

Following our Master

Eldad — I was really thankful this week for what we heard about the upward call, and how it's greater than anything imaginable. We can actually be included in our Father's will, fulfilling His purpose. It is a lie in Christianity that God doesn't need you for anything. I am so thankful to be needed and to be part of what our Father is doing.

Shemiyah — This week Yônêq asked the question, "Did you encounter the gospel?" And he explained to us that an *encounter* is actually a conflict. When you're going about your life and you *encounter* something that you weren't expecting, it creates a conflict. You come upon something in your path and you can't get around it.

We all surrendered to the greater King. It was only an encounter until we surrendered. Chazaq was willing, so the gospel was good news to him; it was the scent of life. But his wife heard the gospel and it was the stench of death. Now how is the gospel going to smell to us every day? Are we going to take on the direction gladly, laying down our lives? Or are we going to encounter His will and have a conflict in our soul?

Neshef — The real gospel makes for a real encounter. You can't just add Jesus to your life. The gospel puts an end to your life. We had a teaching about refractory disciples — those who go around the encounter. But the greater King is the greater King, and it doesn't matter how great you think you are.

Zerubbabel — What makes it an encounter, causing the conflict, are the radical claims of the gospel. Chazaq's wife saw the radical life of having all things in common and surrendering your sovereignty, and it was death — giving up her little house, conveniences, and shopping trips. Our life is radical, getting to the root of the fatal flaw in humanity — selfishness. Our Master just called the rich young ruler on His own words, because he said he had kept the commandments since his youth. So our Master called him on Dt 15:4, "There shall be no poor among you." How could he have kept the commandments when he was rich while being surrounded by his poor brothers? Dt 15:7-8 creates the conflict.

The gospel's radical claims create the lifestyle of our Father.

Shoer — Yônêq said, "Possessions possess the soul of a man. How can this be overcome?" And that's when he started talking about the radical claims of the gospel, and the lifestyle it requires and produces. 1 Jn 5:12 says, "Whoever has the Son has the Life." Whoever has the Son is going to have that lifestyle. Whoever does not have the Son is not going to have that

lifestyle. He is not going to have the radical gospel that requires that lifestyle of a person, and requires him to give up all his own possessions.

Encounter doesn't mean a casual meeting, but rather a sudden, violent clash, a conflict of interests. Our Master and the rich young ruler engaged in a conflict of interests because of the radical claims of gospel and its lifestyle. To give up his possessions meant his life, because his possessions possessed him. To call him to give up his possessions meant to give up who he was, and to just fall in behind our Master and follow Him. He wasn't willing to do that, and that's why darkness and gloom came over him, which was like a foretaste of death. He walked away in that living state of death. It wasn't a chance meeting in Mk 10:17; he saw our Master leaving town and came running to him intentionally, and knelt down and asked him what he had to do to receive eternal life. Our Master told him what he had to do, but it wasn't what he wanted to hear.

There is no greater occupation than what we are doing. I am just thankful we are trying to do the greatest thing imaginable by restoring all things and bringing our Master back to the earth.

Zimrah — The rich young ruler just got depressed because he thought about himself and didn't press on to the higher calling. When I have time to think about myself that's what happens — I get depressed, because I'm not pressing on!

Barak — Pressing on means forward motion, and the spirit of depression has no resting place.

Migdala — Tsiy-Tsah's mother asked her what she should tell people when they ask what her daughter is doing. She couldn't say she is a lawyer or doctor, but Tsiy-Tsah said, "Tell them I am building the Kingdom of God on the earth." It doesn't seem so profound to a natural person, but it is really the most awesome thing. When you are building the Kingdom of God, everything is pressing. We never have time to be idle or putter around. We are always going, always pressing forward.

Havah — Enduring can't be done in spurts. You can't do it with occasional bursts of zeal. The only way we can endure is if we run all the way to the end. Ha-êmeq said that if someone just presses for a while and then gets tired and waits for another burst of energy, he is never going to make it. Our Father wants us to always have a steadfast love for Him. Otherwise we can't make progress. As soon as we stop giving, the evil one comes to us. But if we are always thinking about other people, we can overcome.

