we have given or received offense, we can remedy the matter so that love can flourish.

It is this pattern of living justly that enables us to “enter through the narrow gate.” People who miss the narrow gate end up *smashed against the walls* next to the gate. Their lack of humility, justice, and forgiveness causes them to miss the goal commanded by our Lord—“Enter by the narrow gate.” These people can be recognized by their *passive-aggressive behavior*, their *sulking when they’re corrected*, and their *inability to give due honor and respect*.



They are so blinded by their³ bitterness that they cannot see the defiling injustice their un-forgiveness does to others. “*See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many*” (Heb. 12:15). Those who fail to heed this warning the Father judges without mercy: “*If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins*” (Matt. 6:15). They miss the gate.

On the next page you will find a worksheet: *Living and Loving With a Clear Conscience*. We encourage you to scrutinize your life for hidden bitterness.

Early Faith Communities

As I began to write this newsletter, Sue found a clipping someone had sent us years ago listing the seven purposes of a synagogue. I was attracted to it because we found that these values were part of the faith communities of the early Church. Let me list them and someday we may write more on these:

1. Torah teaching
2. Prayer
3. Worship
4. *Justice*
5. Economy
6. Hospitality
7. House of Community Council

As we work with Native people and their faith communities, we hope to see restored the areas of *justice* and *economy*, in particular, as they are most often absent.

NO Authority = No Justice NO Justice = No *Shalom*

Consider the issue of justice in your own home. The Hebrew letters for the word *shalom* mean “authority that keeps chaos in check.” God foresaw the importance of *authority* in the development of justice in your life. You were not born with an understanding of justice. It is trained into you by the authorities in your life. As you face interpersonal hurt growing up, you can be

helped to understand the justice of forgiveness.

Studies show that the concept of justice is much stronger in males than in females, whereas fairness is much stronger in females. Can you see why Satan is expending so much effort to destroy authority in families? A personal or societal reliance on *fairness* defames God and His justice. *A person who has been trained to be just will have a heart to forgive.* Satan has had to remove masculine authority from the home in order to produce the atmosphere of “fairness” that is so prevalent in this society.

Over 75% of divorces in this country are now instituted by women. As we have talked to a number of divorcees over the years, we’ve found that many had a weak understanding of the purpose of paternal authority: to instill justice. In the absence of justice, these women measure life by *fairness*. Many broke the marriage covenant because they felt they were not treated fairly.

Do I blame women? No. It is we men who have failed in our biblical authority to instill justice in our family. We have been lulled into letting church leaders teach our families the Bible. We have disobeyed God by not “*bringing [our children] up in the training and instruction of the Lord*” ourselves. (Interestingly, studies of married, single, and divorced men and women show that a *divorced male* is the unhealthiest and unhappiest of all. And men who remarry face a 62% chance of being divorced again.) God is just.

Some thoughts to consider

• Dalton, Georgia, the “Carpet Capital of the World”, has the highest divorce rate in the country. I asked some residents why this was so. “Oh, we had hardly

any divorce before the carpet mills moved here. But they mostly hired our women and left the men out. In time our wives grew independent and started divorcing their husbands. They didn’t need them any more.”

• Many are unaware that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has put numerous road blocks in the way of Native men so that they can’t earn a living for their families. Generations in which male authority and dignity have been destroyed has led to rampant alcoholism on many reservations. This injustice has produced bitter hopelessness that things can change and led to the epidemic of passive-aggressive behavior.

• Hasn’t this same emasculation of authority been carried out against African Americans and other minorities? Who will bring about justice for them?

Justice takes responsibility for the *direct* and *indirect* results of our actions.

Justice is evident when you take responsibility for *everything* that results from your actions. How often, when you confront your children about an action that has broken this or that, do they tell you, “I didn’t mean to”? In their mind, that’s sound reasoning. As a parent, you know you need to help them take responsibility for the *results* of their actions.

Since Sue and I have been working with Native people, she has become aware of an injustice done by one of her paternal ancestors, Josiah Bartlett. For generations her family has prided themselves that he signed the Declaration of Independence as the first Governor of New Hampshire. Initially that heritage sounds wonderful because the colonies were able to break free from England.

