

The Way Up is Down

We sang "Creator of All"...

David Zerubbabel — It stirs my heart to sing about the determined flight of the salmon rushing upstream, going back to its source. It's instinctive in the salmon to go back to its source. It won't give up. It brings this picture to my mind of a big brown bear waiting with its mouth open and a salmon leaping into its mouth. That's one of the things they have to face. And they hit that waterfall and fall back down a hundred times and just go back and try again until they've ascended. When they first started back, they didn't know what they'd be facing. It was easy coming down the river.

We are in the last days, and it's going to get harder and harder. It's not going to get easier and easier. But our Master said that he who endures to the end will be saved. That's the promise that we hang on to. He who endures to the end will be saved. We've been hearing in Eph 4 about how that happens. It's not rocket science. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Sovereign, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

It's not by being proud of being such a strong swimmer that you're going to get up that stream, but it's going to be with all lowliness and longsuffering, and trying to help your brother get up the river, beseeching your brother to cry out to the only One who can save. That's how it's going to happen. It's not going to happen any other way. The salmon is a wonderful example for us.

The salmon do not instinctively know all the hardship they're going to have to face. They say the appearance of the salmon changes as they head up the stream. They look very determined as they begin up the treacherous course, beating their heads against the rocks. They continue just beating and beating and beating and beating until they can find a pathway up the stream. And then they finally find a way.

The salmon leap up the waterfalls and keep on going up and up. All of their little bodies get totally bruised and bloody from encountering difficulties the whole way up. Then they reach their goal. They are home! Then they spawn. But they do not know that

just after they reach the top and spawn they are going to die. They go through all that and then they just die.

That's an amazing thing. Our Father stirred them to go back. After about three years out in the ocean, traveling up to 200 miles away, their instincts tell them to return. They had come down that same stream, and then somehow they come back to that very same stream. Sadly, some die on the way.

How could you help but know that there is a God? They go up to have offspring. Their offspring go out to sea and then they come back. It's so wonderful to be a part of that fight going upstream. Remember, it's not going to be easy.

Ne'eman — That song makes me think about the two witnesses — the witness of creation and the witness of the Body. Today Hakam and I came down here on an airplane. It was kind of cloudy on the ground and looked like rain. But when we got up above the clouds, I was awestruck. It was incredible to see clouds upon clouds with the sun shining upon them. Before the modern age, this kind of scene was there, but nobody had ever seen it, except our Father. It was like another world, like a glimpse of an eternal kingdom. He wants to fill the universe.

Our Father wants to make the edah a light that would astound people, that they would be awestruck by our life — our singing and dancing, our love, peace, and joy, the visible, tangible demonstration of His Body. I was just as awestruck when I walked into the Vine House in the early days of the edah as I was up in that plane this morning. I couldn't believe that there were people who would have that kind of love and peace, and that I could be part of it.

Our Father wants to restore that witness of our Master Yahshua on the earth, people filled with the Holy Spirit, who forgive each other, that we would bear with each other and go down low, and not hold grudges but forget our injuries.

He'emin — The awesomeness of us living together and loving one another is so much greater than the highest mountains and the most beautiful sunset. It makes you want you to go through all the pain to make that witness come about. What else are we living for? People try to find that peace in the woods and in the mountains, but you can't find it there. Our Father created us and He knows what we are capable of. He knows that we can love one another with the Helper that He's given us.

Sameach — I was reminded of a time when my son was little, and he was sick and really needed me. He was crawling on the floor and just stretched his hand out to me, and I couldn't help but go down to the floor with him and just hug him. Our Father loves how we need Him. He loves it when we confess our sins. I was quick to respond to my son. Immediately, I went down on the floor and put my arm around him. How much more does our Father turn to us when we finally turn to Him? He doesn't get tired of us turning to Him, and we don't get tired of being our brother's keeper, of helping each other.