It's like the Climber, the Quitter, and the Camper.

Talmidah — The rich young ruler was too proud to call on our Master. Hameq described him as this rich man who saw this dusty Messiah on the road and just couldn't humble himself to get behind and follow Him. He couldn't see beyond our Master's simplicity. A lot of times when children play "Follow the Leader" they all want to be the leader. But we heard that pride is greatest detriment, and humility is the greatest virtue. That's how we can be humble: just get behind and follow our Master. My greatest occupation in the Body is to be a student and learn. I've learned so much this week, and that is why we are called the University of Yahshua. We really have a lot to learn and that keeps us humble. I'm thankful we could see past the dusty Messiah to see that He has the greatest treasure. He has Eternal Life.

Can you write an article about that? "Following the Dusty Messiah" In Mk 10:21, our Master said, "Come and follow Me, the dusty Messiah." A follower of Messiah will leave what he is doing and go somewhere else. An obedient disciple has to hate his life in this world. No one can be a disciple and follow our Master where He is unless he hates his life in this world first. The more we follow our Master, the more we hate our old life in the world. We hate the things we did with it. I hate to look at the factories and office buildings because that's what I once gave my life to. I hated my life in this world.

If we are qualified to be a follower of our Master Yahshua, we have to be in total absolute identity with Him, without any shame whatsoever, "proud to be a son of Jesse Goodman." That's the covenant we've made. We're proud to have His approval, which is the honor from our Father in Jn 12:26. We've got to be *there*, where He is. There are two great words: where and there. "*Where* I am, *there* My servant will be also, and whoever serves Me, *there* My Father will honor him." We are honored because we are serving our Master. If we stop serving, even though we are in the Body we aren't honored anymore.

To be His follower means following Him along the same path of misunderstanding. They misunderstood our Master Yahshua, and they are going to misunderstand us. We will encounter the same misunderstanding and rejection that He had to encounter continually. He was rejected by the elite religious leaders of the world,

the journalists, and the educators. He encountered misunderstanding and rejection. We have to encounter the same thing.

Mk 8:34-35 tells us what we have to do to follow our Master. We have to no longer live for ourselves. We have to have the same unshakable certainty He had. When He was baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon Him — the Dove — and He never flew away. A dove won't alight on anything unclean. Noah sent out a dove because he knew it wouldn't alight on anything unclean, but only fresh new growth (Gen 8:8-11). The Spirit empowered our Master for His mission, which His Father sent Him to fulfill (Isa 42:1; 48:16; 61:1-2). All those things our Master had to fulfill. He knew it. He read it. He was taught. He listened. He paid attention to the teachers, and He had to go out and be tempted as it says in Mk 1:12-13. He had to overcome the evil one continually.

We will face conflict continually. If we follow our Master, we are going to be thought of as our Master was thought of. The sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit is contrasted with all other sins. All other sins can be forgiven, but the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit can't be forgiven (Mk 3:28-29). You can see what happened there. The whole thing started in verse 22. A snap judgment doesn't necessarily constitute the unforgivable sin, but these scribes and Pharisees had watched our Master for some time. It was set into them. There was no way they could repent because the conviction that leads to repentance comes from the Holy Spirit, and they had ascribed the Holy Spirit's influence to evil spirits, so it was impossible for them to receive anything from Him. They had become immune to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Some people have come into the Community and lived with us for months, and they hear and hear and hear, and then they leave. They became immune; there is no longer any conviction there. That's not necessarily blaspheming the Holy Spirit, but it's saying the Holy Spirit has no power to convict. So they become immune to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Some of our neighbors could even become immune from over-familiarity. Normally, they would come and ask us about the hope they see in

us (1 Pet 3:15; 2:12). They see our behavior and are convicted, and then they are saved, while other people aren't.

