

50 Days of Prayer

A Devotional Guide for
Fasting, Praying, and
Reading Scripture during the
counting of the Omer



50 Days of Prayer

At Restoration, we have made it a priority to seek God first in prayer. During this season of counting of the Omer, we have decided to do this collectively as a congregation in the days leading up to Shavout. Together, we want to trust in His power to impact our lives, our congregation, our city, and our world.

For 50 days, we will focus on fasting, prayer, and reading God's word together as a community. We will ask Him to bring life change to us and our families. We will also ask God to use Restoration to bring people to know Him, and to give us opportunities to share the Good News of Yeshua with anyone who will listen! Most importantly, during this season we will seek Him to bring about a spirit of unity among us, one that will empower us to move forward together as we seek Him to bring restoration and salvation to all who call upon the name of Yeshua.

Here are some basic kinds of fasts:

COMPLETE FAST

This fast calls for drinking only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

SELECTIVE FAST

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, or bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

PARTIAL FAST

This fast involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 am to 3:00 pm, or from sunup to sundown.

SOUL FAST

This fast is common for those who do not have much experience fasting food, who have health issues that prevent them from fasting food, or who wish to refocus certain areas of their life that are out of balance. For instance, someone might select to abstain from using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast, and then choose to carefully bring that element back into their life in an orderly fashion at the conclusion of the fast.

The traditional prayer for beginning the counting of the Omer follows:

I am prepared and ready to perform the affirmative command to count the Omer, as it is written in the Torah, “and you shall count for yourselves, from the day after the day of rest, from the day you bring the Omer as the wave-offering, seven complete weeks shall there be; Until the day following the seventh week shall you count 50 days; and you shall bring a new-meal offering unto Adonai.”

“Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to count the Omer.”

***NOTE: ALL OF THE PASSAGES USED IN THIS DEVOTIONAL ARE FROM THE TREE OF LIFE VERSION (TLV) OF THE SCRIPTURES!**

April 11 at sundown - Day 1
Today is day 1 of counting the Omer
Today is day 1 out of Egypt
Today is day 1 of Messiah Resurrected

A New Hope (Matt 28:1-9)

The Son Is Risen!

1 Now after Shabbat, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week, Miriam of Magdala and the other Miriam came to look at the tomb.

2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of Adonai descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

4 And those keeping watch were shaken for fear of him and became like dead men.

5 But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know you are looking for Yeshua who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

7 Go quickly now and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead. And behold, He’s going before you to the Galilee. There you will see Him. See, I have told you!”

8 They quickly left the tomb, with fear yet with great joy, and ran to bring news to His disciples.

9 And behold, Yeshua met them. “Shalom!” He said. They drew near, grasped his feet, and worshiped Him.

10 “Don’t be afraid,” Yeshua said to them. “Go tell My brothers to head for the Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

Reflect:

Miriam and Martha went to the tomb in a state of mourning. Their Lord had been unjustly executed, and crucified on a cross as a criminal. His dead body was hastily thrown into a tomb with not even enough time to prepare His body for a proper burial. Can you imagine the gloom they felt? The pall of death had ushered in a sense of finality that all they had hoped for was lost. I'm sure they supposed that seeing Yeshua's dead body would be like placing a period at the end of a very depressing sentence.

Have you ever felt this way—that your negative circumstances always have the same hopeless outcome? Do you feel this way about your struggles with addiction, with depression, with your marriage or career? Have you lost hope? Friends, if this text shows us anything it is that with God there is ALWAYS hope! When God's resurrection power raised His Son from the dead, He gave us a new hope, one that even had mastery over death. As they left the tomb "with great joy," He met them and encouraged them to not be afraid... Their Lord had risen; death itself could not extinguish the hope Yeshua wants to give us when we put our trust in Him. He wants us to take hold of the hope we have in Yeshua and allow it to transform the areas of our life where we feel defeated. Tapping into this hope will bring victory in our lives and glory to God!

Prayer: Lord during this fifty days of counting the Omer let us be expectant that You will renew our hope. Help us experience the hope we have in Yeshua. Allow it to transform the areas of our life where we feel defeated. Remind us that we have a never-ending supply of hope that is available to us for the asking! Amen.

April 12 at sundown - Day 2
Today is day 2 of counting the Omer
Today is day 2 out of Egypt
Today is day 2 of Messiah Resurrected

Why Count the Omer? (Leviticus 23:9-22)

9 Adonai spoke to Moses saying:

10 "Speak to Bnei-Yisrael and tell them: When you have come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you are to bring the Omer of the firstfruits of your harvest to the kohen.

11 He is to wave the omer before Adonai, to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the Shabbat, the kohen is to wave it.

12 On the day when you wave the omer you are to offer a male lamb without blemish, one year old, as a burnt offering to Adonai. 13 The grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil—an offering made by fire to Adonai for a soothing aroma. Its drink offering with it shall be a quarter of a gallon of wine.

14 You are not to eat bread, roasted grain, or fresh grain until this same day—until you have brought the offering of your God. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

15 "Then you are to count from the morrow after the Shabbat, from the day that you brought the omer of the wave offering, seven complete Shabbatot.

16 Until the morrow after the seventh Shabbat you are to count fifty days, and then present a new grain offering to Adonai.

17 You are to bring out of your houses two loaves of bread for a wave offering, made of two tenths of an ephah of fine flour. They are to be baked with hametz as firstfruits to Adonai.

18 You are to present, along with the bread, seven one-year-old lambs without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They will become a burnt offering to Adonai, with their meal offering, and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to Adonai.

19 Also you are to offer one male goat for a sin offering and a pair of year-old male lambs for a sacrifice of fellowship offerings. 20 The kohen is to wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before Adonai, with the two lambs. They should be holy to Adonai for the kohen.

21 You are to make a proclamation on the same day that there is to be a holy convocation, and you shall do no regular work. This is a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. 22 "Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap to the furthest corners of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Rather you are to leave them for the poor and for the outsider. I am Adonai your God.

Reflect:

Why should we count the Omer? This Jewish holiday is planted in the calendar between Passover and the Fall Festivals for a very specific reason: all Israel was to rejoice over the harvest of the good things God had given them in the Land He had promised to their forefathers. It is a time of celebration for the year's harvest and recounting God's past faithfulness. Along with thanking the Lord for the first fruits of the harvest, the people were to take care to remember the poor and the foreigner among them. When God provides us with abundance, we must take care to remember to show compassion to others. James 1:27 reflects this: "Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world". The Father wants us to be a blessing to those who are in need. When we do this, we are honoring God and truly aligning ourselves with the desire of His heart: to care and provide for others just as He does for us.

Prayer: Lord, please help me to remember that there are those who are oppressed and lack basic provisions. Pour out your blessings on those who desperately need provision, and bring justice and relief to those who need it. Show me what I can do to show Your compassion to the people you bring into my life. Amen!

