

## The Big *IF*

**ha-êmeq** — This morning, we heard a saying that we learned years ago: “Emptiness results when uniformity masquerades as unanimity.” It’s an empty husk. There are no kernels inside when uniformity masquerades as unanimity. Uniformity makes you think of *uniform*, as when everyone puts on a uniform and they are all marching together with their uniform on. It may look as if they have unanimity. The word *unanimity* is a form of *unanimous*, which is composed of “*un*” from the Latin *unus*, meaning *one*, and “*animous*” from the Latin *animus*, meaning *mind*. So *unanimity* is the state of having one mind.

But *uniformity* means having one outward form or shape. You all have the same kind of clothes on. When people are wearing uniforms they look as if they’re all one, but then at the end of the day, they’ll take off their uniforms and put on whatever they really are. Then you see that they all have their own different flavor. You really see the real person once he takes his uniform off. One of them wants to dress like a punk, and one wants to dress like a rock star. So you see it was just a uniform. They weren’t really soldiers, or Wal-Mart employees, or whatever their uniform was. It was just a uniform.

Our Father has given us a mind about how we ought to dress. If we had a chance to switch over to some other style, then you would see that it was only *uni-form-ity* and not really unanimity. But we have a mind about why we do things. We have an understanding of what modesty is and what would be a light to the nations without being weird — beautiful but modest. It’s not just my uniform; it’s my unanimity. It’s *my* mind because it’s *our* mind.

Anything else is just a masquerade, for example if you look at those wheat kernels, they look just like wheat kernels, but if you press them, there’s nothing in there. There’s no nice, fat kernel in there. It’s just a uniform. It’s just an empty husk.

2 Sam 24:18 says, “And Gad came that day to David and said to him, ‘Go up and erect an altar to Yahweh on the threshing floor of the Jebusites.’” So the altar was set right there on the threshing floor, just as we’ve always said, “The Community is a threshing floor.” This is where we worship, but this is also where something happens. When our Father puts pressure on our lives, the good is separated from the evil within us. This is the meaning of the word *thresh* — to separate the grains or seeds from the

husk and the straw by beating the stem. The *stem* had to be beaten! The wheat had to be separated from the chaff. When the threshing process was complete, only the pure wheat was left. The pure wheat from the harvest remained only after the threshing process was complete.

The threshing process is going on right now in our midst. And some will have so little glory that they will blow away, and others who have weight and depth of meaning will stay.

Why did God say, “David will never lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel”? David will never lack a man! But they *did* lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel! What happened? Why did our Father say that? But then I found this:

*Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, and said, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, **if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.**’” (1 Kng 8:22-25)*

You see? There’s the *IF*. That was a conditional promise, wasn’t it? That’s so wonderful. In the same way, Col 1:22-23 applies to us, doesn’t it? There’s a big condition there about entering the Kingdom:

*... He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him, **if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard...** (Col 1:22-23)*

There’s the big *IF*. And we’re right here in the middle of the threshing floor. We’re keeping that *IF*, which Solomon *didn’t*. At first, he was praying with all of his heart, but didn’t continue. So David’s throne lacked a man, didn’t he? He never had anyone to sit on the throne. It passed away just as we said last night. It blew away.

I am so thankful for the threshing floor. Isn't it wonderful that there's an *IF* there? There won't be any *empty husks* in the Kingdom — *none!*

**Neshef** — I was thankful to hear that the weight that we have increases if we're obedient. We can't say, "I want to be weightier; I want to have more glory," and get it, but we receive that glory as we are faithful to what we have heard. It's not climbing Mount Everest. It's giving thanks and being true to your word and cleaning the bathroom and picking up your tools and returning them when you borrow something. It's those little things that everyone can do. It's not too hard for us.

### **Standing before the Tribunal**

By this we stand: Parents are responsible to bring their children up in the right way, the way that they should go (Eph 6:4; Pr 22:6). Our Father holds the parents responsible for the upbringing, training, and education of their own children (not the grandparents, not public schools, not the state, not youth groups, not peers or friends). Even though parents may have to stand before the tribunal of this world because of it, they know they have a greater tribunal they have to stand before some day. Therefore, we are going to be able to stand before the world's tribunal, and say, "I am responsible for my children. I am responsible for home schooling them, and I am *not* going to send them to public school. I have to answer for that someday. I will be judged on it!"

