

The WildBranch Ministry

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

Be Ye Transformed

Romans 12:4-8

The last time we met, so to speak, we discussed Sha'ul's exhortation to many of us concerning our attitude about our ministries and callings. It was as if Sha'ul was saying, "hey guys! don't get full of yourselves. Whatever you have to offer, God has given you." We are now going to learn what God has given us according to the measure of trust that has been graciously imparted. It is generally agreed that Sha'ul wrote this letter during his third visit to Corinth. Sha'ul has already taught on the subject of gifts to the Corinthian community (1 Corinthians 12). These gifts are manifestations of the indwelling Spirit of God. They are, by definition, gifts that cannot be learned in graduate school or from mom and dad. They are supernatural manifestations that are demonstrations of the presence of a supernatural God. I go into much detail on this subject in our series entitled 'The Ministry and Gifts of the Ruach HaQodesh'. I teach this series with the same methodology that I always teach use. I begin at the beginning and trace these gifts through the scriptures. And yes, I do believe that the manifestations listed in 1 Corinthians 12 are nothing new to the Tenakh.

Our Torah teacher, Sha'ul, is now going to remind us all that there are gifts given to us by our Creator, that are a matter of our own dedication and response to His calling on our lives. They are sometimes referred to as 'ministry' gifts rather than 'manifestation' gifts. It is implied in our text in Romans that these gifts are a direct response to our own commitment to renew our minds. Sha'ul begins with the same appeal that he gave in his letter to Corinth.

Romans 12:4-5

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, So we, being many, are one body in Messiah, and every one members one of another."

Our Torah teacher reminds us many times in his letters that we are one body. This is the reality of a scriptural concept and truth that I have been personally teaching for many years. We are one body because there is only one good seed, and that seed was established in the beginning (B'reshiyth 3:15). These are not gifts to a 'New Testament' church, nor are they callings to lives now motivated by grace rather than law. They are objects in a dowry given to a body that began with a seed just like all bodies begin with. Not seeds as of many, Sha'ul states in his letter to the Galatians, but one seed, the Messiah Y'shua. Within this body there are differences in our functions. Gee whiz! Just like every 'body' has! The KJV translators have chosen the word 'office' here to describe these functions. This word is taken from the Greek word *praxis*. We have a very familiar English word that directly comes from this word. It is the word 'practice'. In the Greek language, this word means a function or an act. This word was specifically chosen to imply much more than our concept of the word 'office'. It is a general term used to speak of a person's acts or ways. This is because the word comes from the Hebrew word *derek*, or 'way'. Our text in Romans is the only time this word is translated as office. Here are two better examples.

Colossians 3:9

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his DEEDS."

Mattityahu 16:27

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to His WORKS."

Whoops. Is it possible that Sha'ul is not talking to those in the body who have position or title, but rather all of us? You might notice that I took the liberty of capitalizing the last 'His' in the Mattityahu verse. It is my personal opinion that we will be judged according to HIS works and not our own. In the same way that God will judge the secrets of men by Y'shua the Messiah according to HIS gospel in that day (Romans 2:16). I believe that God is serious about the work of His people. I believe that due to His foreknowledge, He knows that ALL of us are responsible for what we effectually call the 'great commission'.

Romans 12:6

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the measure of faith."

As we discussed earlier, gifts and grace are cognate words because one is produced by the other. The first gift that is mentioned is prophecy. This word is used quite extensively in the Tenakh. It's use here follows the typical Hebrew pattern concerning the use of male and female gender that we find in the Tenakh. Many times, especially in the first three chapters, we find that the masculine use of these kinds of words are used to identify the source of an action, and the feminine use is the action itself. In others words, Hebrew words many times follow the teaching of male initiation and female response or action. The Hebrew word for prophet is *nava'*. This word means 'a prophet' and is in the masculine gender. The act of prophesying or prophecy becomes *n^evu'ah*, which is now in the feminine gender. The masculine identifies the source or initiation, while the feminine reveals the response or action. You might guess that I believe that our lovely female counterparts are indeed the action oriented and response half of our relationships. Remember, we love Him because He first loved us. Prophecy is our (the bride of Messiah) response to THE PROPHET. To prophesy, as it is used here is to speak forth the word of God, in his letter to the Romans I believe it's use is to warn or comfort by information, if you will, from the scriptures. It's use as one of the manifestation gifts in 1 Corinthians is to warn or comfort by foretelling that which is supernatural rather than learned. That is my opinion, for what it is worth. Sha'ul states that this gift is "according to the proportion of faith." The grammatical structure of the next two verses implies that all these gifts are according to the proportion of faith given us.

Romans 12:7

"Or ministry, [let us wait] on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;"

Sha'ul now moves to ministry. The word in Greek here is *diakonia*. It's Hebrew equivalent is *sharat*. There are several Hebrew words in the Tenakh that mean service. The one we are more familiar with is *'avad*. This word is used to mean service, servant, slave and even worship. It is used to refer to serving someone as a response to the will of a master. We are to *'avad* or serve our God as a

response to His will for us as bondservants. The word *sharat* however, is the word used to express the act of freeing or releasing others. There is a difference between service to your boss at work, and ministering to the aged at the local care center. The word used in Romans is *sharat*. We are to minister to the body in the same way that *sharat* is used in the same body in the Tenakh. Here are two examples.

B'reshith 28:35

"And it shall be upon Aaron to MINISTER: and his sound shall be heard when he goes in unto the holy places before YHVH, and when he comes out, that he die not."

Mizmor 103:21

"Bless YHVH, all ye His hosts, ye MINISTERS of His, that do His pleasure."