April 13 at sundown - Day 3
Today is day 3 of counting the Omer
Today is day 3 out of Egypt
Today is day 3 of Messiah Resurrected

Putting down roots (Psalm 1:1-6)

1 Happy is the one who has not walked in the advice of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of scoffers.

*2 But his delight is in the Torah of Adonai, and on His Torah he meditates day and night.
3 He will be like a planted tree over streams of water, producing its fruit during its season. Its leaf never droops— but in all he does, he succeeds.
4 The wicked are not so. For they are like chaff that the wind blows away
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand during the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
6 For Adonai knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.*

Reflect:

Every plant needs roots to live. It is how they stay in the ground, how they draw nutrients from the soil, and how they stay hydrated. The deeper their roots go, the stronger the plant is and the more likely it is to survive droughts. Here in Psalm 1, King David is writing of the kind of person who puts their trust in the Lord, one who reveres God and keeps His way. He likens them to being like a tree whose roots grow deeper despite life's difficult seasons because they are "planted" by a never-ending source of sustenance. God wants our roots to grow deeper and for them to be as strong as they can be. This happens when we seek Him in prayer. The deeper our prayer lives, the deeper our roots go; we become a people who bear fruit not just for ourselves to enjoy but for the sake of the community God has planted us in (Restoration).

Prayer: Lord help us to have more devoted and focused prayer as we count the Omer. We desire to know you better and trust you more. Show us how to understand your ways and to love others the way you love us. In Yeshua's name, Amen!

**April 14 at sundown - Day 4
Today is day 4 of counting the Omer
Today is day 4 out of Egypt
Today is day 4 of Messiah Resurrected**

Bringing It All Into Focus (Isaiah 58:1-14)

Fasting and Tzedakah

*1 "Cry aloud, do not hold back! Raise your voice like a shofar. Tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.
2 Yet they seek Me day to day and delight to know My ways, as if they were a nation that did right, and had not forsaken their God's decree. They ask Me for righteous judgments; they delight in the nearness of God."
3 "Why have we fasted, yet You do not see? Why have we afflicted our souls, yet You take no notice?" "Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and exploit all your laborers.
4 Behold, you fast for strife and contention and to strike with a wicked fist. You should not fast as you do today to make your voice heard on high.*

5 *Is this the fast I have chosen? A day for one to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and spreading out sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to Adonai?*

6 *"Is not this the fast I choose: to release the bonds of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to tear off every yoke?"*

7 *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the homeless poor into your house? When you see the naked, to cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh and blood?*

8 *Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will spring up speedily. Your righteousness will go before you, the glory of Adonai as your rear guard."*

9 *Then you will call, and Adonai will answer. You will cry and He will say, "Here I am." If you get rid of the yoke among you— finger-pointing and badmouthing—*

10 *If you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will be like midday.*

11 *Then Adonai will guide you continually, satisfy your soul in drought and strengthen your bones. You will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail.*

12 *Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins, will raise up the age-old foundations, will be called Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of Streets for Dwelling.*

13 *If you turn back your foot from Shabbat, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call Shabbat a delight, the holy day of Adonai honorable, If you honor it, not going your own ways, not seeking your own pleasure, nor speaking your usual speech,*

14 *then You will delight yourself in Adonai, and I will let you ride over the heights of the earth, I will feed you with the heritage of your father Jacob." For the mouth of Adonai has spoken.*

Reflect:

Fasting is often difficult. When we fast we can get headaches, our stomachs growl, and the lack of food can even make us lose focus on the reasons we are fasting in the first place. Here God tells us that if fasting becomes about *us* and what we are going through that we've missed the point! He wants us to abandon our self-focus and place our focus on His priorities. Verses 6-7 read: *"Is not this the fast I choose: to release the bonds of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to tear off every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the homeless poor into your house? When you see the naked, to cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh and blood?"* When we pursue God's priorities—then, and only then, can our fasting have real meaning.

Prayer: Lord, as I fast and pray, change me. Help me to be less focused on myself and more focused on your priorities. I want to help those that need help. Please show me how. As we fast and pray as a community, help us to continually be leading people who are far from You to Yeshua. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 15 at sundown - Day 5

Today is day 5 of counting the Omer

Today is day 5 out of Egypt

Today is day 5 of Messiah Resurrected

The Master's Plan (John 3:1-21)

A Pharisee Comes Seeking Truth

1 Now there was a man, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jewish people.

2 He came to Yeshua at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You, a teacher, have come from God. For no one can perform these signs which You do unless God is with Him!"

Yeshua answered him, "Amen, amen I tell you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus said to Him. "He cannot enter his mother's womb a second time and be born, can he?"

5 Yeshua answered, "Amen, amen I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not be surprised that I said to you, 'You all must be born from above.'

8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

The Father's Love Revealed

9 "How can these things happen?" Nicodemus said.

10 Yeshua answered him, "You're a teacher of Israel and you do not understand these things?

11 Amen, amen I tell you, We speak about what We know and testify about what We have seen. Yet you all do not receive Our testimony!

12 If you do not believe the earthly things I told you, how will you believe when I tell you about heavenly things?

13 No one has gone up into heaven except the One who came down from heaven—the Son of Man.

14 Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,

15 so that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life!

16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

17 God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

18 The one who believes in Him is not condemned; but whoever does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not put his trust in the name of the one and only Ben-Elohim.

19 "Now this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world and men loved the darkness instead of the light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, so that their deeds will not be exposed.

21 But whoever practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be made known that his deeds have been accomplished in God."

Reflect:

Nicodemus was a man searching for answers. As a Pharisee, he had devoted his whole life to studying the Torah. When he heard of the things that Yeshua was doing, Nicodemus personally came to Yeshua at night and let it be known that he believed that Yeshua was from God.

Yeshua, as he often did, turned the conversation on its head by being direct: you must be born again to see God. You must be born again so that you can live eternally in the presence of God instead of spending eternity outside of God's presence. Yeshua went even further; not only did one have to be born again; this was part of God's master plan from the beginning. Friends, this is a deep truth... The Father sent Yeshua not only so we could be born again, but also so we

could have eternal and abundant life right now if we believe in Him! This is Good News that everyone needs to hear... Let's pray for opportunities to live this truth out and share it with others!

Prayer: Lord, I want to hear from You like Nicodemus did. I want to know and live out Your master plan for my life. Help me to hear from You, to know You, to walk in Your footsteps, and to share Your Good News with the people I meet. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 16 at sundown - Day 6
Today is day 6 of counting the Omer
Today is day 6 out of Egypt
Today is day 6 of Messiah Resurrected

The Fear Spiral (Mark 5:21-37)

21 When Yeshua had crossed over in the boat again to the other side, a big crowd gathered around Him; and He was by the sea.

22 Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, comes. Seeing Him, he falls at His feet.

23 He begs Him a great deal, saying, "My little daughter is near death! Come and lay hands on her so that she may be healed and live!"

24 So Yeshua went off with him, and a big crowd was following Him and pressing upon Him.

25 And there was a woman with a blood flow for twelve years,

26 who had suffered much under many doctors. She had spent all that she had without benefit; instead, she grew worse.

27 When she heard about Yeshua, she came through the crowd from behind and touched His garment.

28 For she kept saying, "If I touch even His clothes, I shall be healed."

29 Right away the blood flow stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed from her disease.

30 At once Yeshua, knowing in Himself that power had gone out from Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

31 His disciples responded, "You see the crowd pressing upon You and you say, 'Who touched Me?'"

32 But He kept looking around to see who had done this.

33 But the woman, scared and shaking, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

34 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in shalom and be healed from your disease."

35 While Yeshua was still speaking, messengers come from the house of the synagogue leader, saying, "Your daughter is dead. Why do you still trouble the Teacher?"

