

Parashat Vayishlach

פרשת וישלח

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Testing our faith

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 32:4-36:43
הפטרה: Hosea 11:7-12:12, Obadiah 1:1-21
הברית: Hebrews 11:11-20,
החדשה: Matthew 26:36-46

Times of hardship can test the faith and convictions of all of us. God's Word in *Parashat Vayishlach* recognizes the challenge of testing in Yaakov's (Jacob's) life, whether it comes from fear that resulted from the deception Yaakov committed against His brother Esau or what occurs from persecution, disaster, or grief. In our passages for this week, Yaakov's faith was tested to return to the land of Canaan. As a result of his fear, Yaakov prayed to God for help. *Bereshit / Genesis '32:9 Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,' 32:10 I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. 32:11 'Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. 32:12 'For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered. (NASB)* Yaakov (Jacob) prays to God thanking the Lord for His loving kindness and faithfulness being blessed with, cattle, wives, and children. Yaakov then asks God to deliver him from Esau his brother and reiterates the promise God had given him before leaving the land of Canaan in *Parashat Vayetze*. Our portion of scriptures for this week offers three truths to remind us to stand strong in our faith during challenging times. First, God is trustworthy and faithful to us to deliver us. The implication is that our Lord will not abandon us nor should we have reason to abandon our faith in Him during hard times. Second, Yeshua himself suffered and was vindicated by God. By aligning ourselves with Him in faith we have an eternal perspective that God will give us everlasting life and know without a doubt that despite our current times of difficulty we will ultimately *2 Thessalonians 2:14 ... share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Third, that even in the midst of trials God extends his mercy to encourage and strengthen us.

בראשית 32:4-12

4 זרש' וישלח יעקב מלאכים לפניו אל-עשו אחיו ארצה
 5 שער שדה אדום: ויצו אתם לאמר כה תאמרון לאדני
 לעשו כה אמר עבדך יעקב עס-לבן נרתי ואחר עדי-
 6 עתה: ויהרלי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה ואשלחה
 להגיד לאדני למצא-הן בעיניך: וישבו המלאכים
 אל-יעקב לאמר באנו אל-אחיוך אל-עשו וגם הלך
 לקראתך וארבע מאות איש עמו: וירא יעקב מאד
 8 ויצר לו ויחץ אתהעם אשר אתו ואת-הצאן ואת-
 9 הבקר והגמלים לשני מחנות: ויאמר אסדיבוא עשו
 אל-המחנה האחת והבהו ויהיה המחנה הנשאר
 10 לפליטה: ויאמר יעקב אליו אבי אברהם ואליו
 אבי יצחק יהיה האמר אלי שוב לארצה ולמולדתך
 11 ואיטיבה עמך: קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל-האמת
 אשר עשית את-עבדך כי במקלי עברתי את-הירדן
 12 הנה ועתה היותי לשני מחנות: הצילני נא מיד אחי
 מיד עשו כירא אנכי אתו פן-יבוא והפני אם על-
 13 בנים: ואתה אמרת היטב איטיב עמך ושמתי את-

Bereshit / Genesis 32:4-12
 32:4 He also commanded them saying, 'Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; 32:5 I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.'" 32:6 The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.' 32:7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies; 32:8 for he said, 'If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape.' 32:9 Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,' 32:10 I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. 32:11 'Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. 32:12 'For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered. (NASB)

Reading about the life of Yaakov, we realize that it is possible to maintain hope that is based upon our knowledge of the character and promises of God and our savior Yeshua the Messiah. Despite the struggles we encounter in life, we are still equipped to live as the people of God by demonstrating our faith in Yeshua. The way we demonstrate our faith in Yeshua is by using the gifts that we have received from God. The purpose of the gifts that God gives us is to administer God's mercy to others. Through our spiritual gifts we are equipped to extend mercy and to bless. Have you exercised your gifts and extended mercy or been a blessing to someone recently? Whether we are sharing the message of salvation to the lost, serving to meet practical needs of others, offering hospitality, or loving sacrificially, we are able to accomplish this ministry because of the mercy that we have been given by God. It is in this way that God receives the praise and the glory.

In *Mishley / Proverbs 2*, Solomon instructs his son to pursue the spirit of knowledge and wisdom. He says *2:2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; (NASB)* to encourage his son to turn to the ear of wisdom and apply his heart to understanding. Solomon instructs him to search for wisdom, call out for insight, and cry aloud for understanding. The results of this searching for wisdom and understand is *2:5 Then you will discern the fear of the Lord And discover the knowledge of God. (NASB)* These instructions characterize

a life that is focused upon seeking the Lord. Are you passionate in your pursuit of God? The story of Yaakov's journey to the land of Haran, we do not see him pray to the Lord except in times of trouble. Yaakov may have understood God's mercy as he prayed to be at peace with his brother Esau in the land of Canaan. Yaakov serves as an example for us to continually seek the Lord to give us understanding, and to help us in times of trouble. God is willing and ready to reveal more of Himself and His truth when we ask in faith with a humble heart. I don't know if you have thought about this before but we are compelled to grow in the grace and knowledge of God as the Apostle Peter wrote in *2 Peter 3:18*? Even Yeshua grew in grace and in knowledge (*Luke 2:52*). How much more should we seek to grow in the Lord and to study the Word of God? I thank God for equipping us with all that we need. We have the reality of His presence in our lives and of His Son, the power of His Spirit and the truth of His Word. Let's apply this reality by seeking the Lord in both the good times and the bad.

Tehilim / Psalms 16:1-11

16:1 Preserve me, O God for in thee do I put my trust. 16:2 O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord my goodness extendeth not to thee; 16:3 But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. 16:4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. 16:5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup thou maintainest my lot. 16:6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. 16:7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. 16:9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth my flesh also shall rest in hope. 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (NASB)

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever