

Yom Kippur 9

By the Grace He Supplies

(The Parable of the Talents)

Shelem — Today I was thinking... I actually train Derusha's daughter for her and Derusha does my laundry for me and Yedidah is in the kitchen for me. We all do those things for one another. I remember when I was in the world I was so alone because I didn't have any friends I could really rely on. If I wanted something done I had to go and pay somebody and I never knew whether I could trust them to be honest, to do a good job, to not charge me too much money. I couldn't find anybody I could trust. I always wished I had friend who was a mechanic and I wished I had a friend who was a plumber. I wished I had friends that I could trust and I wouldn't have to go and pay. It's all wrong in the world; I don't want to live there. Now here I've got my friend who's a plumber, my friend who's a good cook, friends who are musicians, my friends who do the laundry, and we're hoping our friend who's an electrician will be saved too. So we'll have our friend the electrician here with us and he'll be able to serve us and we'll be able to serve him, train his children and help him. We don't have to be worthless because we all serve one another with the gifts we have. We might not think doing the laundry is such an important job but I used to want to pay somebody to do my laundry because I was so busy working in a horrible job for 40 hours a week so I could hardly keep up with my own laundry. As I look around [having sung "Abiding in the Vine" with our arms entwined] I'm just so thankful that we can serve one another and see our Master in one another and hold each other up — making a circle of unity and keep abiding in Him.

Nun — I was reading 1 Pet 4:10-11 and it says just what Shelem was talking about — using our gifts. Something spoke to me about how our gifts and grace are meant to work together as verse 10 says, "as each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." This is what Yoneq was saying the other day. When Yahshua ascended on high He took those that were captives with Him and set them free and then it says He gave gifts to men. In Eph 4:8 it talks about the gifts: apostles, prophets, teachers, etc... for the equipping of the saints for the building up of the Body. Obviously, He's dispensed certain, special gifts to us and then he says *employ* it in serving one another.

The gifts that He's given us are to be employed in servitude within the Body, but *only* through the manifold grace of God. We have to be empowered by His grace to use those gifts effectively, because those gifts alone can actually destroy. They are actually destructive apart (alone, separated) from the manifold grace of God.

Manifold means various component parts making up a whole, many kinds or multiple varieties all together, performing several functions at once, all encompassing or inclusive, nothing lacking, the fullness of something. The New English Bible says, "Whatever gift each of you may have received, use it in service to one another, like good stewards dispensing the grace of God in its varied forms." His grace is essential if our gifts are to function normally together (as a unit). We've received it now and must employ it. We don't employ the gift, but we employ the grace given to us.

The manifold wisdom and grace of God is here in the Body. It's been dispensed to us. If I don't have the particular grace that may be needed to help someone in a situation then I can at least go and get it from someone who does have the grace. That is, of course, if I'm discerning the Body properly. Others may be better equipped to handle some situations than I can. This way the Body functions normally. No part is out of bounds, straining to do something that can only be supplied through the grace of another part in the Body. So we employ our gifts with that in mind. All the grace we need is in the Body if every part is connected to the Vine. It is only with that grace (not apart from it) that the Body is built up.

Then in verse 11 it goes on to say, "Whoever speaks let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God. Whoever serves let him do so by the strength that God supplies." It's not by our own "natural" strength or will power that we serve in the Body, but by the grace that God supplies in accordance with our faith. I saw that if we're not receiving grace, then it doesn't really matter what our gifts are. It's not going to serve the Body or build the Body up if I'm going on without grace. Rather, it will tear the Body down. You'll be out of control. You won't be working together as a unit. You'll be out of joint — disconnected (like a dislocated shoulder). Whatever's out of joint causes everything to be uncoordinated — dysfunctional.

He's made us stewards over the manifold grace of God. He's given us gifts, but what are gifts without the grace to employ them — to use them properly? He's given us grace to accompany our gifts. Then we can serve. But if we don't have that grace, then we can't serve. We won't have

any confidence to speak or teach or serve or do anything. The Body will be lacking oil and vitality. We'll be lagging behind in growth. But with grace it's like we have a thrust of energy. We push forward and grow. This is what happens when we are all receiving grace to do our part in the Body. *Grace* is what *energizes* our gifts.

Talents (Mt 25:15)

That's one of those places in the epistles that explains some of the things our Master said in the Gospels (Mt 25:15). He's talking about the gifts and talents in this parable. It says that people have received a certain amount of talents according to their own ability. Some have received 2, some 5 and some 10. You have to employ that talent and it energizes your gift. Without the grace your gift is of no avail, because it's not going to build up and strengthen people if it's not done by His grace. That's what talents means.