36 But ignoring what they said, Yeshua tells the synagogue leader, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

37 He did not let anyone follow Him except Peter, Jacob, and John, the brother of Jacob.

38 They come to the house of the synagogue leader. He sees a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

39 After entering, He said to them, "Why make such a fuss and weep? The child didn't die, but is sleeping."

40 They start jeering at Him. But after sending all of them out, He takes the child's father and mother, and those with Him, and enters where the child was.

41 Then, taking hold of the child's hand, He tells her, "Talitha kum," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up."

42 Immediately, the girl stood up and began to walk around! (She was twelve years old.) And they were overcome with astonishment.

Reflect:

We all have our own agendas, don't we? Every day we wake up and have a plan for the day. For many of us, it's getting the kids off to school and heading into work to finish that project or achieve a sales target. Often God will interrupt our plans to reveal to us what He was has planned! I can imagine that Jairus was thinking time was of the essence and that Yeshua needed to come NOW. Instead of his daughter getting healed, someone else was instead. Can you imagine what he felt as this miracle happened? Perhaps he questioned why Yeshua had stopped to solve a mystery instead of saving his daughter. In moments like these when we don't see God acting as we'd expect, it is important that we don't allow ourselves to enter into a fear spiral. When confronted by situations like this, **we must remember that God is always in control. Always.** All circumstances serve His will! It is in these moments He will reveal His glorious power in ways we can't begin to understand.

Prayer: Lord Yeshua, please help us to trust You when we can't see what you're doing. Remind us that You're always in control, no matter how we feel. Show us that You are good and that we can trust You no matter what. Amen.

April 17 at sundown - Day 7

Today is day 7 of counting the Omer

Today is day 7 out of Egypt

Today is day 7 of Messiah Resurrected

Where You Go, I Go (2 Samuel 15:14-22)

David's Exodus from Jerusalem

14 Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or else none of us will escape from Absalom. Leave in haste or else he will overtake us quickly and bring disaster down on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

15 Then the king's officials said to the king, "Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses."

16 So the king set out, and his entire household followed him. But the king left behind ten concubines to take care of the palace.

17 As the king went out and all the people after him, they paused at the last house.

18 All his servants passed on beside him: all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites and all the Gittites—600 men that had come after him from Gath—passed on before the king.

19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why should you also go with us? Go back and stay with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place.

20 Your arrival was only yesterday—should I make you wander around with us today, to go wherever I may go? Go back and take your kinsmen back with you. Kindness and truth be with you!”

21 But Ittai answered the king and said, “As Adonai lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king will be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be.”

22 So David said to Ittai, “Go on and cross over.” So Ittai the Gittite passed on, with all his men and all the little children who were with him.

Reflect:

David was God's anointed king, but his son Absalom had staged a coup. The king was forced to flee, and those who were faithful to him went with him as well. Ittai was a Philistine from Gath, the same city that Goliath was from. Having just come into David's service, he chose to follow him into exile. Sometimes we have to make intentional choices when we follow Yeshua. Following Him will usually require a level of sacrifice! As I write this, I am sitting in a tent in Ethiopia, thousands of miles from my family with people whom I've never met. It's very hot; I've been up for a long time. I should be aggravated, but instead there's a joy that God has made available to me that is special. It cuts through the tiredness and exhaustion to reveal a new, fresh level of intimacy and friendship with God and the people He's called me to serve. Friends, is God calling you to a similar state of sacrificial living? I encourage you to go, because intimacy with God's and great joy are certainly waiting for you.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hear Your voice. I want to sacrifice my desires for Your plan for my life. Help me to know that Your plans for me are good regardless of my circumstances. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 18 at sundown - Day 8
Today is day 8 of counting the Omer
Today is day 8 out of Egypt
Today is day 8 of Messiah Resurrected

Stop Doubting and Believe! (John 20:19-29)

Yeshua Appears to the Disciples

19 It was evening on that day, the first of the week. When the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Judean leaders, Yeshua came and stood in their midst! And He said to them, “Shalom aleichem!”

20 After He said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

21 Yeshua said to them again, “Shalom aleichem! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

22 And after He said this, He breathed on them. And He said to them, "Receive the Ruach ha-Kodesh!"

23 If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; but if you hold back, they are held back."

24 One of the Twelve, Thomas called the Twin, was not with them when Yeshua came.

25 The other disciples were saying to him, "We've seen the Lord!" But he replied to them, "Unless I see the nail prints in His hands, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand in His side, I will never believe!"

26 Eight days later the disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Yeshua comes, despite the locked doors. He stood in their midst and said, "Shalom aleichem!"

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe!"

28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Yeshua said to Him, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed? Blessed are the ones who have not seen and yet have believed!"

Reflect:

Thomas was capable of both great devotion (John 11:16) but also skepticism (John 14:5). Aren't we all like this? Regardless of how faithful God has been to us in the past, when we are confronted with a situation that demands faith we instead choose to doubt. At moments like this, we need to remember Yeshua's encouragement to Thomas: "Stop doubting and believe!" There will always be moments when our trust in the Lord wavers but at times like these we need to exercise our faith and choose to believe instead of doubting.

Prayer: Lord help us to tame our doubt. We want to know You better and trust You more. Remind us that You are a God who can work miracles even in the face of death! Amen!

April 19 at sundown - Day 9

Today is day 9 of counting the Omer

Today is day 9 out of Egypt

Today is day 9 of Messiah Resurrected

DONT FOLLOW YOUR GUT! (Proverbs 3)

In All Your Ways Acknowledge Him

1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my mitzvot.

2 For length of days and years of life, and shalom they will add to you.

3 Let kindness and truth never leave you— bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

4 Then you will gain favor and a good name in the eyes of God and man.

5 Trust in Adonai with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear Adonai and turn away from evil.

8 It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.

9 Honor Adonai with your wealth and with the first of your entire harvest.

10 Then your barns will be filled with plenty, your vats will overflow with new wine.

Discipline as the Father's Love

11 My son, never despise Adonai's discipline or dread His correction.

12 For Adonai loves those He reproves, even as a father, the son in whom he delights.

Precious Pearls, A Tree of Life

13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding.

14 For her trade-value is better than silver, and her yield better than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than jewels and nothing you desire compares to her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand. In her left hand are riches and honor.

17 Her ways are pleasant ways, and all of her paths are shalom

18 She is a tree of life to those who embrace her, and blessed will be all who hold firmly to her.

19 By wisdom Adonai founded the earth. By understanding He established the heavens.

20 By His knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds drip dew.

21 My son, hold on to sound wisdom and discernment, do not let them out of your sight.

22 They will be life to your soul, and an ornament to grace your neck.

23 Then you will walk on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble.

24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

25 Have no fear of sudden terror, or of the devastation of the wicked when it comes.

26 For Adonai will be your confidence and will keep your foot from a snare.

27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.

28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back later— I'll give it tomorrow," when you have it with you.

29 Do not plot evil against your neighbor while he lives trustfully beside you.

30 Do not quarrel with a man for no reason —if he has done you no harm.

31 Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways.

32 For the devious are detestable to Adonai, but He takes the upright into His confidence.

33 Adonai's curse is on a wicked house, but He blesses a righteous home.

34 Though He scoffs at the scoffers, He gives grace to the humble.

35 The wise inherit honor, but fools are held up in disgrace.

Reflect:

When we hit a difficult time in our lives, many of us pick up the phone and call someone we know. As we "vent" (i.e. *complain*!), advice will come which may or may not be sound counsel. Or, instead of calling someone, we might just rely on our "gut" instinct, doing what we feel is best. In this passage, Solomon is advising his readers not to rely on their own understanding but instead to trust God. When we do, he will give us the wisdom, provision, and guidance we need. The book of James says: "He (God) gives wisdom liberally to all who ask for it." Let's seek His wisdom in our lives today.