Neshef — It's so impossible what the salmon do, traveling 200 miles and leaping up the waterfalls, but then man puts up concrete dams hundreds of feet high. It's like the evil one, how he puts these dams in our life, but our Father hears our cries and gets us over those dams. He doesn't just say, "Oh, well, there's a dam there. Those salmon can just go up another river, or maybe they'll just all die." But He helps bring them up. He can even speak to natural man about putting up ladders for the salmon. Then they produce offspring and give up their lives. We're like those salmon, and the life He's given us will fill the whole earth someday. I'm just so thankful that He doesn't just tell us what to do, but He helps us do it.

ha-êmeq — That's because He is our shepherd, like it says in Psalm 23. I am a shepherd now, too. I have a little flock of three goats. I understand that this is not a religious thing. It's heavy to carry three goats. It demands a lot. But it says Yahweh is the great shepherd of Israel, and He never sleeps. When I walk over there and the goats just look to me, I just love it. They hear and they look up, and they come, as if to say, "My shepherd!" They need a shepherd.

You can never take a vacation if you are a shepherd. I can't say, "You goats have to just not exist for one day so I can rest, because I'm really tired." There is never a time when our Father doesn't love His sheep. He's always caring for them, always feeding them. Now I understand why our Master said to those wonderful men, "Feed My sheep. Kepha, what are you doing going fishing?" Like Migdala, I'm so thankful she's feeding my little flock now. I used to have to do everything, but then she came along, and we said, "Could you possibly help?" And now I look out and I'm so thankful when I see her feeding my flock. Just think how vast my flock can be now, because I have a human being who will actually feed my sheep for me.

Our Master said, "Kepha, do you love Me? I've got this burden..." Do you know how hard it is for God to save men? It is the hardest thing for

Him. He has this incredible burden to save pitiful human beings. “Kepha, do you love Me? Take care of My sheep for Me.”

Of course, Kepha said, “Do I love you? I love you *so much!*”

“Then what are you doing out there, doing your own thing? Do you love Me? Feed My sheep.”

At 6:00 AM I look out there and there’s Migdala. I don’t have to worry. She’s there. She loves me. She feeds my little flock for me. And now they just run to her. They just love to hear Migdala’s voice. She doesn’t run off. She’s not a hireling. I don’t have to go look for her because she is off shopping. She loves our Father’s purpose.

It’s our Father’s heart in us. He wants to save people, but who would feed them if it wasn’t for our hands? What if Ishah Ruth just wanted to take a vacation? We’d all be hungry. Our Father would say, “Feed My sheep,” and there would be nobody. But she’s there.

I’m so thankful for that volunteer heart of our people. “Do you love Me? Then take on My character,” which is this ever-present shepherd. We’re here for Him. We’re His hands. It’s not some mystical thing, “The Lord is my shepherd...” You get a real hand when you put out your hand like Sameach said.

Hakam — What I saw this morning in the airplane was more glorious than any imagination I ever had about the glory of the heavens. We got on the airplane at dawn. There were so many clouds. The sun was coming up in the east and we were looking toward the west. It was such a glorious light filling the sky. It went on forever, just cavern after cavern of glorious light filling the sky. It was like what you might imagine about the city of God, something eternal filling the universe.

Our Father knows human beings can’t see that. If it wasn’t for that airplane, all they’d see is clouds and rain. Our Father knows that human beings cannot see that glory. What a marvel it is that He sent our Master Yahshua, His Son, to bring His glory to earth, which is far beyond what we saw this morning, and find a way where that life could go into us. He put into us the glory of the One who holds it all together, and we are to demonstrate His kingdom, with all its glory, because His Spirit has been poured out in our hearts.

That is what produces what ha-êmeq talked about. When someone reaches out for help, there’s a hand that goes all the way down and reaches out and takes that hand. It makes you want to give everything. It doesn’t matter how many rocks you hit, how many injustices we might have to

experience because of each other's imperfections. It's the hope of being able to have that spirit and bring it to others in a way that will produce the culture of our Father.

