

The WildBranch Ministry

...thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Romans 11:18

Be Ye Transformed

Romans 12:3

Rav Sha'ul has just admonished us that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We must begin this process by not being conformed to the attitudes, teachings, and perspectives of the world. I believe the transformation that Sha'ul speaks of is referred to in his earlier letter to the Thessalonians.

1Thessalonians 5:23

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of Adonay Y'shua the Messiah."

The transformation process involves our spirit, soul, and body, our example being the Messiah Himself. For all of us who began our life journey outside of God, we must first renew our minds. This letter is written to believers in Messiah, so the transformation of the 'spirit', represented in the Tenakh as the Most Holy Place, has already taken place as a gift from God and not of works lest we should have something to run around and brag about. As followers of Messiah we are now to renew our minds, a.k.a. the Holy Place. Sha'ul uses a natural process here to teach the truth of the transformation of our entire life, beginning with the spirit. Once our spirit has been made one with God, dwells within us and guides our life, our mind now has a new source of information. Instead of receiving instructions from the world, our minds now have the ability to receive from the Word of God. This process Sha'ul also talks about in 2 Corinthians 1:9-10:

"But we had the sentence of death in ourselves [before we believed], that we should not trust in ourselves but in God, who raises from the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death [our spirit], and does deliver [present tense,

our minds] *and in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us*, [full redemption, resurrection.]

There is a sanctification process that all believers go through. This process must begin with God himself, for He is the only one who can redeem your spirit. During this life we save or deliver our minds by turning to His words and turning away from the ways of the nations and people around us. God created us so certainly He knows how our 'triune' system operates. First the spirit is given new birth, then the mind is renewed, and finally our physical bodies are transformed unto His image. This is how our bodies work. All things that we do in our body are a direct result of instructions given by our minds. If our mind says we are going to take a shower, then by golly we are going to take a shower. So our bodies receive the physical cleansing they need as a result of instructions given by the mind. This is why it is a deceptive statement to say that although we did not do this or that, in our heart were good intentions. If the heart is good, then the body will do what is good. This is what Messiah was referring to when He said:

Mattityahu 7:17-18

"Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth bad fruit."

Sha'ul, in addressing our former conformation to worldly, religious ways is informing us that now we will not only think differently, but this renewing of the mind will cause us to be totally transformed. Because in our former life we were taught that sabbaths, feasts, dietary laws and commmandments in general were done away with, our behavior reflected that same doctrine. Our behavior and practices are only a natural result of our thinking. This is not only logical, but it is the very reason why the advertising industry is collectively one of the largest industries in the world. But now, Sha'ul tells us that things are different. We are now going to be established in the Messiah and our traditions, sabbaths, feasts, dietary habits, and views of our world will come from the Creator.

Romans 12:3

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Sha'ul now goes on to give us a warning about our attitude toward one another. I find it provocative that Sha'ul begins by stating that his exhortation concerning HOW we are to treat one another and his teaching on differing gifts provided to us, comes as a result of grace. In other words, through or by the gift of grace, we are given specific instructions as to our behavior and responsibilities. It is as if Sha'ul is stating once again that we are now HIS workmanship, created in Messiah Y'shua, unto good works. We are first asked not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to. The word used here by Sha'ul is *uperphronein* in the Greek. It is a combination of two Greek words, one being *phroneo*, or mind, and the other being *huper* or above. Right off the bat, Sha'ul warns us of those who, not heeding his advice, teach and present things that are beyond what the scriptures are to teach our minds. Could he mean that some things, however well motivated, are not from God? The word for 'mind' here is not the same word that was used in verse two in referring to the transformation of our minds. In verse two we have the use of the word *nous*, but here we have a different word. The word *phroneo*, is used in the Tenakh with reference to the heart and nearly always in the negative. The Hebrew word used in the Tenakh is also a combination of two Hebrew words, most often separated by a *maqgef*, or what we would call a hyphen. This word *chaser-lev* means 'lacking heart'. Interesting, huh? Sha'ul seems to be focusing here on a 'shepherding' attitude that may suggest one who, given the context, feels that he or she has no need of anyone else, and because of this, possesses all the gifts that YHVH has to offer. It also suggests that this 'I know it all' attitude leads to teaching that goes well beyond the true words of God. This may also allude to the possibility that though their words may be true, there is no mercy or love from the heart. Remember that Sha'ul began this section of scripture with mercy. Here are some examples of this wording that the Ruach HaQodesh chose to speak through Sha'ul.