Prayer: Father, please give me your wisdom. When I'm not sure what to do, show me. Help me to trust you more everyday. Amen.

April 20 at sundown - Day 10

Today is day 10 of counting the Omer

Today is day 10 out of Egypt

Today is day 10 of Messiah Resurrected

AS ONE (Ephesians 4:1-32)

Unity of the Body and of God

1 Therefore I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you were called—

2 with complete humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love,

3 making every effort to keep the unity of the Ruach in the bond of shalom.

4 There is one body and one Ruach,

just as you also were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one immersion;

6 one God and Father of all,

who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace was given in keeping with the measure of Messiah's gift.

8 Therefore it says,

"When He went up on high,

He led captive a troop of captives

and gave gifts to his people."

9 Now what does "He went up" mean, except that He first went down to the lower regions of the earth?

10 The One who came down is the same One who went up far above all the heavens, in order to fill all things.

11 He Himself gave some to be emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers—

12 to equip the kedoshim for the work of service, for building up the body of Messiah.

13 This will continue until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of Ben-Elohim—to mature adulthood, to the measure of the stature of Messiah's fullness.

14 As a result, we are no longer to be like children, tossed around by the waves and blown all over by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men with cunning in deceitful scheming.

15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all ways into Messiah, who is the Head.

16 From Him the whole body is fitted and held together by every supporting ligament. The proper working of each individual part produces the body's growth, for building itself up in love.

Put Off The Old, Put On The New

17 So I tell you this, indeed I insist on it in the Lord—walk no longer as the pagans do, stumbling around in the futility of their thinking.

18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance in them due to the hardness of their heart.

19 Since they are past feeling, they have turned themselves over to indecency for the practice of every kind of immorality, with greed for more.

20 However, you did not learn Messiah in this way—

21 if indeed you have heard Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Yeshua.

22 With respect to your former lifestyle, you are to lay aside the old self corrupted by its deceitful desires,

23 be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

24 and put on the new self—created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

25 So lay aside lying and "each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

26 *"Be angry, yet do not sin." Do not let the sun go down on your anger,*
27 *nor give the devil a foothold.*
28 *The one who steals must steal no longer—instead he must work, doing something useful*
with his own hands, so he may have something to share with the one who has need.
29 *Let no harmful word come out of your mouth, but only what is beneficial for building others*
up according to the need, so that it gives grace to those who hear it.
30 *Do not grieve the Ruach ha-Kodesh of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of*
redemption.
31 *Get rid of all bitterness and rage and anger and quarreling and slander, along with all malice.*
32 *Instead, be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other just as God in Messiah*
also forgave you.

Reflect:

One of the most important aspects of our lives as disciples of Yeshua is to remain in unity. In this passage, Paul is reminding the believers in Ephesus that God had called them to a unity that superseded their personal need. They were called as individuals who were made new creations who were to function as one. We can see a great example of this special, cohesive unity in the film *The Gladiator*. In the film Maximus is a betrayed general who escapes execution only to be sold into slavery to become a Gladiator. One of the film's great battle scenes occurs in the Roman Colosseum, where those organizing the "festivities" are going to reenact the battle of Carthage (149 BCE). Maximus and his companions were slated to play the role of the losers of that battle (Hannibal and his men); this meant they would face certain death. Just prior to entering the arena, they are given the counsel that they should "go and die with honor". Instead of shrinking back in fear and resignation, Maximus realized there were only two options; life together or death alone. He gathered his courage and spoke these words to his friends: "Whatever comes out of these gates, we've got a better chance of survival if we work together! Do you understand? If we stay together we survive!" As the scene unfolds, we see that those who followed his advice would indeed survive... Maximus led his men with courage, wisdom, and cunning strategy to a stunning victory over a much more heavily armed force. However, those who ventured off on their own were picked off by the enemy's archers and were eliminated before the real fight ever began! Friends, this is an incredible illustration of what we can achieve when we purpose to strive for unity. Through the example of Yeshua's life and His words, the whole purpose of His earthly ministry becomes clear... Not only did He come to redeem us from sin and death but also to make us one people with faith in the one true God. He wants us to share in the unity that He and the Father shared, a unity that is fueled by meekness, selflessness, and love. When we live this concept out and intentionally put aside our own agendas while seeking to meet the needs of others first, many lives will be dramatically transformed by the power of God's love moving through us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to be united as we seek You. Amen.

April 21 at sundown - Day 11
Today is day 11 of counting the Omer
Today is day 11 out of Egypt
Today is day 11 of Messiah Resurrected

Purified (Psalm 51:1-21)

Create in Me a Clean Heart

*1 For the music director: a psalm of David,
2 when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he went to Bathsheba.
3 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your mercy. According to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions.
4 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.
5 For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.
6 Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.
7 Behold, I was born in iniquity and in sin when my mother conceived me.
8 Surely You desire truth in the inner being. Make me know wisdom inwardly.
9 Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. 10 Let me hear joy and gladness, so the bones You crushed may rejoice.
11 Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
12 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
13 Do not cast me from Your presence— take not Your Ruach ha-Kodesh from me.
14 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.
15 Then will I teach transgressors Your ways and sinners will return to You.
16 Deliver me from bloodguilt, O God— God of my salvation. Then my tongue will sing for joy of Your righteousness.
17 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise.
18 For You would not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it, nor be pleased by burnt offerings.
19 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
20 In Your favor do good to Zion. Build up the walls of Jerusalem.
21 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices and whole burnt offerings. Then bulls will be offered on Your altar.*

Reflect:

In order to truly know who God is and to hear from Him, we need to acknowledge our sins before Him. When David wrote this Psalm, he was repenting for the sins of deception, adultery, and murder. While we may not have committed those sins in particular, we have all sinned and fallen short of God's standard of righteousness. When David realized that he had unconfessed sin in his life, He ran towards God because he understood the depth of His mercy. This is what God wants for us! When we realize there is unconfessed sins in our lives, we can turn to God and He will take them away. He will always be there to lovingly lead us to repentance and restoration. When we repent and ask for forgiveness, He will do both!

Prayer: Lord, I want to live free of the condemnation that comes with sin. What sins in my life have I not repented for? Help me to see them and give them to You. In Yeshua's name, amen.



April 22 at sundown - Day 12
Today is day 12 of counting the Omer
Today is day 12 out of Egypt
Today is day 12 of Messiah Resurrected

Child's Play (Matthew 18:1-14)

Childlike Humility

1 At that hour the disciples came to Yeshua, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 And He called a child to Himself, set him in the midst of them,

3 and said, "Amen, I tell you, unless you turn and become like children, you shall never enter the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whoever then shall humble himself like this child, this one is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoever welcomes one such child in My name, welcomes Me.

6 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who trust in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck and to be sunk in the depth of the sea!

7 Woe to the world because of snares! For snares must come, but woe to that man through whom the snare comes!

8 "And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. It's better for you to enter into life crippled or lame than, having two hands or two feet, to be thrown into fiery Gehenna.

9 If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. It's better for you to enter into life with one eye than, having two eyes, to be thrown into fiery Gehenna.

10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father in heaven.

(11) Where is 11?

12 "What do you think? If a certain man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, won't he leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go looking for the one that is straying?