Enduring to the end is enduring in loving our Master Yahshua, and obeying Him in a way that produces this culture. When the world sees that love, that is the witness of the kingdom that everyone thinks so mystically about. But the reality of it is in our ability, by the love that's been poured out in our hearts, to endure with each other. Those who endure in that love to establish that culture and see it grow into a great nation, they'll inherit everything. That's what we're living for. There isn't anything else worth living for. If we lose sight of that, we've lost sight of everything. We're just lost if we don't see that.

Aquila — I remember one time, probably ten years ago now, when Sameach said, "It doesn't matter how long you have been in the Community. What matters is whether there is grace upon you." I will never forget that. I want to cry out for grace and be like that salmon, and the way we are going to get to our destination is by Jn 15:8. He said, "Abide in Me, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

The salmon fights and fights and fights, but if it just decided it was too tired, it would instantly start floating back downstream. It is the same with us. We can give ourselves for years, but as soon as we give in to our flesh, we start going back downstream, wasting our Father's time. All the strength we exerted to make it as far as we did is wasted. It just made me want to be violent to fight and not give any ground to the evil one. I want to fight until the day I die.

The bears don't go after the ones that are floating downstream. They go after the ones that are flying up. Likewise, the evil one doesn't need to oppose those that are floating downstream, he attacks those that are swimming upstream.

Eph 4:2 is our calling, our occupation, living as a disciple of our Master Yahshua. The first thing it says is not, "bear with one another," or, "be gentle with one another," or, "be patient with one another." The first thing it says is that you have to go down very low. I don't know whether we have all risen to how low we are supposed to go. In order to do all those other good things we have to arrive there, we have to go up to that low place where there is no strife in us. The way up is down. You can't bear with one

another, you can't see past their shortcomings if you are not completely humble and full of grace. Let's just learn and understand that. It says with *complete* lowliness.

We have to be with our Master. We can't be against Him. Whoever is not with Him is against Him (Mt 12:30). Whoever is not with Him 100 percent is against Him. If we are not building, we are tearing down; if we are not loving, we are hating, which is destroying, and whoever destroys the Body will be destroyed. It is our obligation and our duty to our Master Yahshua to love one another and be *with* Him. King Asa was told, "Don't ask whether God is with you; ask yourself whether you are with Him. He is with those that are with Him."

Netsak — I know sometimes we are swimming with all our might and all our strength, and we just keep running into something or someone even, but if we go all the way down, that is the only way to get to the next level. There is still another obstacle, but at least we are on the next level. Sometimes I hit that same rock day after day, and then someone talks to me, and I see how I'm not being humble, and I humble myself and I go to the next level...

The way up is down. The reason the wise virgins go up is because they go all the way down. And the reason the foolish don't go all the way up is because they don't go all the way down. "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that He may raise you up in due time." Don't have a higher estimation of yourself than you ought.

Hakam — This is the way that our Father is teaching us. It is what is going to fulfill our Father's heart. When our Father gets a people who learn that way, the glory that is going to be revealed on this earth is going to be something that men have never seen — the culture of our Father. That culture is never going to end. Everything else is going to come to an end, but this way that we are learning will never come to an end.

It is like the yeast in the dough, it just keeps rising and rising and rising. I don't think you can ever fill the universe, but we are going to try. There is no end to eternal life and there is no end to eternal destruction.

Derush Yadon ben Chayil — I am thankful for everything we heard. I remember coming to Florida when I was 13 years old, it was sunrise as we

were flying into Tampa airport. The sun was just coming up over the clouds, and it was amazing. I had never seen a Florida sunrise, and I remember being in awe at that. And I remember when I met Yônêq and he brought me home for lunch, and I remember walking in the door and being in awe at what I saw. And then I remember getting baptized and having forgiveness, and I remember being in awe at that. But when I heard the news that God humbled Himself, that the Almighty said, “I need you,” that was the biggest awe. It is amazing...