

The WildBranch Ministry

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

Be Ye Transformed

Romans 12:8

As we closed in our last segment, we were doing some research on the gift of giving. I hope we could see that proper giving is a gift from God, but not all giving is from God. There are times, too often for many of us, that our constant giving to someone or some entity, only reinforces or encourages that someone or something to receive. So like kind begets like kind, and the open hands never close. This is why Sha'ul adds the word *yashar*, to the text. There is a 'right' and 'proper' way to give. I believe that the scriptural way of giving is to plant your increase and offerings in soil that produces, rather than soil that just sucks it up. Messiah told us that it is better to give than to receive. Although this lesson is not directed specifically at teaching on giving, I have come across an interesting 'scientific' discovery of late. According to Creation magazine, a publication of the ministry, Answers in Genesis, a recent study has concluded that elderly couples, who do nothing but receive benefits and solace, have a 42% higher mortality rate than elderly couples who spend their waning years giving to others. There is something that happens to us physiologically when we give rather than constantly receiving. Does this surprise anyone?

Romans 12:8

"... he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

There are those in the body of Messiah who have been given the ability to rule with diligence. You might notice that Sha'ul's exhortations concerning our action is always juxtaposed with an additional word. We are not admonished to 'give', but rather to give in rightness or simplicity. I have mentioned before that Y'shua is not the fullness of the Godhead, but rather the fullness of the Godhead, bodily. There are no superfluous terms used by Sha'ul. Here we have those who are not given the ability to 'rule' but to rule with diligence. Any ole Tom, Dick, and Harry can rule over someone. Practically all of us can shout

commands at one another. Here we have a different Greek and Hebrew concept than we have with ministry or teaching. The Greek word employed here is *proistemi*, which means to stand before and direct. The Hebrew from whence this comes is the familiar term 'avad. This word is the Hebrew word used to refer to being subject to another person's will. In this case it is used as a noun and refers to the one whose will another is to be subject to. So far, this describes anyone who is 'in charge', so to speak. But this person is told to rule with diligence. The word here is *spoude* in the Greek and is used to speak of 'eager care'. The word is a business term and speaks of caring for the outcome of a business. In our context, it is the business of our God and King. The operative word here is care. Here is an example in the Brit Chadashah.

2 Corinthians 7:11-12

"For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what CAREFULNESS it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our CARE for you in the sight of God might appear unto you."

The Hebrew word that the English word diligence springs from is *mahar*. This word also means to lead and direct with care and responsibility and in fear. Here are a few examples of how it is used in the Tenakh.

Sh'mot 22:16

"And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely ENDOW her to be his wife."

Yesha'yahu 35:4

"Say to them that are of a FEARFUL heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you."

A godly ruler is not to operate outside of the King's business. He or she is to rule with care and in fear of the Ultimate Ruler. There is always to be a diligent focus on the bottom line or goal. In our context, it is to take the Messiah and His

Torah to the lost. We are never to lose sight of our purpose. It is not to build kingdoms but rather to go and bring in the inhabitants of the kingdom, for when that is complete, then, and only then, will the kingdom be restored to Israel. (Acts 1:6-8).

There are those of us who have the incomparable ability to extend and minister mercy. But once again, not just having mercy, but ministering mercy with cheerfulness. We are to extend the same mercy that YHVH has shown us in the very first verse of this chapter, so I will not labor on this word. We, however, are to show mercy with cheerfulness. What does that mean? The Greek word used here is *'ilarotes*. This word is only used two times in the Brit Chadashah. Here is the other occurrence.

2 Corinthians 9:7

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a CHEERFUL giver."

A familiar verse, yes? Some of us have perhaps heard this verse quoted every time the offering plate was passed. Unfortunately, given the previous defining of the concept of giving, many of us have given not so cheerfully knowing that our offerings are supporting lavish lifestyles and exquisite cathedrals. The Hebrew word that is used in our Brit Chadashah dictionary is *ratzon*. This word means to exhibit voluntary pleasure or satisfaction. It comes from the Hebrew verbal root *rutz*. This is the Hebrew word for running or sprinting toward. Here are a couple of examples of this word.

Vayikra 1:3

"If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his OWN VOLUNTARY WILL at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD."

Ezekiel 20:40

"For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith YHVH 'Elohiym, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I ACCEPT them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. 41 I will ACCEPT you with

your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen."

Mishlei 11:1

"A false balance is abomination to YHVH: but a just weight is his DELIGHT."

Extending mercy is acceptable to God. Remember that this is our reasonable and ACCEPTABLE service to God? Our mercy must be done in delight and pleasure. As I conclude this section of teaching, I must take the time to rightly divide the word of truth. Do not think for a moment that Sha'ul is teaching us that all of us in the body of Messiah have one of these gifts. While I do admit that I know people who are more gifted in some of the areas than myself, we ALL have the ability to extend mercy when given the opportunity. On the one hand, we should not use these gifts as tools to 'lord' over the brethren, but at the same time we should not use them as excuses NOT to exercise our responsibilities either. There are those who excuse themselves from ever 'teaching' anyone, anything, but proclaiming that they do not have that particular gift. Giving or exhorting are sometimes easily ignored for the same reason. It is true that not all of us have the same gifts or ministry (verse 4). But just as it is in 1 Corinthians 14, the Spirit of God will administer them severally as He wills. If no two people had the same gift or ministry, then only 7 people would have a ministry or gift. If we did not have more than one ministry or gift, then those who can teach could quickly excuse themselves from giving, and often do.

Shalom Alecheim!

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