Talents are grace. Talents are not gifts or abilities. Webster had a misunderstanding of the word talent when he defined it as gifts or natural abilities. Talents are graces that are given according to a man's natural gifting. Talents are spoken of as grace in Rom 12:6. A person should exercise his gifts, according to the grace he's been given. We have to be responsible with the talents given us. That is what we received when we became disciples. We've always had our natural gifts. We were born with them, but you weren't born with the grace. That requires a relationship with our Father. Grace can only be imparted to us when we receive the Holy Spirit and are then filled with the Holy Spirit. Then we can use the grace to energize (employ) our gifts — our natural abilities (Mt 25:15-30).

When the servant didn't use the grace given him, but buried it, that wicked and lazy servant was cast into outer darkness. That doesn't mean he was going to the Lake of Fire. It meant that he was deserving of death, because he didn't employ or use his grace wisely. Maybe you have a gift of evangelism, maybe you have a gift of helps, maybe you have a gift of wisdom, discernment, or a gift of working on different places or things, a gift of order, but without the grace for doing all these things, all you have is a gift that

dominates others. It can't possibly be utilized properly because it's without the grace to activate it and cause it to work in conjunction with others. Someone like this seeks to glorify himself.

What if Yatsaq has a gift of horticulture, but just does it by his own raw natural abilities? Does it glorify God? It says in 1 Pet 4:10 if we do it by the strength He supplies (the strength is the manifold grace, the added power to do something) then it gives Him glory — it builds up. It says to let him serve by the talent he's received, that he's been given, which he is responsible for. Then if we do it by His grace, then our Master is going to be glorified. So, so many times we work in our own strength and it tears down. We just do it for our own glory. But if we're doing it by the grace He supplies, then it's going to bring HIM the glory, because He's the one imparting the grace to us. He's given us His grace and we have to use it. It's really good to understand that, because talents are the grace and faith we have to exercise our gifts.

Don't think too highly of yourselves. It starts out in Rom 12:3 saying, "Don't think too highly of yourself, but only in accordance with the measure of faith each person has." So if you have a gift, use it in proportion to the faith you've received. We really have to understand the word "proportion." If you have a gift you can't use it any other way, but in proportion to the faith you have. Read it, Yotham, through verse 6-8.

Yotham — "If prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith. If service, in proportion of his faith. Or he who teaches, according to the proportion of his faith, etc."

So you can see that the gift is exercised (energized and employed) in proportion to the faith which is given. Then the Body can really function properly and grow up in every aspect. So do we understand now a little more about talents?

"That man really has a lot of talent. Look at how he plays the piano." That shows how the word *talent* is misused in the world; but that's not the proper understanding of the word, is it? He has a natural gift of playing the piano, or singing or doing things. There are so many people in the world with natural gifts that should be employed in the

Body with grace. Music, for example, without grace added to it, only communicates the flesh, but with grace, our praises ascend and our Master is glorified. I want to tell you what the word *talent* really means.

The word *talent* in the Strong's Concordance is #5007 (with reference to #5006) and means supporting weights or a balance — well-balanced (as a man of the Spirit would be).

There must be a “balance” between the natural abilities and the spiritual abilities (or grace). The master in Mt 25 gave his servants a certain amount of talents according (or in relation) to the servants' own natural ability. There was a balance between the talent(s) with the servants' own capabilities naturally. There can be no grace or spiritual ability added to “nothing” or supporting nothing. There has to be something already in a person to work with before a certain spiritual grace can be given to him. Our Father bestows talents in conjunction with a person's own natural inclinations, his makeup and abilities. The grace or spiritual ability is added to and “supports” (energizes) a *natural gift*. The grace (talent) turns the natural gift into a spiritual gift of the Spirit — like conversion. The natural body becomes a servant to the spiritual body. The Spirit is now in control of the whole body and soul (1 Cor 6:17).

A balance is the natural and the spiritual working together in harmony. Natural abilities need spiritual power to build up the Body of Messiah (1 Cor 3:10-15). Natural strength alone is hay, wood, and straw (1 Pet 4:11). One must be careful how he builds. The Body of Messiah can't be built with hay, wood, or straw — which is natural ability alone. It's only the flesh and the flesh profits NOTHING. Only what is done in the Spirit will last and endure the testing, which in turn produces gold, silver, and precious stones.