But there is another side. The Europeans had come to a land that

was already home to Native people⁴ father, Abraham. Think about Abraham when he went to rescue Lot (see Gen. 14). Isn't it justice that caused him to risk his life? Why wouldn't he accept the King of Sodom's reward for the rescue? Because his *faithfulness* caused him to live justly. Abraham had rescued Lot as he himself would want to be rescued. Any reward from the king for his just act would be boastful fodder for the monarch that he had prospered Abraham.

- 1) She was a British Fox.
- 2) The Fox tribe was driven from New Hampshire to Wisconsin, and ultimately to a reservation in Oklahoma.

Sue felt terrible about "the other side" of what her ancestors had done in driving the Native peoples from their land. By privileging us to work with Native people, God was giving her a chance to right an injustice from generations ago.

Justice requires us to remedy wrongs done to others.

We have asserted that our Father is releasing around the world a *Hebraic Restoration* as He fulfills His promise to restore Israel to the Jewish people. The *Hebraic Restoration* is really an *Abrahamic Restoration*:

"Consider Abraham: 'He trusted in God, and was faithful to him, and that was credited to his account as righteousness.' Be assured, then, that it is those who live by trusting and being faithful who are really children of Abraham.

The [Hebrew Bible] foreseeing that God would consider the Gentiles righteous when they live by trusting and being faithful, told the Good News in advance to Abraham saying: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So, then, those who rely on trusting and being faithful are blessed along with Abraham, who trusted and was faithful" (Gal. 3:6-9).

To be found trusting and faithful makes us children of our

father, Abraham. Think about Abraham when he went to rescue Lot (see Gen. 14). Isn't it justice that caused him to risk his life? Why wouldn't he accept the King of Sodom's reward for the rescue? Because his *faithfulness* caused him to live justly. Abraham had rescued Lot as he himself would want to be rescued. Any reward from the king for his just act would be boastful fodder for the monarch that he had prospered Abraham.

We live with injustice all around us. But aren't these injustices God's invitation for us to get involved and show the world *the way through the narrow gate*? Can we continue to blind ourselves to injustice around us and show up at our congregations and have our worship accepted by the Father? I don't think so:

"I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies...Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream" (Amos 5:21-24).

"When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow" (Isa 1:15-17; see also Isa. 5:1-4,15,16; Jam. 1:27).

Still reluctant to remedy injustice? *"Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked" (Pro. 25:26).*

The Narrow Gate of Justice

Paul exhorts us to walk in the freedom that Christ gives us—the freedom to forgive and to extend justice to others:

"You, my brothers, were called to be free... serve one another in love

[seek justice for those who cannot obtain it for themselves]. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' If you keep on biting and devouring each other [speaking evil about others in a way you wouldn't want for yourselves], watch out or you will be destroyed by each other" (Gal. 5:13-15; see also Eph. 4:32).

The Jewish people have a title for non-Jews who aid them in times of need: "*Righteous Gentiles.*" Two people you may recognize acted justly: Oscar Schindler [*Schindler's List*] and Corrie ten Boom. They, along with many others, stood firm at great risk to fight injustice. We need many more "Righteous Gentiles" to bring justice to those who cannot obtain it for themselves.



Website Update

Honoring Others

Beginning this month in our Table Talk Series we will present different issues on Christian courtesy. *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3,4). Courtesy represents our consideration of others and helps remove unnecessary apprehension in relationships: "In every-*

thing, do to others what you would have them do to you."

Impudence

Our handout entitled "**Impudence: Reflection of the Anti-Christ Spirit in Today's Church**" is a free download. Let us know what you think!

Hebraic Foundations to Native Ministry

The first draft is now being disseminated to Natives and Anglos to discuss and apply. This also is a free download.

"This is one of the most excellent presentations of the gospel and church I have seen in a long time—and I read a LOT! Your presentation has answered so many of the questions and spoken to the struggles I've been having as a veteran of 32 years of Pastoral Ministry and Missionary Service.

I have already made several photocopies to get it into the hands of fellow Pastors and Christian leaders, especially those involved in "reordering and restructuring the Church, Church Planting, or Cross-cultural contextualization of the Gospel and Church."

Getting copies of our handouts:

We realize that some of you do not have computers. Some of you are able to use the computers at your

town library. Our 14-hour workdays are focused primarily on reaching Native people. The website makes it easier to stay in contact, as over 400 people visit it each week!

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz
"For in Christ..the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Galatians 5:6).

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