That's in our conscience, and if we stand that way before the tribunal, they can't do anything. They should say, "We don't want to go beyond this person's conscience." If we have conviction, we'll stand that way. Then we'll be able to stand before the tribunal of our Master at the judgment someday. That's the greater tribunal, the greater judgment. If only we could let them know that, "No, sir, I am not going to do it!" It's just like the man at the car boot sale when we were in England. ha-êmeq asked, "Are you sure this juicer works?" and he said, "I have to live with my conscience for the rest of my life. I am not going to sell my soul for two pounds."

We are not going to sell our soul just to compromise with the state, to relieve the pressure. We have to stand before the greater tribunal, the greater judgment. They can do whatever they want. They can put us in jail, they can lash us, they can do anything. But we have to stand before a greater tribunal, and we are going to stand *there*, and be able to stand. Stand!

We have to answer to our Father for the way we've raised our children. Sending one's children off to public schools to be trained and inculcated with the world's philosophies will be disastrous. On Judgment Day, we will have to stand before Him. So we must have conviction. That's how we have stood so far, because we had conviction. So far, we've had conviction, and they can't do anything about that, though someday they might.

*Stand, therefore, with the truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest and your feet sandaled with the good news of God. (Eph 6:14-15)*

**Sho'er** — As ha-êmeq shared in the beginning, an empty husk results when uniformity masquerades as unanimity. If we don't have conviction, then we are going to try to be uniform, but we're not going to have unanimity; we aren't going to have one mind, and we aren't going to have one heart and one soul. We would just be going along in some kind of a form.

The Community is the threshing floor. Mk 4:17 says, "... and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. After, when tribulation or persecution arises for the Word's sake, immediately they stumble." If we are not here with all of our heart, that ox is going to trample, and that winnowing fork is going to toss us up, and we are going to blow away. We are not going to be able to endure.

Without pressure you really have nothing. Diamonds are made from pressure. You have all this carbon, but without intense pressure you don't get a diamond. Our Father wants a precious people. He wants a return on His investment, but it is not going to come without tremendous pressure. And when the persecution comes, then you find out where your conviction really is. Or even when the times of ease come, you might find out where your conviction really is. But wherever it is, our Father is going to test us.

We need to check ourselves to see whether there is anything in us that has a different opinion, or a different mind that would destroy what

our Father is trying to build. A whole tribe could have a different mind, and then all of a sudden there is division, and everything that our Master Yahshua died for is jeopardized.

We have to be like Jephthah's daughter, Ishshah: "No, Father, you made a vow, you made a promise! Sacrifice me!" She had *conviction!* What would it have mattered if she had lived another 20 or 30 or 40 or 50 years, or 100 years? She died for that conviction. Can you imagine? What is going to be her reward? It didn't matter whether she lived 50 more years. What matters is that she was true to her convictions. She said, "No, Abba, you are not going to be *cursed* because of that vow!" She loved her father more than she loved her own life. I am so thankful for Jephthah's daughter. It's the greatest thing. Have you ever read about it? It is in the *Fatal Flaw* freepaper.

**Sameach** — The State of Vermont saw that we weren't just empty husks. They said, "There is something to these people!" It was what we believed, it was what we had learned, it was what we stood for, not just as individuals, but as a nation — even the small nation we were back then. We were in unity and it was powerful. We didn't even know how to articulate it, but they threshed the grain, and they said, "Wow! There is something to this."

When the enemy comes in like a flood, our Father will raise up a standard against them. But it is only an Israel that is praying, that is devoted to our Master, that He will protect. Then all the armies of the earth could surround one little clan, and our Father will raise up a standard against them. They will never be able to destroy us if we are His people and we are doing His will, *if* we love one another, *if* we are being obedient and raising our children right.