13 And if he finds it, amen I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't stray.

14 Even so, it's not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost."

Reflect:

Humility. It can be a daunting word for those of us who want to follow after Yeshua. Here the disciples are questioning aloud which one of them would be the most famous. To understand why they were exploring this line of thought, it's important to understand the context. They were in Capernaum, which literally and quite fittingly translates to English as "village of the Comforter". Here we see our Comforter at work performing great miracles among the people as they were being healed and set free from demonic oppression. It is important to note that Capernaum was a coastal city known for its great wealth. They approached Him with the question, "who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven," because they saw elite, wealthy people being drawn towards Yeshua and must have felt starstruck by all the attention. They naturally assumed that since they were His "dudes" that they'd be rock stars! In response, the Lord brought a child before them. He did this in order to show them that: 1) authentic humility

free of personal ambition was the only way to even enter the kingdom of God, 2) if there was anyone God gave special attention to, it was children, and 3) humility is expressed by lives that have departed from sinful behavior and practiced radical (by human standards) forgiveness. We must, as disciples of Yeshua, remember to exercise humility as He explained it in our lives. It will take forgetting ourselves, putting our own agendas aside, making the needs of others (especially the littlest among us) a priority before our own, and being intentional in fleeing sin and practicing forgiveness.

Prayer: Lord, we want to make it known that You are the greatest among us. Help us to remember that we need to be humble like little children when it comes to our own agendas, our sin, and forgiving others. Please show our community how to live this way so that those who are far from God will see that it's Your example we're striving for and not our own. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 23 at sundown - Day 13
Today is day 13 of counting the Omer
Today is day 13 out of Egypt
Today is day 13 of Messiah Resurrected

Oh, NOW I Get It! (Matthew 16:1-28)

Religious Leaders Demand Signs

1 Now the Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Yeshua, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

2 But He replied to them, "When evening comes, you say, 'Fair weather coming, for the sky is red,'

3 and in the morning, 'Stormy weather today, for the sky is red and gloomy.' You know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times!

4 An evil and adulterous generation clamors for a sign, yet no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." And leaving them behind, He went away.

5 Now when the disciples came to the other side of the sea, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 "Watch out," Yeshua said to them, "and beware of the hametz of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

7 And they began to discuss among themselves, saying, "We didn't bring any bread."

8 But knowing this, Yeshua said, "O you of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?"

9 You still don't get it? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets of leftovers you gathered?

10 Or how about the seven loaves for the four thousand and all the baskets of leftovers you gathered?

11 How is it that you don't understand that I wasn't talking to you about bread? Now beware of the hametz of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"

12 Then they understood that He wasn't talking about the hametz in the bread, but about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The Father Reveals His Son

13 When Yeshua came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

14 They answered, “Some say John the Immerser, others say Elijah, and still others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

15 He said, “But who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Yeshua said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven! 18 And I also tell you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My community; and the gates of Sheol will not overpower it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will have been forbidden in heaven and what you permit on earth will have been permitted in heaven.”

20 Then He ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.

First Prediction: Death and Resurrection

21 From that time on, Yeshua began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and ruling kohanim and Torah scholars, and be killed, and be raised on the third day.

22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Never, Master! This must never happen to You!”

23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but the things of men.”

24 Then Yeshua said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to follow after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then ‘He will repay everyone according to his deeds.’

28 Amen, I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Reflect:

Many times Yeshua’s disciples didn’t “get” what He was trying to teach them. They were often too focused on the temporal, the here and now. Here in this chapter we see Him trying to get them to see things not from man’s limited understanding but from God’s eternal perspective. At first, they confused Yeshua’s warning about not listening to false teaching as essentially a rebuke for not bringing sandwiches to a picnic; they didn’t get what He was saying! Later, when discussing His eventual death and resurrection, **Peter begins to rebuke the One whom he had just identified as the Son of God!** In His answer to Peter’s rebuke, Yeshua characterized Peter’s temporal, humanistic line of reasoning as coming from Satan himself. The only cure to this spiritual blindness is clear—we must follow Yeshua, in all ways and at all times. The Lord’s command to “take up our cross” and to follow Him means putting God’s word at the forefront of our decisions and interactions with one another. We must acknowledge that our own will, our pride, and the belief that we know better than God are faulty ways of navigating this life and that only He knows what is best for us. We must surrender our lives back to the One who created us and then trust Him for the results. Carrying our crosses is a daily discipline, one that adopts a lifestyle of seeking the scriptures for His wisdom and guidance, with focused prayer, and commitment to active participation in a healthy community of believers. When we do this, we

wind up losing the worst parts of ourselves and becoming more like Yeshua! Instead of being creatures of sin, we will become spiritual beings that are renewed daily with newness of life and divine purpose.

Prayer: Lord, help us to take up our crosses and to daily follow You. We want to be more like You and to see our circumstances from Your perspective. Empower us with Your Holy Spirit so that we can become more fully devoted followers of Yeshua. Use us to bring revival to Restoration, to Seattle, to Israel, and to the whole world. Amen.

April 24 at sundown - Day 14
Today is day 14 of counting the Omer
Today is day 14 out of Egypt
Today is day 14 of Messiah Resurrected

The Barren-ness (1 Samuel 1:1-28)

1 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of the hill country of Ephraim— his name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

2 He had two wives: the name of the one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah was childless.

3 Now this man used to go up from his town every year to worship and to sacrifice to Adonai-Tzva'ot in Shiloh. (The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were kohanim of Adonai there.)

4 Then on the designated day Elkanah would sacrifice and give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters,

5 but to Hannah he would give only one portion—even though he loved Hannah—for Adonai had closed her womb.

6 Her rival would taunt her bitterly to provoke her, because Adonai had closed her womb.

7 So it was year after year, whenever she went up to the House of Adonai, that she would provoke her; so she wept and would not eat.

8 Then her husband Elkanah would say to her, "Hannah, why are you crying? Why won't you eat? Why is your heart so sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

9 After eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah got up. Now Eli the kohen was sitting on his seat by the doorpost of the Temple of Adonai.

10 While her soul was bitter, she prayed to Adonai and wept.

11 So she made a vow and said, "Adonai-Tzva'ot, if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your handmaid, remember me and not forget Your handmaid, but grant Your handmaid a son, then I will give him to Adonai all the days of his life and no razor will ever touch his head."

12 It came to pass, as she prayed long before Adonai, that Eli was watching her mouth.

13 Now Hannah was praying in her heart—only her lips were moving, but her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was drunk.

14 Then Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Get rid of your wine!"

15 But in response Hannah said, "No, my lord, I am a woman with an oppressed spirit! I haven't been drinking wine or beer. Instead I've been pouring out my soul before Adonai."

16 Don't consider your handmaid a wicked woman. For out of my great anguish and grief I've been praying until now."

17 Then Eli responded, "Go in shalom, and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you asked of Him."

18 "May your maidservant find favor in your eyes," she said. So the woman went her way; she ate, and her countenance was no longer dejected.

19 They rose up early in the morning and worshipped before Adonai, then went back to their home to Ramah. Then Elkanah was intimate with his wife Hannah, and Adonai remembered her.

20 So it came to pass at the turn of the year that Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She called his name Samuel, "because I have asked Adonai for him."

21 When the man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer the annual sacrifice to Adonai and to fulfill his vow offering,

22 Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "When the child is weaned, I will bring him, so he may appear before Adonai and stay there forever."