The leaders (Heb 13:17; Eph 4:11) must be careful to never allow those who have natural ability to function in the Body without the spiritual grace added to them; otherwise, it will ruin (destroy) the temple (1 Cor 3:17). All the sheep have to be “adjusted down” (in Greek) or readjusted (Eph 4:12) in order to produce more favorable, abundant fruit (Jn 15:5,8). We can't have all the evangelists who have the

spiritual graces inappropriately placed. So who is in sin — the leaders or is it the sheep? A shepherd's whole life and purpose is to solely watch over and direct the sheep. He is to give encouragement and vision for their lives (Heb 10:24; 3:13; 12:15).

The word *watch* actually comes from watchmen, which actually means “to lose sleep over.” So you can see how vital and necessary the shepherd's life is to all those under his charge. This is why there is accountability. With responsibility comes accountability.

Eventually (once a foundation has been laid, around 2-4 years) people must start being appointed according to Eph 2:10. A person's spiritual grace(s) becomes much more evident after that initial time in the Body and the need becomes apparent for them to be set aside so they can attend a more specific task. Each member has to walk in the works prepared for him or her.

At the Judgment Seat of Messiah the leaders must give account for every person they have misplaced. No one is to be overlooked. That is one of the primary reasons the responsible brothers meet together weekly: in order to discuss the crucial elements of each person's life in the Body. When someone is appointed to function according to Eph 2:10 it may even require prayer and fasting in certain situations.

This would be, as an example, a case as when Paul and Barnabas were sent out as apostles to preach the good news of Messiah. The leaders (Eph 4:11), in council all together, having prayed and fasted, determined what God's will was for these men. They sent them out in the power of the Holy Spirit. All were in absolute agreement, having recognized the spiritual graces and abilities of these men. According to the leading of the Holy Spirit, they were sent out to accomplish a specific task. This is what they were to walk in and works would follow in keeping with how they were prepared to function according to God's purpose. Everything is according to a person's natural and spiritual giftings (Rom 12:6).

The apostles, prophets, evangelist, shepherds and teachers (in council together) must set aside those prepared for certain tasks to function the way they were created to

be. If people are misplaced it will bring about the downfall of the Body. The leaders hold the major responsibility and oversight for such matters in the Body (Eph 4:12). This is how the Body will grow in love and mature in stature comparable to Messiah.

Glory is weight, worth and value. It has substance. You feel the weight of someone who has glory. Hay, wood, and straw is feather light in comparison and are worthless, since they burn up easily and turn into ashes. Ashes don't count for anything. How much value would you place upon ashes? Ashes are worthless.

Bynah — The flesh profits nothing.

That's right, the flesh profits nothing. A lot of people can speak, but you better not be speaking in the flesh, because it could be sorcery. You start speaking in the flesh and pretty soon you start getting praise and recognition. Then another spirit comes to you and you start speaking by that spirit. This spirit empowers you as you are speaking, and more and more you begin receiving glory. That spirit has found a home in you and then you become a sorcerer.

That's how the Nicolaitan system came into the first church and they took over. We've got to be careful that we're speaking by the Holy Spirit. Make sure that if anyone speaks it is the very utterances of God. It will bear fruit. It will show people how they should live. God is speaking to us, giving us direction and wisdom (insight) so that we can live this life and won't fall away and depart from really giving Him the glory and honor. He will be the One who receives the praise in every way. That's what it says in the last part of 1 Pet 4:11. It's really important that we read the last part of the verse. Speaking in the flesh doesn't bring that glory to Him, but only if He is speaking through us.

If we serve, we must make sure we're serving by the grace He supplies. If we're serving by His grace, we're not complaining. We're not wishing that we were doing something else. We're not saying, "Oh, I've got to do this all the time." We're serving by the grace that He provides, the strength that He provides.

It goes on in Mt 25 and says if we are without that grace (we bury it) after a while you start thinking He's a hard taskmaster. You bury your talent and don't use it. You might be using your gift, but since there is no grace to go beyond the natural ability, you start thinking, "This is too hard; He's expecting too much from me." If you complain, you're obviously thinking God is a hard taskmaster. But it's because you aren't receiving any grace. So you stop serving altogether. You contribute nothing to the Body. You make no investment in the Body. That's who is thrown into outer darkness. We must employ our gifts by grace and call upon the grace that we've been given.