Mishlei 9:16

"Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; and as for him that lacketh understanding [chaser-lev], she saith to him ..."

Mishlei 11:12

"He that is void of wisdom despiseth [lacks heart] his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his peace."

This particular bit of wisdom follows the theme of this chapter which coincidentally flows with Sha'ul's exhortation concerning the gifts that all of us have to offer.

Mishlei 11:1

"A false balance is an abomination to YHVH, but a just weight is His delight."

Here are a couple more examples.

Mishlei 15:21

"Folly is joy to him who is destitute of wisdom [lacking in heart], but a man of understanding walks uprightly."

Mishlei 24:28-30

"Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause, and deceive not with your lips. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work. I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding [lacking heart]."

Is it any coincidence that Sha'ul will also address this subject at the end of this chapter in Romans? Sha'ul elaborates further by asking us to think soberly, a term which has no direct equivalent in the Hebrew, but means to have sound biblical thinking. In other words, thinking that is not under the influence of things that alter the mind. This word is used in the LXX and means to be sensible. I believe this is a direct warning to teachings that are designed to titillate our curiosity into secret and unprovable concepts. It is this writer's opinion that what God reveals to us is so we might obey Him and trust in His instructions to be redeemed and to prolong our days in the land and to prosper. Without pointing fingers, I have witnessed a whole lot of gobbledy goop in this messy movement. I suppose I just see YHVH as much more pragmatic than some. I do

not see our Father as a god of rituals, pomp and ceremony, esotericism, secrecy or divine sparks. The God I worship makes sense, and exhorts His people to be sober-minded because He is sober-minded.

Sha'ul finishes verse three with a reminder that God has given every follower of Messiah a measure of faith. The word used here in Greek is *metron*. This word refers to the act of determining the limitations of the bounds of something. This is opposed to it's use in reference to the Ruach HaQodesh in Yochanan 3:34.

"For he whom God hath sent speaks the words of God; for God gives NOT the Spirit by measure unto him."

YHVH gives a measurable faith to all of us through the unmeasurable Ruach HaQodesh. I am sure that many of us have been taught that because the Spirit of God is infinite in His abilities, that because we have the Spirit within us, that we are infinite and without measure ourselves. But as long as we are in these bodies, we are limited in our potential here on earth. The phrase "I can do all things through Messiah, who strengthens me." has to be taken in the context of all scripture. Now would be a good time to pause and think logically here. When Messiah comes and we enter into the kingdom come to Israel, that will be a wholly different story.

The word *metron* is used 13 times in the Brit Chadashah. In all but one occasion it refers to something measurable. One of it's notorious uses is found in Mattityahu where Y'shua borrows it from the oral law, which would eventually become Sanhedrin 90a.

Mattityahu 7:1-2

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what MEASURE ye MEASURE, it shall be MEASURED to you again."

The word *metron* is taken from the Hebrew word *madad*. This word is also used throughout the Tenakh as a reference to something that has bounds and limitations. I believe that Sha'ul's use of it here is directly associated with the gifts of ministry that he is about to remind us that we all possess to a greater or lesser degree. His speech here is to point out to us through the grace of God

that we cannot be effective in any way without each other. So many times we preach this truth, but do not practice it in our ministries. A vital part of our transformation process involves our brothers and sisters and their measures of faith as well as our own. When we all choose to strive to come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Messiah, then and only then will we be without measure.

Shalom Alecheim!

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