23 So her husband Elkanah said to her, "Do what seems best to you. Stay until you have weaned him—only may Adonai establish His word." So the woman stayed home and nursed her son until she weaned him.

24 When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with three bulls, one ephah of flour and a jar of wine, and brought him to the House of Adonai in Shiloh, while the child was still young.

25 After they slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli.

26 "It's me, my lord!" she said. "As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman that stood by you here, praying to Adonai.

27 For this boy I prayed, and Adonai has granted me my petition that I asked of Him.

28 So I in turn dedicate him to Adonai—as long as he lives he is dedicated to Adonai." Then he bowed in worship there before Adonai.

Reflect:

If we can learn anything from this passage, it's that prayer works. What's on display here isn't just a normal run-of-the-mill "thanks for the stuff You give me and by the way there's more stuff I need so if You could just make that happen, that would be great... Thanks and see You next time!" Hannah's prayer shows us that she was desperate to see God act in her life. She knew that only He could end her humiliation and replace it with the true joy she longed for. Hannah knew that God was just and believed that surrendering her heart and soul to Him was her only hope. On top of her personal circumstances, it is important to note that she was living in a time when Israel had essentially abandoned the tabernacle. Her culture had made God an afterthought! Instead of succumbing to the opinion of her culture, the insults of her adversaries, and her own barren circumstances, she pressed forward in seeking out the only One who could actually fulfill the desires of her heart. We must take into consideration how she asked; her prayer was one of intensity, one that was made with all of her heart. To top it all off, not only did Hannah ask God for His blessing, but she actually vowed **to give that blessing back to the Lord!** During these days of fasting and prayer, let us purpose to seek Him with this kind of intense, focused, and selfless prayer with the understanding that God will hear and act on our behalf.

Prayer: Lord, we are desperate for You to pour out Your spirit here at Restoration. Help us to pray for revival and restoration for those who are far from God. Help us to make

selflessness and focused intensity disciplines we pursue in our prayer lives. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 25 at sundown - Day 15
Today is day 15 of counting the Omer
Today is day 15 out of Egypt
Today is day 15 of Messiah Resurrected

“Go, and You Do the Same” (Luke 10:25-37)

Who Is My Neighbor?

25 Now a certain Torah lawyer stood up to entrap Yeshua, saying, “Teacher, what should I do to gain eternal life?”

26 Then Yeshua said to him, “What has been written in the Torah? How do you read it?”

27 And he replied, “You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

28 Yeshua said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.”

29 But wanting to vindicate himself, he said to Yeshua, “Then who is my neighbor?”

30 Yeshua replied, “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was attacked by robbers, who stripped him and beat him. Then they left, abandoning him as half dead.

31 And by chance, a kohen was going down that road; but when he saw the man, he passed by on the opposite side.

32 Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the opposite side.

33 But a Samaritan who was traveling came upon him; and when he noticed the man, he felt compassion.

34 He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then setting him on his own animal, he brought him to a lodge for travelers and took care of him.

35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him. And whatever else you spend, upon my return I will repay you myself.’

36 Which of these three seems to you a neighbor to the one attacked by robbers?”

37 And he said, “The one who showed mercy to him.” Then Yeshua said to him, “Go, and you do the same.”

Reflect:

In Israel, even to this day, Samaritains are discriminated against by both Jews and Arabs. The Israeli's are hostile towards them because they don't see them as being Jews despite their Jewish origin. Arab hostility is based on their perception that the Samaritans are Jews! These feelings of animosity are not the result of modern geo-politics; they date back to the time of Rehoboam, the Son of Solomon (1 Kings 12)! In this parable, it would have been easy for the Samaritan to look at the evil that had fallen upon the Jewish man in the passage and say to himself “not my problem”. Instead, we see the man act more godly than those who considered themselves the religious elite of their day by showing mercy, compassion and generosity to one who might not have shown it to him if the situation had been reversed. This is how Yeshua

wants us to act towards our neighbors *and* those who persecute us because this is how He would act towards us! It is in these moments we will experience an outpouring of His Spirit both to help us lay down our lives for our neighbors, and also to break our hearts of selfishness and self-centeredness. As we begin to undertake the service of others as a discipline, God will transform us into the likeness of Yeshua, making us more and more like Him every day.

Prayer: Lord, please help me to love the way You love, to serve others and to show mercy, compassion, and generosity towards even those who might persecute me. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 26 at sundown - Day 16
Today is day 16 of counting the Omer
Today is day 16 out of Egypt
Today is day 16 of Messiah Resurrected

We Are Better Together (Hebrews 13:1-21)

Brotherly Love in the Community

- 1 Let brotherly love continue.*
- 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers—for in doing so, some have entertained angels without knowing it.*
- 3 Remember the prisoners as if you were fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you also were suffering bodily.*
- 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.*
- 5 Keep your lifestyle free from the love of money, and be content with what you have. For God Himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you,"*
- 6 so that with confidence we say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What will man do to me?"*
- 7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.*
- 8 Yeshua the Messiah is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*
- 9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace—not by foods that have not benefited those occupied by them.*
- 10 We have an altar from which those serving in the tabernacle have no right to eat.*
- 11 For the bodies of those animals—whose blood is brought into the Holies by the kohen gadol as an offering for sin—are burned outside the camp.*
- 12 Therefore, to make the people holy through His own blood, Yeshua also suffered outside the gate.*
- 13 So let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing His disgrace.*
- 14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come.*
- 15 Through Yeshua then, let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips giving thanks to His name.*
- 16 Do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*
- 17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as ones who must give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no*

benefit to you.

18 Pray for us, for we are convinced that we have a clear conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

19 I especially urge you to do this, so that I may be restored to you sooner.

Closing Blessing

20 Now may the God of shalom, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep by the blood of an everlasting covenant, our Lord Yeshua,

21 make you complete in every good thing to do His will, accomplishing in us what is pleasing in His sight, through Messiah Yeshua. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Reflect:

We may not always know what God has for our individual next steps but we do know that His word gives us guidance and direction. During this 50 days of fasting and prayer, Hebrews 13 is an excellent summary of how to live in light of Yeshua's coming. Love one another... Show hospitality to strangers... Remember prisoners.... Reject sinful behavior... We should be observing each one of these precepts with all of our heart, soul, and strength. When we do this, God will unify us in a special way. He will show us that we were created to be one body, a people who were created to fellowship with Him and with each other. When we worship, laugh, cry, pray, eat, and essentially just live life together, God will faithfully bring us victory in every area of our lives and meet our every need. He will empower us to cross the threshold of what He has for us all, and we will lead others to know Him in powerful, life changing ways. This is what being better together is all about!

Prayer: Lord, I want to know what You have in store for me. Help me to live my life with more compassion for others. Let our services at Restoration be filled with an awesome sense of Your presence and bring many to salvation during this season. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 27 at sundown - Day 17

Today is day 17 of counting the Omer

Today is day 17 out of Egypt

Today is day 17 of Messiah Resurrected

#Winning (Romans 14:1-23)

Unity in Community

1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of disputes about opinions.

2 One person has faith to eat anything, but the weak eats only vegetables.

3 Don't let the one who eats disparage the one who does not eat, and don't let the one who does not eat judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

4 Who are you to judge another's servant? Before his own master he stands or falls. Yes, he shall stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person esteems one day over another while another judges every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 The one who observes that day does so to the Lord. The one who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and the one who abstains, abstains to the Lord, and he gives thanks to God.