Israel — A wicked slave is someone who says that our Father is not supplying him grace. Before I thought that it was that He hadn't given him any abilities. But He has given him abilities and he might even know that he has abilities, but he says his Father is not supplying him enough grace. Such people say, "He's a hard taskmaster" and decide it's too much and they harden and close their hearts off to His grace in their own life. They bury it. But it's not that they didn't have any abilities. It's that they weren't willing to humble themselves and receive the grace.

So much is done by a person's own natural ability. But it comes to nothing, really.

Nun — The reason you start accusing God, saying "He's a hard taskmaster is"... well, just think what it's like in the Body when the demands are on you to employ your gift, but you don't have any grace. You're just in the flesh, gutting it out, trying to supply those needs in your own natural strength. That's what's really hard. It's not that He's a hard taskmaster. The word "hard" is not even a good word. It's impossible. You're not using the grace which is meant to accompany your gift. So you just get exasperated, so frustrated. That's what's really hard, you feel like you're being whipped like a slave in Egypt.

The problem is in ourselves because we're not going to the throne of grace and confessing our sins. We aren't pouring out our heart to Him and pleading for the grace that He supplies so we can accept the demands upon our life which help the Body grow. He has all the manifold grace we need. The manifold grace is to be used in our serving. We need that grace to do anything that profits. The flesh doesn't profit at all.

If we go on without grace then we'll just start resorting to our natural abilities to cope with the demands. That's the flesh. You may get away with this at first, but after a while the pressure continues to increase

and build up. Everything seems so hard when you don't have grace. Your proper judgment gets distorted. The needs continue on in the Body so you either have to judge yourself and repent or end up striving to do it all apart from Him. Often times we justify ourselves, saying, "These demands are too great which are coming upon my life." Then we get a critical eye towards others, and point the finger, dividing from people in our heart, and all the while excusing our wicked attitude towards God. We feel we have a right in being passive or judgmental and bury our talent. We may think it's not fair what is expected from us — that God is too hard on us. But we're in the flesh. And when you're in the flesh everything is bleak. The demands upon our life cause us to either cry out for the grace or we end up harboring resentment and maintain a resistant heart towards the needs in the Body.

But the talent is the grace we need to face every situation. He gives some 1, 5, 10, all in accordance with the faith they've received — along with their natural abilities. So, since He's given us grace in proportion to our faith we have no excuse. If complaint ever starts coming out of my mouth, I can judge it quickly. I can know right away I've buried my talent. He doesn't want me to bury my talent and He doesn't want me to function on natural strength either. He wants me to use my talent along with my ability. He wants the Body to grow and mature. But I need to go to Him and use the talent He's given me and ask Him to empower me to be able to serve in His Body. He doesn't want me to tear down what He wants to build up. That would make me like a devil — an accuser. Trying to serve in the Body and build it up without grace is what's hard. It's impossible. We have to turn away from that accusing spirit — accusing God and blaming Him for our hard circumstances that make us see our daily need for grace. He's not hard. We're the ones that are hard. Without grace we get hard — we get a hardened heart. And we make it hard on the whole body and ourselves being in the flesh, draining everyone, being cut off from grace.

ha Qanai — It's really easy in the world if you have a gift to use your gift when you're ready to, how you want to, when you want to, and where you want to. You're still in charge of your gift. But when we come to our Master, we give it all to Him so He can use it when He's ready, when He wants to, how He wants to, and where He wants to. So in our life we can be called on like that at any moment, because people see that there's something in us that can be used to build up His Body. If you're in the flesh and you're living for yourself then you can dig your heels in just like you would have in the world. You still want control of it. But we've given

everything to our Master and He will use what's in us when He wants to for the building up of His kingdom.

I'm grateful that it does come out if we're living for ourselves. It can't be done if there's a limit. You can go on for a while but eventually you have to repent because we're not living for ourselves anymore, we're living for Him. So if you're not using those talents and you're just holding onto your gifts, it shows that you're living for yourself — just like you're used to controlling when and how you want to use it. But our Father knows how it should be used now. We give it to Him and He uses it when He's ready. And to do that, we need His talents, we need to use those talents. Then His yoke is not even burdensome — it's light, because you want to give yourself to Him.

