

פרשת ויגש / Parashat Vayigash

Shabbat Tevet 9, 5770, December 26, 2009
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
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Our Faith is Not About Self-Promotion

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 44:18-47:27
הפטרה: Ezekiel 37:15-37:28
הברית: Ephesians 2:1-10
החדשה

10 This week's reading ends with the telling of how Yoseph bought all of the land of Egypt for Pharaoh including all of the people as slaves because the famine was so sever. In order to eat, the people sold themselves, including everything they owned even their own bodies. The people proclaim "you have saved our lives" (47:25); though the people sold everything they owned they were grateful for their lives nonetheless. *Bereshit / Genesis 47:20-27* shows us how Yoseph's life ultimately emphasized a calling to be a blessing to others, to save many lives, even though the people were purchasing their food, Yoseph became a blessing because he had obeyed the Lord.

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בְּרֵאשִׁית 47:20-27

20 וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִשָּׂם: וַיִּקֶן יוֹסֵף אֶת־כָּל־אֲדָמַת מִצְרַיִם
לְפָרֹעַה כִּי־מָכְרוּ מִצְרַיִם אִישׁ שָׂדֵהוּ כִּי־חָזַק עֲלֵהֶם
21 הָרָעַב וַתְּהִי הָאָרֶץ לְפָרֹעַה: וְאֶת־הָעָם הֶעֱבִיר אֹתוֹ
לְעָרִים מִקְצֵה גְבוּל־מִצְרַיִם וְעַד־קִצְחוֹ: רַק אֲדָמַת
הַכֹּהֲנִים לֹא קָנָה כִּי חֹק לַכֹּהֲנִים מֵאֵת פָּרֹעַה וְאָכְלוּ
אֶת־חֲקֵם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָהֶם פָּרֹעַה עַל־כֵּן לֹא מָכְרוּ
23 אֶת־אֲדָמָתָם: וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־הָעָם הֵן קָנִיתִי אֶתְכֶם
הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־אֲדָמַתְכֶם לְפָרֹעַה הֲא־לָכֶם זֶרַע וּזְרַעְתֶּם
24 אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה: וְהָיָה בַּחֲבוּאֹת וּנְתַתֶּם חֲמִישִׁית לְפָרֹעַה
וְאַרְבַּע הַיִּדֹת יִהְיֶה לָכֶם לְזֶרַע הַשָּׂדֶה וְלֶאֱכֹלְכֶם
25 וְלֶאֱשֶׁר בְּבֵתֵיכֶם וְלֶאֱכֹל לְטַפְכֶם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַחִוִּיתָנוּ
26 נִמְצָאֲחֵן בְּעֵינֵי אֲדֹנָי וְהָיִינוּ עֲבָדִים לְפָרֹעַה: וַיִּשֶׂם
אֹתָהּ יוֹסֵף לְחֹק עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַל־אֲדָמַת מִצְרַיִם
לְפָרֹעַה לְחֹמֶשׁ רַק אֲדָמַת הַכֹּהֲנִים לְבָדִים לֹא הָיְתָה
27 לְפָרֹעַה: וַיֵּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן

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Bereshit / Genesis 47:20-27

47:20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh's. 47:21 As for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt's border to the other. 47:22 Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land. 47:23 Then Joseph said to the people, 'Behold, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now, here is seed for you, and you may sow the land. 47:24 'At the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones.' 47:25 So they said, 'You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves.' 47:26 Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt valid to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's. 47:27 Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous. (NASB)

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Thinking about this week's parsha (Parashat Vayigash) the end of Yaakov's life mustn't have gone quite the way he had expected. Do you think that his life can be characterized as "seeing good days?" Yaakov had trouble with Laban, thought he lost his son Yoseph, and the famine in the land that forces him and his family and all that he owns to leave the Promised Land and go to the land of Egypt has to be a serious blow on his faith of G-d's provision if it wasn't for the Lord speaking to him that it was ok to go down to Egypt.

What can we learn and apply to our lives today from Yoseph's life and being a blessing to others? Scripture indicates that it is possible to live a good life, to love, and to see good days (*1 Peter 3:10-12*). One of the key components is to refrain one's tongue from evil. This goes beyond guarding one's tongue from vulgarity. It also includes not speaking or believing in "evil reports" or "evil attitudes." Take for example the negative attitudes brought by the ten spies sent from Yisrael into Eretz Canaan to spy out the land.

