

Kedoshim

Holy Ones

Torah:

Leviticus 19:1-20:27

Haftarah:

Amos 9:7-15; Ezekiel 22:1-16

Brit Chadashah:

Matthew 5:43-49

Reading: Betty p. 139 and Ps. 15. Jewish hero: Zachariah (John's father) Carrier: Isaac

Sermon: Waiting on G-d

Passages: *“Trust in the L-rd with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. But those who wait upon the L-rd shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”* (Proverbs. 3:5,6 and Isaiah 40:31)

We live in an openly hostile secular world which both despises our belief system and denounces our moral standards. They are at work to undermine all aspects of our faith in the school system and actually legislate against us when we promote our moral standards. This society has set the age of sexual consent at 16, as well as the right of a sixteen year old girl to abort her baby. Homosexuality is now enshrined as a protected human right and political campaigns are even won or lost depending on whether candidates support the LGBT cause or not. They have gotten a firm hold on the way our society sees itself.

It is reaching the point where our children may be kidnapped if we hold to the freedom of religion rights which our constitution and even the charter of the UN are supposed to be guaranteeing us. They use bullying and intimidation in the media and even through government agencies. They are looking for blood and want to sink our spirituality.

The slaughter of babies in the womb continues unabated, though, recently, two American states have moved to outlaw abortion, once the fetal heart begins to beat. Life truly begins at conception, but this is a step in the right direction.

Instead of wringing our hands and lamenting the erosion of our rights to have freedom of religion, we need to change tactics and go on the offensive. We need to see ourselves as an increasingly persecuted religious minority and we need to claim our rights as such and aggressively defend them. Mishpocah, this is because the western world is no longer Christian.

And while I am grateful that the Roman Catholic Church is both anti-abortion and anti-gay, with a massive majority of small “c”, non-practicing Catholics (like Justin Trudeau), it is unlikely that the church's positions will have much of an impact on the lives of the average secularized Catholic. Many other churches have caved in on these issues.

We need to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves because the days of persecution are upon us once again and we had better learn good fighting strategies if we are to survive and fulfill our Torah/Gospel mandate. While this persecution is escalating, there are still millions worldwide who are coming to faith and it is my fervent prayer that millions of lapsed, secularized believers will come back to the faith.

I also pray that the growing hordes of non-practicing and lapsed Muslims will also come to the

faith, along with the millions of Hindus, Buddhists and others who are trapped in various forms of paganism.

We also need to aggressively reach out to the millions of deluded evolutionists, who are either atheists or agnostic and be able to diligently articulate our faith with at least as much gusto as the first century believers did as they struggled under the yoke of Roman oppression.

You see, we do not only walk with the L-rd when things are going our way, we need to walk with Him as we develop new outreach strategies, whenever new enemies rise up to challenge our eternal Torah/Gospel message. As part of this, we need to be diligent to claim our rights to religious liberty and even go as far as to proclaim that sexual orientation is a religious conviction that we have every right to defend.

Scientific phenomena aside, but which also proves our point, we need to say that we believe that G-d created men and women to enter exclusively into a monogamous heterosexual union. We also need to affirm that we believe that this heterosexual union is the only acceptable expression of human sexuality. Because we are guaranteed freedom of religion, we need to claim that it is also our right to defend these convictions and forbid the practice of homosexuality of any kind in our midst.

As well, we need to proclaim that because we have the constitutional right to freedom of religion, members of the LGBT community have no place in our midst, because according to our religious beliefs their lifestyle is a violation of biblical sexuality. At the same time we need to affirm that we are not calling for violence against members of the LGBT community and while the ancient commonwealth of Israel called for capital punishment whenever gay sex was practiced, we will limit ourselves to exclusion or removing them from the midst of our communities – which is what delivering them over to the devil means.

Should our country once again be governed according to the dictates of the Bible, we would naturally revisit this issue. As it stands, we insist on our constitutional right to the religious liberty which removes members of the LGBT lobby from our communities because they are practicing a totally unacceptable form of forbidden sexual behaviour. Our only outreach to them will always be to help get free of their perverted sexuality or to live among us in celibacy, while they wait to be delivered from this affliction.

All of this is part of what is meant by waiting on the L-rd, because we need to be free to put into practice all the stipulations of His Word, even when we encounter societal hostility which wants to suppress us and persecute us into silence or even into oblivion.

Basically, waiting on the L-rd means that it is our duty to understand how He wants us to react in every situation of our lives, and as we seek His face, we will also be given both guidance and renewal, along with the various forms of provision which we need to function as we wander through this life on our way to our father's house in glory.

Because we realize that we are kingdom bound, we need to also be kingdom conscious and see our lives, as an extended opportunity to apply the teachings of His Word, no matter what happenstances we encounter along the way.

In fact, no matter what we are going through, we need to see our lives primarily as a context or

field, where we apply His Word and sow it into every area of our lives. This is so that we can reap righteousness, holiness and fruitful victory in every area of our lives, whether things are going our way or whether we have to endure great trials and tribulations.

If we to rely upon our own understanding, we would fail to see things from a kingdom perspective and would not be able to receive the direction and guidance we need to overcome in this world and walk in the light, even through the gathering darkness.

Our passage in Proverbs uses both the heart and the head, because both parts of our being need to be given over to G-d. I know that sometimes it is hard to trust in the L-rd with all of our heart, but harboring fear and doubt will only consume emotional energy which should be given over to the L-rd. Even in the midst of great pain and suffering, when we cannot understand what is happening to us, we need to turn our fears and doubts over to the L-rd and understand that His will, will be done (eventually) and that His kingdom will finally come.

It is our spiritual duty to walk with the L-rd according to His Word, while we wait for this glorious event. When it says that He will direct or guide our paths, it means that He will tell us what to do to survive and to overcome as we face whatever life and the enemy can throw at us. The pace of change is continuing to accelerate in our world, but G-d can and will guide through all of them, because the pace of societal and technological change can never out pace the grace and provision of G-d.

When we proclaim that the teachings of His Word are both changeless and eternal, we are not sinking back in a primitive, archaic, even obsolete, belief system which some claim flies in the face of the scientific discoveries of our modern world. We are saying that nothing in science or in the universe contradicts the Word of G-d and we would rather place our faith in the words of the Almighty, than in latest set of modern myths which evolution is based on. We acknowledge our need for divine guidance and want to learn how to wait on G-d and trust in Him as our primary source of inspiration in a world that is full of deceit and is powered by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Our biggest fear should always be that we would lose our way spiritually and get sucked in to the beliefs and immorality of this world. We know that spiritual assimilation is equal to spiritual death and that spiritual confusion is equivalent to a spiritual coma and we want to avoid either of these unwanted eventualities.

As we face life's challenges as believers, Jewish and Gentile, we want to always be experiencing constant spiritual renewal as we learn to pace ourselves and never let the life's raging storms or its rising waters, demolish the house of our faith. We may suffer loss and be badly shaken up more than we like, and even experience periodic damage, but He will always renew our strength and guide our feet. This is because, if the truth be told, our lives are really just one extended journey of faithfully waiting for His inevitable kingdom and with this perspective, we will never be choked by the pleasures, the riches or the cares of this life.

As we lead lives which are Sabbath powered and festival driven, we will always be looking towards the next Sabbath and the next festival, and towards the coming kingdom, no matter what else is going on in our lives.

Counting the Omer is a discipline which teaches us to remain focused on the goals and

objectives which G-d has set for us in His Word, as we grow in grace and knowledge, even in the midst of growing darkness and increasing societal opposition.

We need to know how to live, both when we are under attack and when things are peaceful. Our spirituality needs to be both defensive and offensive as we remain kingdom conscious. He will heal any damage we incur and restore us when we suffer loss, because our spiritual condition is the most important aspect of our lives. It is not always easy to wait on G-d and rely on Him, because life can throw us some pretty wicked curve balls and this sophisticated world can be quite a distraction.

But we affirm that it is only the Bible which will be allowed to teach us what to believe and how to live. Along with this, we will learn to rely upon the L-rd and upon His renewal, so that we do not run out of spiritual gas as we wander through this life on our way home. We are nearly midway between Passover and Pentecost and then we have the High Holy Days and Sukkoth to look forward to. Even as we wander through our intensely frigid Canadian winter, we also have Chanukah and Purim to cheer us up along the way.

Are you learning to pace yourself spiritually? Are you letting the L-rd help you to renew your spiritual strength? Is your spiritual life rising up on wings like an eagle? Are running and not growing weary and walking and not growing faint? Are you standing up for your right to freedom of religion? Are you remaining a convinced creationist? How strong and firm is your belief in the G-d of the Bible? How firm and strong is your belief on the Bible?

Are you firmly committed to a pro-life position and are you convinced that all and any forms of homosexuality are a direct violation of what the Bible teaches about human sexuality? Do you also affirm that pre-marital and extra-marital sex are also grave violations of what the Bible describes as acceptable expressions of human sexuality? Are you willing and able to explain and defend your perspective on biblical sexuality?

I do not believe in violent confrontations with those who do not share my beliefs or my morality. But I do believe in dialogue and in speaking up and making a stand. I want to always be waiting on G-d so that He can give me the wisdom and the strength which I need to walk with Him and not be overwhelmed by the folly of this world. There are powerful spiritual forces which are ready to undermine our faith, if we do not rely upon the L-rd and seek His guidance in every area of our lives.

Our world is driven by spiritual forces, even as people adopt the craziest positions and we constantly need the help of the L-rd to successfully navigate our way through this weird and wonderful minefield of possibilities and not get stopped or stalled by it. May the L-rd guide you into deepening your faith in His Word and in strengthening your response to it, even when you encounter massive opposition, because greater is He who is in you, than he who is trying to run the world. When all is said and done, we will never regret our decision to follow His Word and to defend our right to freedom of religion in a world which no longer shares either a belief in the Word or a commitment to practice a morality as a practical application of this source of truth. Our world is changing, but we remain committed to changing the world and to never allowing the world to change us, either in what we believe or in how we live.