Some of us have been called by God to free or release others by our service. This service is just as imperative as the service of the ones being freed or released. This is precisely what the deacons of Acts chapter six were called to do, in freeing up the twelve disciples as the restoration of the whole house of Israel began to take place. Quite frankly, if this is what you have been doing as your part in this restoration, then you need to be thanked by those whom you have freed. Thank you.

Teaching also appears as one of these gifts. It is once again my personal opinion that this gift is not listed as a manifestation gift for a good reason. I believe that true teaching from the scriptures comes simply by long tedious hours of dedication combined with the intense desire to spread a just weight. I am not rejecting God's ability to supernaturally lead a teacher, but sound teaching comes only from prolonged dedication and a spirit that is just as anxious to learn as it is to teach. I personally believe that this particular gift was being referred to directly by Sha'ul's comments in verse three. The word used here is *didasko*. It's Hebrew equivalent is *lamad*. The base of *lamad* is *mad*, which means to 'measure' or to 'stretch out', and *arah*, the verbal root for the word Torah. *Yarah* means to cast, to throw, or to guide to a target. Teaching, from a scripural point of view (isn't that all we are interested in?) is always, I

repeat, always in context with the laws, commandments, statutes, and precepts of God. The first occurrence of the basis of 'teaching' is found in B'reshiyth 46:28.

"And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to DIRECT his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen."

The principle behind teaching is for the purpose of guiding and directing. This guidance and direction is handed down from one generation to the next. No one, I repeat, no one has any business teaching scripture that does not use the Torah of our Creator as the basis for their guidance and direction. One of the first uses of these words in the context of 'teaching' is found in D'varim 4:1.

"Now therefore, hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the ordinances, which I TEACH you, to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which YHVH 'Elohiym of your fathers giveth you."

Romans 12:8

"Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."

Sha'ul now exhorts us to exhort. Follow me as I follow the Messiah, he might say. The gift of exhortation is a gift that most of us would claim. However, the biblical model of exhortation has been somewhat circumvented. The word from the Greek here is *paraklesis*. That word sounds familiar. The Hebrew equivalent is *nacham*. The verbal root of this word means to comfort by means of change in attitude. This word is the verb form of that guy who built that ark that floated around for awhile. This word is expressed in the English in the Old Testament as comfort and repent. The traditional word for repent *shuvah*, is not used of God in the scriptures. When the English word repent shows up with respect to God, it is the word *nacham*. *Shuvah* means to return or restore. God certainly does not need to repent in that sense. But God does repent.

Yonah 3:10

"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God REPENTED of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them, and He did it not."

Quite simply, God, for the express purpose of providing comfort and mercy, changed His attitude about the situation in Nineveh and did not destroy them. This is the kind of God we serve. There are some of us who are called with just this kind of ministry to the body. Deserved judgment needs to be tempered with this kind of comfort and attitude. However, discernment of particular circumstances must be taken into account. Once again, this is an example of a word that in it's masculine form refers to the 'comforter' and the feminine form refers to the 'act' of comforting. As I alluded to earlier, this word is used as one of the titles of the Ruach HaQodesh. What many of us are called to do are distinct attributes of God, the Ruach HaQodesh, and the Messiah.

Yochanan 14:26

"But the COMFORTER, who is the Ruach HaQodesh, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you."

2 Corinthians 1:3

"Bless be God, even the Father of our Adonay Y'shua the Messiah, the Father of mercies, and the God of all COMFORT."

Philippians 2:1

If there be, therefore, any consolation in Messiah, if any COMFORT of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions,"

This last verse was quickly followed by Sha'ul's EXHORTATION to 'let this mind be in you, which was also in Messiah Y'shua.' We are told all throughout the Tenakh that, in the latter days, God will comfort His people. The question is how shall He comfort His people. I believe that this is accomplished through the gifts and ministries that YHVH has given His people. In other words, God comforts His people when WE comfort His people. God teaches truth when WE teach truth. God ministers when WE minister. You may want to check out theses verses before finishing a look at this gift. Yesha'yahu 40:1, 49:13-16, 61:2, Mizmor 94:19, 119:50-52, 76, Z'kharyah 1:17.

Sha'ul teaches us that some of us have the ability to give, and to give with liberality or simplicity as it says in the KJV. For some of us our calling and ministry is simply to give, and to give with simplicity. What does it mean to give

with simplicity? The Greek word used here is *aplotes*. It's Hebrew equivalent is *yashar*. This is a common Hebrew word and means 'uprightness, straightness or rightness'. It's root is the root of the name of our Messiah. Below are a few examples of how this word is used in the Tenakh.

Mizmor 119:128

"Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be RIGHT; and I hate every false way."

Hoshea 14:9

"Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the YHVH are RIGHT, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein."

Nechemyah 9:13

"Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them RIGHT judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments:"

Giving in the body of Messiah should be initiated by the upright in heart and given to those who are using these gifts for righteous reasons according to the righteous commandments, statutes, and laws of our God. Period. Apparently there is a difference between the 'gift' of giving, and the simply act of arbitrarily handing stuff out. Through the mercy and grace of our God, there are those of us who have been given a proportion of trust to be able to appropriately and scripturally give unto the ministry of our Creator. This implies that there are times when we give that are not according to His grace and not an act of trust. I must admit that I was part of a religious system that encouraged and admonished faithful church attendants to give to a system that deserved their gifts simply by virtue of the fact that this 'church' was their system. Right or wrong, faithful or unfaithful, obedient to the commandments of our God or not, this was their 'home'.

Next time we meet we will discuss rulership and mercy in some detail.

Shalom Alecheim!

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