1 Peter 3:10-12

3:10 For, 'The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. 3:11 'He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. 3:12 'For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.' (NASB)

We see what it is like for a life to bless others in the life of Yoseph but how does a life of blessing apply to us today? Scripture calls us to a life that is concerned with the well being of others. This isn't about the state of being comfortable as a result of financial stability. Our lives should exhibit peace, sympathy towards others, compassion, love, humility, honesty, and have a response to sin that is not about repaying evil with more evil but with blessing as Yoseph did. (Remember how Yoseph did not take revenge on his brothers.) Peter says that the person who desires life, to love and to see good days he must keep from evil and do good. As you go about the following week, what ways can you offer to be a blessing in someone's life? Take for example how we communicate with each other. Are you saying things in a way that brings judgment upon someone else's actions supposing that you are the judge of life and obedience before G-d? When we begin to think that everyone has to do what we deem as "right" there is a serious problem. The scriptures are clear; we need be living a life that is obedient to the Lord and that means obeying G-d's commands. We cannot expect everyone to live according to our opinions. I say "opinions" because not everyone is at the same place in their walk with G-d as you are I may be. Taking the wrong attitude in this can place us in the circumstance as it says in *1 Peter 3:10*, keeping our tongues from evil and lips from speaking deceit. It is easy to speak hatred, anger, and restrict our love towards others. Yeshua taught in *Matthew 5:21-22*, on anger that drew a parallel between being angry towards others and committing murder. Our attitudes, our mindset, and our relationship with G-d are all connected and have to be right if we are going to live a life that is a blessing to others.

John said in *1 John 3:15* that everyone who hates his brother is a murder.
70 It is clear that our attitudes are being watched and judged from heaven. Take for
example fostering an attitude of hatred towards people who celebrate the birth of
Yeshua on December 25th. From the scriptures, we know that Yeshua was born
on or around Succot (the feast of Tabernacles). We also know from history why
75 the birth of Yeshua was moved to December 25th from His real birth date on
Succot. Tradition is difficult to break from and some people will never have a
desire for the truth but is that a reason to harbor a spirit of hatred (murder)
towards those who refuse the truth? A continuous attitude of hatred will most
80 assuredly result in a life that is less than a blessing towards others. The challenge
presented to us this week (and the rest of this month) is to present ourselves as
humble and loving people of G-d to the lost and hurting in this world. It is up to
us today whether we will walk humbly before the Lord and before others, and live
a life that is lead by the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) rather than a spirit of
hatred.

85 A life of blessing also means we “inherit a blessing” as well; an
inheritance from G-d, it is His gift to us, no matter what earthly circumstances
may bring (i.e. the famine in this week’s parsha). To truly walk in the ways of the
Lord, one must first stop harboring hatred towards others. Rav Shaul (Paul)
commented on love that is quite interesting in *1 Corinthians*.

90 ***1 Corinthians 13:1-7***

*13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have
love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 13:2 If I have the
95 gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have
all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
13:3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender
my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. 13:4
Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is
not arrogant, 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is
not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 13:6 does not
100 rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 13:7 bears all
things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

The motivation behind writing this week’s parsha is the result of what I saw that
was said in a messianic chat room this last week. It really hit me how much scorn
105 some messianic believers have towards Christians who celebrate the birth of
Yeshua on December 25th, followed by the laughter, the insults, and the ridicule.
It was said, quote: “Christians are like computers, they don’t do what you want
them too.” That kind of attitude is a display to everyone that observance of the
Torah is not an act of divine worship but rather that of self-promotion. Rather
110 than observance of the Torah leading to love their neighbor, it leads to scorning
their neighbors who fail to live up to their expectations. Observance of the Torah
is nothing but a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal if there is no love (*1 Corinthians
13:1*). Loving your neighbor with mercy, patience, and charity, we may love the
Lord through them. Our every loving act towards our neighbor becomes an

115 expression of our love for G-d. Has this been lost in the messianic community? I shudder to think that it just may be.

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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