7 For none of us lives for himself, and none dies for himself.

8 For if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

9 For this reason Messiah died and lived again, so that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you too, why do you look down on your brother? For we all will stand before the judgment seat of God.

11 For it is written,

*“As I live, says Adonai,
every knee shall bow to Me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”*

12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Therefore let us not judge one another from now on, but rather decide this—not to put a stumbling block or a trap in the way of a brother.

14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Yeshua, that nothing is unholy in itself; but it is unholy for the one who considers it unholy.

15 For if your brother is grieved on account of food, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy by your food the one for whom Messiah died.

16 Therefore do not let what is good for you be spoken of as evil—

17 for the kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking, but righteousness and shalom and joy in the Ruach ha-Kodesh.

18 For the one who serves Messiah in this manner is pleasing to God and approved by men.

19 So then let us pursue what makes for shalom and for the building up of one another.

20 Stop tearing down the work of God for the sake of food. Indeed all things are clean, but wrong for the man who by eating causes stumbling.

21 It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything by which your brother stumbles.

22 The faith you have, keep it to yourself before God. How fortunate is the one who does not condemn himself for what he approves.

23 But the one who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because it is not of faith. And whatever is not of faith is sin.

Reflect:

Our culture naturally puts successful people on pedestals. Whether they be historical figures, athletes, performing artists, titans of industry, or even those who are merely experiencing their “fifteen minutes of fame”, we are compelled to follow their stories and accomplishments. Often the backstory of these individuals incorporates elements of determination, tenacity, unyielding grit, and/or chance. They are fighters who succeed by the sheer force of their will, and many times #winning comes to them by steamrolling their opposition into submission. Friends, this is not how God views success. Spiritual success comes from an attitude that defers to others, especially when they are weaker than us. We are called to be a people who model Yeshua's love, compassion, and gentleness towards one another. This means we need to be intentional about not turning our spiritual, political, or personal opinions into mandates for everyone else. We must remember that God gives each one of us the freedom to explore the depths of His love for us and to seek out His plans for our lives. A hyper-focused and dogmatic stance on these kinds of issues disrupt our unity. We need to consistently challenge our own assumptions and

traditions in a manner that promotes Godly change ***in our own hearts first!*** When we focus on allowing God to gently break us of our own misassumptions (instead of trying to change everyone else!), it is then that we will become more like Him. Our hearts, transformed by love, will bring more glory to God and more people into His kingdom than our dogmatism ever could.

Prayer: Father, help us to recognize that our dogmatic positions are hurtful not only to us, but to others as well. ***We want to be obedient to Your word and allow the Holy Spirit to change us, and to know that only You can change the hearts of others.*** If we are being steamrollers, help us to stop! We only want to know You, to model Your humility and gentleness, and to lead others into Your kingdom here at Restoration and anywhere else you may lead us. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 28 at sundown - Day 18
Today is day 18 of counting the Omer
Today is day 18 out of Egypt
Today is day 18 of Messiah Resurrected

Return to Sender (James 4:1-10)

Resist Pride and Evil

1 Where do quarrels and conflicts among you come from? Don't they come from this, namely your passions that battle within your body parts?

2 You crave and have not. You murder and you envy, yet you cannot get it. You fight and you wage war. You do not have because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives so you may spend it on your passions.

4 You adulteresses! Don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think that in vain the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit which He made to dwell in us"?

6 But He gives greater grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

7 Therefore submit to God. But resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded!

9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of Adonai, and He shall lift you up.

Reflect:

God will never turn His back on you, but the same isn't true for us. Our pride and self-sufficiency lead us away from what we were created to do. Here, James explains that human nature is capable of all manner of evil in its quest to satisfy its urges, and that we must flee from those passions and lusts that are capable of convincing us that we don't need to live God's way.

Instead of God turning His back on us, the opposite is true. We turn our backs on Him. If you have been doing this, this time of fasting and prayer is a great opportunity to turn away from those things that bring us death and turn to the One who can give us life.

Prayer: Lord, I want to stop turning my back on You. I want to use this time of prayer and fasting to surrender myself to You, especially in the areas where I feel self sufficient so that I can be who you birthed me to be. Let Restoration be a place where people can turn back to Yeshua so that they can know and grow in who You are. In Yeshua's name, amen.

April 29 at sundown - Day 19
Today is day 19 of counting the Omer
Today is day 19 out of Egypt
Today is day 19 of Messiah Resurrected

A prayer for Israel (Psalm 48:1-15)

Consider Zion's Towers

- 1 A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah.*
- 2 Great is Adonai, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God —His holy mountain.*
- 3 A beautiful height —the joy of the whole earth— is Mount Zion, on the northern side of the city of the great King.*
- 4 God, in her palaces, is known as a stronghold.*
- 5 For behold, the kings assembled, they advanced together.*
- 6 They saw, then they were astounded, they fled in terror.*
- 7 Trembling seized them there, pain like a woman in labor.*
- 8 With an east wind You broke the ships of Tarshish.*
- 9 As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of Adonai-Tzva'ot, in the city of our God. God will establish her forever. Selah*
- 10 We have meditated on Your lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple.*
- 11 Like Your Name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth. Your right hand is full of righteousness.*
- 12 Mount Zion is glad, the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of Your judgments.*
- 13 Walk about Zion, go around her. Count her towers.*
- 14 Consider her ramparts, go through her palaces, so you may describe it to the next generation.*
- 15 For this God is our God, forever and ever! He will guide us to the end.*

Instead of a reflection, let's just offer up this prayer for Israel:

Heavenly Father, we thank You that Yeshua is coming back. Remember Israel and release Your salvation in her. Open blind eyes so that they may see the Messiah. Pour out your Spirit on her people and bless the body of Messiah in Israel with Your presence and protection. Amen.

April 30 at sundown - Day 20
Today is day 20 of counting the Omer
Today is day 20 out of Egypt
Today is day 20 of Messiah Resurrected

The Crowning Jewel of Creation (Genesis 2:1-2)

1 So the heavens and the earth were completed along with their entire array.
2 God completed—on the seventh day—His work that He made, and He ceased—on the seventh day—from all His work that He made.
3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He ceased from all His work that God created for the purpose of preparing.

Reflect:

In synagogues everywhere around the world and here at Restoration, the Shabbat is the most important day of the week. In the book of Leviticus (chapter 23) we see that Shabbat is the first holiday listed because it happens every week! God created Shabbat as the crowning jewel on the creation dialogue at the beginning of the book of Beresheet (Genesis). There are six days of intense activity, with all of creation being born. Right along with this intensity is God's command to be "fruitful and multiply". This sounds a lot like our everyday lives, doesn't it? As we identify our passions, they begin to drive us to pursue them... We become too compelled to act! We must remember that in God's plan for creation we weren't meant to just churn in non-stop activity. God ordained the Shabbat and blessed it as a day when mankind is called to rest and remember their Creator, but it also has additional meaning. Adonai didn't create the shabbat just for man to remember Him; He also intended for us to know that God remembers us as well!

