



The Simplicity of Following...

Sheep grazing on a hillside in Tiberias, Israel - next to the Sea of Galilee

Photo by: Derek

Faith –

Volumes of libraries have been written about this one word. There are books, teachings, CD's, DVD's, YouTube videos, presentations and sermons on this one subject. Why is it so important, that even an entire movement that began in the 1960's was called, "The Faith Movement"? I am no scholar. I am no great Bible teacher. I do not possess a Biblical theology degree. However, what I believe Abba revealed to me recently, has given me an understanding of such simplicity, that I do not believe I will ever be the same again.

I will not be untruthful. The last six months have been a great challenge; full of obstacles, derailments, and sometimes...utter despair. The intensity of the matter, at times, has been more than I thought I could bear. There are times in our walk, this journey called salvation, that we feel alone, abandoned and forsaken. However, what we feel and the reality of walking with the Master, sometimes doesn't equate.

On the eve of my birthday, I want to share with you something I feel that only those who are much greater in maturity and age than I, should ever be privileged enough to possess – the understanding of simple, childlike faith. When we see through the eyes of a child, the One who leads the way before us, a great comfort becomes our security so much so that we do not even realize the great horror of existing outside of that comfort.

Through some deep discussions I have had with Rivkah lately, there have been some things that have come out of them which have brought me much peace. I am not much of a talker and did not really speak until about the age of 4 years old. Those that know me, know I am a quiet person, one of a great reflection and few words. The enemy has used this to nearly destroy most of my life. Unlike some I know, who have no problem externalizing their inward conflicts – I am quite the opposite.

However, It is what Abba has shared with me that has opened the door for me to see that there is great freedom on the other side; but I must walk through the door to experience it.

If you ask most people (those at least who have read some of the Bible), what the great faith chapter is, most would probably come back with Hebrews 11. Yes, this is a chapter about the great heroes of faith, describing the product of those who have gone before us and walked a life of faith, yet the greatest chapter on faith, in my opinion, is Psalm 23.

Faith is not something that we could ever create or muster up within ourselves, for which of us have ever started our walk with steadfastness and an unwavering solidity? Faith begins with the Author of faith, Elohim Himself. Faith is a

gift from Him, a gift that requires assembly AND batteries.

We must act upon the gift He has given us, regardless of size, because if we do not, what we possess will be removed from us and given to someone else who has done something with their gift.

Why is Psalm 23 considered the ‘faith’ chapter when the word faith is not even mentioned in any of the verses?

Because without following, the destination will never be reached.

The Shepherd never meant for this walk to be difficult, for it is through following His leading that we are counted faithful. Our journey through this life is about following the Shepherd from one pasture to the next, without fear of being forsaken, forgotten and abandoned.

In the ancient culture of the East, the shepherds intimately knew their flocks of sheep and the sheep knew their shepherd. The sheep would gladly follow the voice of the shepherd, even if it meant crossing rivers. The defenseless sheep knew no fear, for the shepherd knew well how to defend, provide, nurture and care for them. The sheep had one task and one task only – to follow the shepherd.

Throughout the Scriptures, the [shepherd – sheep] analogy is used so often that we should not examine the Scriptures through the eyes of complexity but through the eyes of simplicity. For in studying the relationship between the shepherd and his flock, you will gain an understanding far surpassing that of any “theologian”!

The Shepherd is One we must follow; not just know 'about'.

Simplicity does not mean a lack of maturity, for maturity is knowing the importance of simplistic childlikeness. As Rivkah recently said, it is a balance to become mature in your belief while exercising complete childlike simplicity.

Our measure of faith is not dependent upon the size granted us but upon our willingness to yield to and follow the One who alone remains faithful. For how can we know what faith looks like if we have no example of faithfulness to follow?

Abram was called to leave one pasture and follow the Shepherd to another pasture (Genesis 12:1). He had no idea where he was going, but through his obedience (his following), he was brought to the place he and his descendants would inherit (Hebrews 11:8).

Abraham was a human, who, like us, made many mistakes. Why then is he called the father of faith? Why was his belief counted to him as righteousness and why was he called a friend of Elohim?

As I pondered these things in my heart, the following words came to me.

“We are counted faithful when our following becomes as unwavering as His leading.”

It is in our following that we act in faith; our actions counted as righteousness –

Psalm 23...

- Yahuweh is my Shepherd; I do not lack (*I have no wants for He knows how to lead and I know how to follow*)

- He makes me to lie down in green pastures (*I do not have to find the pastures myself, for He leads me to them to lie and rest in His abundant provision and peace*)
- He leads me beside still waters (*Agitated and loud flowing rivers frighten me, thus He brings me near to quiet and gentle streams so I may quench my thirsty being*)
- He turns back my being (*Though I may stray and get lost, He knows where I am, finding me, bringing me back into His loving care – restoring my soul*)
- He leads me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake (*Though I must walk along narrow paths to find the next pasture, I do not fear, for not one of my feet slip, nor will I fall because His Name is riding upon His ability to keep me secure*)
- When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me (*I have no fear, no doubt, that Your faithfulness will lead me to places of safety – taking great comfort in Your rod and staff for they keep me on the path of life and deliver me from those who would destroy me*)
- You spread before me a table in the face of my enemies (*Though ravenous wolves and thieves surround me, I will continue to graze knowing full well You are in control*)
- You have anointed my head with oil; My cup runs over (*Though I may be injured along the way, bearing thorns in my flesh, Your oil soothes my wounds and brings me healing to the point that I am better off after my wound than before it*)

- Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life (*It is You I follow, and it is Your kindness and goodness that bring up my rear guard – You are my Leader and Your actions of goodness and beneficial kindnesses surround me, enwrapping me about – protecting me from those who would snatch my being away if I lag too far behind You*)

- And I shall dwell in the House of Yahuweh, to the length of days! (*You have provided me with Your sheepfold, in Your house do I find great pleasure in dwelling, for I am safe, secure and nourished by Your hand. I am home, wherever You are, whatever the length of days measured out for me - I will rest in You*)

Proclaim these words again and again!

In learning the ancient customs of the Eastern shepherders and their relationship with their flocks, you can begin to understand the incredible parallels between them, the Great Shepherd and His little flock – His children.

It wasn't until recently, that what has been a great burdensome load I have been carrying, was lifted off. Abba is doing something in me, letting me know that what has kept me bound in sadness and despair most of my life is now being released.

I do not know how many people this message will reach, nor will touch – because when you are going through something, you think that no one else in the world is going through what you are. But, for those who have been in the battle, many of you from childhood, I leave you with a word that came to me last night. I will generalize it because it is very personal to me.

This morning I awoke with such freshness, light and newness that it has to be the one thing Abba revealed to me last night as Rivkah and I talked.

Only He knows how to bring us back to Himself, when we finally realize our job in life is to simply follow His leading. For the grave place my being was at – He clearly showed me this:

“It's just another pasture the Shepherd decided to stop at, to allow his sheep to graze”

Only He knows the impact this has made upon me already.. For I have tried to lead, when my only place was to follow.. Where I am, is just another pasture He has led me to, and my only requirement is to graze upon what He has provided - living contently under His leading and control.

Real freedom comes through simple following...to rest in knowing I do not have to decide what pasture is best for my sustainment...

In great humility from beside the still waters,

Shabbat Shalom,

Derek