Chen — The reason that slave in Mt 25 was wicked was because burying something is an active thing. He didn't just set it on the shelf and neglect to use it, but he dug a hole and stuck it in and covered it over. He buried it. He put it where you couldn't see it anymore. That's really a wicked thing. And that's why the judgment that came upon him was righteous. He was wicked. He was worthless. It makes me think of how our Master stands at the door and knocks when we're not connected — when we're out of fellowship. He's knocking. If we don't respond to Him then we're in the same place, just like that. We refuse to get up and open the door. It's an active thing. It's rebellious if we don't find the grace. He's knocking. He's doing His part to give us grace to do His will. But if we don't get up and get that grace, respond to the knocking... I mean He should never be outside the door, but if we don't respond then we're in the same place as that wicked slave. We're burying our talent. Judgment needs to come. It's good that judgment came to him. It's good that judgment comes to us, because we find ourselves cut off and in darkness, and even weeping if we don't respond. It's good.

We have Yahshua's heart now. Anything that militates against His heart, we have to cut off, crucify it, hate it, despise it — in order to keep His heart.

Hadashah — I'm so thankful that our Father's made it possible that we can become little children. Because I know we all came here with our heads full of all kinds of knowledge, of some sort, and opinions and experience full of functioning in our own strength and doing our own thing and carrying out our own will. But I'm thankful that He made it possible for us to junk all that rubbish and become simple little children who just want to receive from Him — who want to receive His knowledge, His wisdom, His

heart, His ways, His grace to function. We can do that. We can become little children. And I know it's only when we value what He has given us: value His grace, value the strength that comes from Him and value His heart, then we don't want to be filled up with anything else. We just want to get rid of the flesh, cut it off to be filled with Him. He said, "Woe to those who are filled up now for they shall be empty."

I know when we appreciate what He has for us: when He's knocking and He wants to come in, that He wants to give us that grace, then we're not going to hang on to all those things that have filled us in the past. We're going to let go of them and cut them off. I'm just thankful Yahshua went before us. He totally depended on His Father. He didn't do one thing in His own strength. We can follow in His footsteps and follow in His example and be children who totally trust Him.

Amen. A boy named Shaul grew up in the community. His father came into Island Pond. His name was Gene Sage (*Benaiah* now). And his son is named Shaul and he lives in Boston. He's married and has children. He's a construction worker (carpenter) and he climbed up on a ladder to a roof without grace and he fell off and about killed himself. His favorite song is "By the grace He supplies, we will follow Him; we can do nothing apart from Him..."

Isn't that wonderful he says that's his favorite song? He's learned to not even climb up a ladder without grace. He's learned to not trust in himself, to not be so familiar with things saying, "Ah, I can do it; I've done it a thousand times." He's a fantastic worker. He could just work in the flesh, and do all kinds of things, but he won't anymore, because our Father corrected him and disciplined him. Presumptuous is what it is — presuming. Our Father won't allow it. Our Father will only allow someone to do His work if they are receiving grace. It will be blessing for the edah.

Okay, let's give Him our thanks. If you have some, give it to Him. If you have praise, give it to Him. He's worthy. And we believe He's worthy. If you have it, give it to Him. He just wants what we've got.

Shaul can't do that much anymore, can he? He works in the office now. He fell a long, long, long way and he landed on his feet...

Amaz — He was coming down and he stepped onto the ladder and the little hooks that hold the extension gave way. The ladder that was leaning up against the roof fell away and he fell down on the driveway — 22 feet below. He barely missed the bulkhead that opens up to go to the basement by something like two feet. That would have killed him instantly. The metal doors would have cut him right in half. He broke his femur on this side and crushed his left ankle.

This is the very thing that Rev 3:3 talks about. You don't know the hour that He's coming. Read it. He came upon him right then. He was probably just working in the flesh. He didn't say, "Father, give me grace today. I need you. I can't do anything without you. I need your help, your strength today. Protect me."

And he just kept on until the hour came upon him.

Write Shaul and talk to him about this. Tell him how much we all learned from his life and that we're thankful that he can do nothing apart from Him. It could have been the same for any one of us if we, too, go on in the flesh without crying out for grace. We're going to sing it tomorrow morning for him.

That's why it says, "Father, don't lead me into temptation." Some people are led into temptation to show them where they are, so they could fall. They couldn't do anything about it. Our Father would allow us to get into a situation in our lives where He'd have to show us that we were in the flesh. He would lead us into temptation where we could fall. God doesn't lead anyone into temptation, but He leads us to the place where we can be tempted — like He led Yahshua into temptation to be tested.

God wasn't doing the tempting, but He led Him where Satan could tempt Him in order that He could overcome Satan. Certainly, it says we should pray that we wouldn't be led into temptation, because we might not be able to take it. Shaul could have been dead right now, but our Father preserved his life. His discipline was for all of us so we wouldn't have to be disciplined. We all learned by his discipline — the sin of presumption. Look up the word *presumption* sometime.