So we have to give an account with gentleness and respect, otherwise they may reject our witness because of how we are. If we are not gentle and full of respect, then who is guilty? We don't go out and preach to our neighbors. They see our witness and then they start asking us. It is not like when we go to an event and we have to be pretty straightforward because we may never see those people again. But our neighbors we see all the time. So that is how we win our neighbors, wherever we are.

Also, we have to be very cautious about our own physical families. Mk 3:31-35 — Our Master Yahshua's spiritual family superseded His physical family. So many times we are almost possessed with that family spirit, the "kinfolk syndrome." Many people just can't seem to leave their secular family. It's not that we hate them, but we don't love them as much as our spiritual family. There is a man who came to our Master and said, "Let me first bury my father," but our Master said, "Let the dead bury the dead." David Zerubbabel's mother died and he decided not to travel across the country and get involved in her burial. His sisters were taking care of everything, and he was able to not offend them. He didn't just say, "I'm following our Master; I don't have time for you!" We don't treat our family that way. That is not the hate our Master was talking about. The hate He spoke of was not loving them as much as you love Him — not neglecting Him in order to cater to one's family in the world.

1 Jn 4:20 explains it perfectly. Everything in the scriptures is explained somewhere else in order to give understanding. You may not understand Lk 14:26, but then you look at Mt 10:37 and you see what He is talking about, and then you go to 1 Jn 4:20 and you see that hating is not loving. Love for our Master and His Body goes beyond everything, goes beyond your family. Chazaq loved our Master more than he loved his wife, so she had to be left behind because she was unwilling to follow him. He had to leave her totally or he would have had to drink out of two cups.

Mk 4:17 tells why so many people have left. Why does anyone leave? It says here why anyone would leave or stay. Why would they stay? Because their root went deep into the good soil, the marvelous soil, absorbing the nutrients of the soil. It didn't get stuck on a rock or anything that kept it from going down deep. In some who just made a profession, it didn't go down deep. As in Mk 4:17, they stumbled, fell away because of the hardships of all kinds that you might find in the Community. It is very essential we understand these things.

(Speaking to a guest) What if you are here and are never convicted and never surrender your life? What does Jn 3:18 say?

Guest — I know what Jn 3:16 says.

If you knew what verse 18 said, you might repent.

Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (Jn 3:18)

(To the guest) You can know the Bible, but it doesn't save you. Christians read the Bible through in a year, but it only condemns them more and more. The more you know, the more you think you see, the more condemned you are, because you don't obey it. Our Father wants to save you. He hasn't saved you yet. You've never before been encountered with the Holy Spirit. If you are encountered with the Holy Spirit, what do you do? Surrender to the Greater King. Your little ten thousand measly soldiers are not going to save you.

Shemiyah — A person in the world who misjudges the Spirit becomes immune to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. He can't hear from us, because the Holy Spirit isn't just floating around, but He's in a people. He sees us and he misjudges us to the point where he becomes immune to the conviction that Spirit can bring through us. When you said that I thought of how in the Body we can also become immune to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, if we misjudge the Spirit in the Body. It is dangerous for a person in the world to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, but it's also dangerous for us in the Body if we don't discern the Spirit in the Body. We can actually come to the point where we are immune to the conviction of the

Holy Spirit. That is what happened in 1 Cor 11:30, where many are weak and sick and fallen asleep. The Spirit can't convict them anymore because they regard their brothers according to the flesh.

He keeps on knocking and knocking until they can't hear Him anymore. They got immune, right? They never opened the door.

Shemiyah — You can even become immune to medication. And you can keep on learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth. And you can come into an encounter with the gospel many times, but if you never receive it into your heart you're going to become immune to it. You've denied its power.

Chattanooga is the buckle of the Bible Belt. Everyone is a Christian there, supposedly. But there is a place on Market Street where there were hundreds of Christian youth hanging out, doing all kinds of horrible, worldly things. But they were Christians. They walk the big, broad road that leads to hell. We are really going to have to be there to be a light to them. Some of them are looking for the truth.

ha-êmeq — I was thankful for how Yônêq brought back how the evil one has his diadem on, because it is a very vivid explanation of what is going on. If you aren't aware that the evil one has his diadem on, then you forget that he is planning on taking over.

