

FAMILY BREAKDOWN-THE REMEDY-WEEK SEVEN

Written by Rabbi Philip Hammond.. Posted in Reconciliation 2015-2016

“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another.” John 15:9-17 [NASB]

It should be plain for all to comprehend that there can be no remedy for a family breakdown without love. Yet this is not as simple as it may first appear. If we took a variety of people from different cultures and of different ages, we would have very differing views on what constituted the definition of love. Even in our “Western” culture the definition of love had a different meaning 60 yrs ago to what is has now. Our youth have a very different view of love to their Grandparents.

This different understanding comes from a change of definition brought forward by a change in environment. This change of environment is brought about by a change in what is taught to the “student”, by their teachers and the example of “leaders” in a community. These days [2015] we use the English word love in a very light and flippant manner. 70 years ago the word love when used within the context of relationship meant commitment to the other. Nowadays people fall in and out of love almost on a daily basis. It would be better termed temporary lust and friendship. With this in mind let us remind ourselves what the word love means in a biblical context.

Love/Aheb – Devote completely to another.

All throughout the bible there are countless commandments to love/aheb HaShem and to love one another.

“You shall love HASHEM, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources.” Deuteronomy 6:5 [AST]

“You shall love HASHEM, your God, and you shall safeguard His charge, His decrees, His ordinances, and His commandments, all the days.” Deuteronomy 11:1 [AST]

“Love HASHEM, all His devote ones....” Psalm 31:24 [AST]

“.....that you love one another.....” John 13:34 [NASB]

“Beloved, let us love one another...” 1John 4:7 [NASB]

Considering these issues let us view our scripture passage [John 15:9-17] within its biblical context and how it relates to the two Houses of greater Israel reconciling.

In verse 9 we have a wonderful statement of such depth it is breathtaking. Yeshua says that He has the same love for His disciples as the Father has for Him. Consider for a moment this statement. However to fully grasp the beauty and depth of this statement of encouragement, we need to go a little further. Yeshua says to “abide in My love.” Yeshua then tells His “audience” how they are to abide in His love. To abide in His love they are to keep His commandments. Yeshua then goes on to give the reason for His ability to abide in His Father’s love, He tells them, “I have kept My Father’s commandments”, thus He abides in the Father’s love. Yeshua has shared this truth and intimate relationship with His disciples that they may receive the same joy as He. We can only have true biblical love and joy if we follow the instructions of the Father as exemplified by Yeshua HaMoshiach.

We need to understand something vital. True love brings joy! Yet at the same time true love must withstand the presence of pain. So how can one have pain and joy at the same time? This can only take place if we follow the example of Yeshua HaMoshiach. This allows us to have “joy” when we are faced with times of pain. If we are focused on the instructions of our Father, which are in turn the commandments Yeshua speaks of, then we can have joy in our lives under the most difficult of conditions. It is also important

that we are realistic regarding these difficult times. Yeshua sets the perfect example under the most trying of conditions.

Then Yeshua came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray.' He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with Him. And He began to feel sadness and anguish. Then He said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and stay awake with Me.' And going on a little further He fell on His face and prayed. 'My Father,' He said, 'if it is possible, let this cup pass Me by. Nevertheless, let it be as You, not I, would have it.'

No doubt Yeshua knew of the pain that was coming His way. He brought His anguish to the Father, but we know from His prayer that He both knew and accepted that the will of the Father was to be followed. These instructions are the very instructions that pave the way for the redemption of all Israel, thus even in the pain of the horrific death He faced, He would have known "joy". Joy because His focus was on the "end result". Yeshua was paving the way for the redemption of all Israel. Imagine the "emotion" between Father and Son [if I can put it that way] when Yeshua was about to be nailed to the "tree". These events unfolded because of the love HaShem has for His Children, the Children of Israel.

He was doing the will of the Father, because of His love for the Father. This is the perfect example of the beauty of true Aheh/love. True love overcomes pain, suffering and fear.

"In love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear implies punishment and whoever is afraid has not come to perfection in love. Let us love, then, because He first loved us. Anyone who says, 'I love God' and hates his brother is a liar, since no one who fails to love the brother whom he can see can love God whom he has not seen. Indeed this is the commandment we have received from Him, that whoever loves God, must also love his brother." 1John 4:18-20 [NJB]

When viewing the subject of reconciliation between Judah and Ephraim, there are some statements in the above text that require our attention. Would it not be reasonable that Ephraim view Judah as a brother and that Judah view Ephraim as a brother? Would it also not be reasonable to assume both Ephraim and Judah claim they love HaShem? We must approach these questions with caution and honesty. We have witnessed a large

degree of hatred between these two Houses [brothers] over a long span of history. This being the case then we are then forced to ask the question. Do we truly love/aheb the Holy One of Israel? Because if we do, or claim we do then it is not an option to hate the other “brother”.

Fear can bring about hate. Certainly many actions carried out by Ephraim have understandably given rise to Judah fearing Ephraim – therefore bringing about hate. However this hasn’t and isn’t a one way street. There have been and are actions conducted by Judah that has caused fear and hatred stemming from Ephraim. Both Houses/brothers have a responsibility to change our actions and move closer to actions pleasing to HaShem. This involves both Houses taking a very honest look into the mirror and seeing if we actually reflect the image of HaShem or the image of self. One fear we all have, is that of “losing face.” Well I have news for us all, if we embrace and follow the instructions of HaShem then both Houses are going to “lose face.” However other than having our pride hurt we have everything to gain, and should not be afraid of this process.

I am totally convinced that HaShem has given His Children the perfect set of instructions that when followed allow us to achieve a love close to that of the Father. If we have the love of the Father “in us”, then we can truly love our brother. If we have the love of the Father and that of Yeshua, then we can lay down our life for “our brother.” Laying down our lives [in the context of the subject of reconciliation between the Two Houses], means to leave behind those self serving teachings and traditions that are not pleasing to the Father and often based on fear of losing face. Both Houses have their cupboards full of these. So let us engage in some “spring cleaning” and throw out those items that we should not be dressed in. This will be a difficult process that involves throwing out some of our well worn “favourite garments”. However our love for HaShem must be at a level that we are willing to throw out all “garments” that He declares unclean. We should be mature in our approach to this process, knowing we will make mistakes, have questions, doubts and some aspects of fear. We must allow our love for our Father to grow at a rate that will build solid foundations, rooted deep into the fertile soil provided by HaShem. As we approach these challenges and issues, let us be encouraged that it is HaShem Who is in total charge, and He will bring about His purposes. If we hang onto His “Right Hand” He will bring us through.

Truly there is no God like our God, the God of Israel and no nation like the Nation whom He elected.

Blessings to all citizens of biblical Israel,

Rabbi, [Prof] Philip Hammond. PhD.