If you look at those Christians it is an obvious contradiction. They are doing horrible things and they say, "What's wrong with this? This is how you reach people for Jesus."

The evil one is planning on taking over, and he is making good headway. The world is becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah. The evil one has his diadem on, and he is planning on taking over. And here we are — our little motley crew with our diadems on, and we're planning on taking over. Here we are — the weak, the lowly, the gentle, shy, and meek — all of us here are planning on taking over.

So, if I were the evil one, I would be prowling around here, circling the camp, getting as close in as I can, looking for any weak outsiders on the edge of the camp that I could manage to pick off. If I can't get the ones in the middle, at least I can discourage them enough by taking off all the outside ones. Like what happened this week [*several "brothers" left*] could have been so discouraging, and we could go bury our heads and cry because we had hope in all those people who didn't have any root in them. But our Master warned us about this, so we don't have to be discouraged.

When someone said that we hear the same things over and over again and we never get tired of it, I thought how it feels as if every time I hear something I have never heard it before. It feels as if I'm always hearing something absolutely new but from the same source. I'm hearing something new continually. It is really the same thing, but it seems totally new. Then I realized as Shemiyah was talking that viruses come and our body figures out the virus so that we'll never get that virus again. You become immune. And then the evil one or the virus maker makes one a tiny bit different and is able to infect you with it. But then your body figures that one out and you're immune to it, too.

So that's how it is with our Master in a positive way. We might start to become immune to what we're hearing over and over again, like, "Love one another," but we don't get immune to it because it always comes slightly different. Really, if we are hearing from the Spirit, it is always new — new every morning. It is really the same message, but it is given in a new way if we have ears to hear.

In the *Yellow Deli* days we used to underline our favorite verse, and mine was Phil 3:13-14. I was working on the "forgetting what lies behind" part. So now I've forgotten what lies behind and I've started pressing forward. It is an upward call where most people would say, "Give up, you can't do it." It reminds me of a child's story in the world about a dam that had a leak in it and a little boy was trying to hold back the water and everyone said he wouldn't be able to do it, but he had high hopes. It was something that was impossible to do. The point of such stories was to get little children to think positively and aim high and not give up. It could be you could accomplish something that it wouldn't seem as if you could do. People will say, "You've got pretty high hopes, little one." "Yeah, I've got high hopes, and I'm gonna keep pressing on that upward call." The only way he held that water back was by continuing to press. You just keep on with the little bit you've got and you can actually accomplish something so vast.

That is what the evil one is afraid of, because he knows we are just little, weak people, but we've got high hopes. We've got a really high hope and an upward call. All we are doing is just pressing with all our strength and somehow something's moving, though we are just the little weak ones of the earth. We are pressing against an evil kingdom that we want to bring to an end. We are responding to a call.

Zerubbabel — We are like the little seed pushing up through the asphalt. It keeps pressing until it breaks through to the sunlight.

Baruch — When I lived in Cambridge, I went for a walk down the street and came to an old seed factory that burned down. Once that factory was full of seeds, and the fire department blasted it with hoses and blew seeds all over the place. There is a big parking lot surrounding where the factory was, and there is lettuce growing up through the pavement! You feel bad because lettuce isn't supposed to have to crack through pavement. Lettuce is supposed to be placed lovingly in the good soil. But that lettuce encountered pavement — very rocky circumstances — but it kept pressing on until it found something beneath the asphalt to get its roots into.

The parable of the sower has so much wisdom for us. One seed encounters the rocky soil, one encounters the wayside, and another one encounters the birds. Some make it and some don't. Even if they are watered just the same, one might give up, but the other presses on.

Goats make the finest milk because they ruminate. They regurgitate and chew it and chew it and chew it until the whole body assimilates it. Therefore, we really have to chew our food.