I recently saw this principle on display while on a medical outreach trip with Jewish Voice Ministries International (JVMi) in Wiloso, Ethiopia among the Beta Israel (Jews currently located between the Amahara and Tigray regions of Ethiopia). These people live in abject poverty; they have little to eat, their water supply is putrid, and they suffer persecution from their neighbors. The Messianic believers in this area are even more persecuted than their Jewish brothers because of their commitment to following Yeshua. On top of all this, their government ignores them. It would be easy to think that God had forgotten these people, leaving them in a kind of permanent exile. On our last Shabbat in Wiloso as we rested, it occurred to me that God *had* remembered these "forgotten people". He had used the team I was with to show them that He never forgets His creation! May we remember that He will never forget us, either!

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your Shabbat. We want to take the time to remember all You've done for us. Thank You for Your faithfulness us and others as well. Amen.

May 1 at sundown - Day 21
Today is day 21 of counting the Omer

Today is day 21 out of Egypt Today is day 21 of Messiah Resurrected

Punk'd, Part 1 (Luke 4:1-10)

Temptation in the Wilderness

1 Yeshua, now filled with the Ruach ha-Kodesh, returned from the Jordan. He was led by the Ruach in the wilderness

2 for forty days, being tested by the devil. Now He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He was hungry.

3 The devil said to Him, "If You are Ben-Elohim, tell this stone to become bread."

4 Yeshua answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

5 And leading Him up, the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in an instant. 6 And the devil said to Him, "I'll give to You all this authority along with its glory, because it has been handed over to me and I can give it to anyone I wish.

7 Therefore, if you will worship before me, all this shall be Yours."

8 But answering, Yeshua told him, "It is written, 'You shall worship Adonai your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"

9 Then he brought Yeshua to Jerusalem and placed Him on the highest point of the Temple. He said to Him, "If You are Ben-Elohim, throw Yourself down from here.

10 For it is written,

'He will command His angels concerning you,
to guard you,'

11 and 'upon their hands they will lift you up,
so that you may not strike your foot against a stone.'"

12 But answering, Yeshua said to him, "It is said, 'You shall not put Adonai your God to the test.'"

13 And when the devil had completed every test, he departed from Him until another occasion.

Reflect:

The devil is real. Many may find this statement controversial while still others might believe that the idea of angelic bad guy that wages war against God and humanity is a fairy tale. Nothing could be further from the truth; Satan is as real as God is. Mythology wants to paint him as a spiritual equal to Yeshua, but this is a flat out lie! We see here in this chapter that Yeshua has a prophetic calling that once fulfilled would bring redemption and healing to mankind. In Satan's attempt to undermine that calling, he took a physically weakened Yeshua to Jericho, up on the Mount of Temptation. The spiritual warfare being waged there wasn't just an attempt to derail Yeshua; it was a desperate attempt to keep you and I eternally enslaved to the power of sin and death. ***The scriptures are clear who won that battle— Yeshua! The Urban Dictionary defines the word "punk'd" as: A way to describe someone ripping you off, tricking you, teasing you. Friends, this is exactly what Yeshua did; He punk'd the devil!*** Our Lord took the very scripture that Satan was trying to distort and used its true meaning to utterly defeat him. The Father had given Yeshua authority over all forms of darkness, and with that authority Yeshua embarked on an earthly ministry that would bring many adopted sons and daughters to God.

Prayer: We want to walk in Your power and authority over darkness, Lord. Help us to have the faith we need to move forward in that authority, and the understanding to know that You have already conquered Satan. We want to see families set free and lives changed here at Restoration during this time of prayer and fasting! Amen.

May 2 at sundown - Day 22

Today is day 22 of counting the Omer

Today is day 22 out of Egypt

Today is day 22 of Messiah Resurrected

Punk'd, Part 2 (Matthew 8:23-34)

Master of the Storm

23 As He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.

24 Suddenly a great storm arose on the sea, so that the boat was being covered by the waves. But Yeshua kept on sleeping.

25 So they came and woke Him up, saying, "Master, save us! We're perishing!"

26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became totally calm.

27 The men were amazed, saying, "What kind of person is this? Even the winds and the sea obey Him!"

Freedom from Demons

28 When He came to the other side, into the region of the Gadarenes, two demon- plagued men coming from the graveyard met Him. They were so violent that no one could pass by that way.

29 And they screamed, "What's between You and us, Ben- Elohim? Have You come here to torment us, before the appointed time?"

30 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding some distance away from them.

31 The demons kept begging Him, "If You drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

32 And He told them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the cliff into the sea and drowned.

33 The herdsman ran away, went into the town, and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-plagued men.

34 The whole town came out to meet Yeshua. And when they saw him, they begged Him to leave their region.

Reflect:

It is a common misconception these days to view a life of faith as one of passivity; we often just take what life gives us and believe that if we will just be stronger, be better or do better that our circumstances will be changed. Friends, this is both a lie from the pit of hell and a misunderstanding of what Yeshua came to do. He came to set us free from sickness and disease, and He does it by the authority that the Father gave Him! This freedom He offers us can't be obtained by anything we do but instead comes from the utter simplicity of just believing that Yeshua can do it. The centurion believed this, and his servant was set free because of his

great faith in Yeshua's power. As Yeshua moved forward to set those in demonic captivity free, we can see that the great tempest that struck the boat they were on was no normal storm; instead it was yet another focused attack by the prince of power of the air (Satan, the god of this world) to disrupt Yeshua's ministry. Again here we see the devil get punk'd by Yeshua's absolute authority over all things demonic. After He rebuked the tempest, they sailed to the Gaderenes (a territory of gentile pagans). Upon being confronted by two demon-plagued men, Yeshua cast the evil spirits out of them and sent the pigs running into the sea. This not only set those men free, but also destroyed the pagan economy of that place; their pigs were what they sacrificed to their non-gods. Yeshua's entire ministry in this place was a display of God's absolute power over spiritual darkness. Friends, we must understand this concept as our congregation moves forward. As we seek to impact the kingdom, our adversary will oppose us as he did Yeshua. Our hope for deliverance is not in what we are able to do in our own power; it is in our faith in our God who has absolutely defeated darkness!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we rejoice in knowing that you have utterly defeated spiritual darkness and oppression. Help us to pray with this understanding and to have the boldness in prayer to challenge areas where the devil has set up strongholds. Please use Restoration as a place where people are set free! In Yeshua's name, amen.

May 3 at sundown - Day 23
Today is day 23 of counting the Omer
Today is day 23 out of Egypt
Today is day 23 of Messiah Resurrected

Restored at Restoration (Luke 4:17-22)

17 When the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him, He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18 "The Ruach Adonai is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed,

19 and to proclaim the year of Adonai's favor."

20 He closed the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue were focused on Him.

21 Then He began to tell them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears."

22 All were speaking well of Him and marveling at the gracious words coming out of His mouth. And they were saying, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?"

Reflect:

Yeshua's ministry was declared on the week of this haftorah portion (Isaiah 61). The passage clearly outlines that He was to preach freedom to those who were oppressed, to bring physical healing, and to proclaim to the world that God's favor was now available to them through Him. It defined how God's plan would play out in His life. God has a plan for each one of us! When we accept Yeshua and align our lives with God's priorities, our calling mirrors this passage. As we

grow and become rooted in His word, opportunities to proclaim the Good News will naturally present themselves. God wants to use us to bring souls into His kingdom, so that they can experience healing that can only come from Him. Restoration is without doubt a place that God wants to use to accomplish this! We must seek the Lord for opportunities to spread the Good News and tell people about Yeshua. When we do, He will answer by healing hearts and doing miraculous things!

Prayer: Lord, we desire to serve You. Help us to have the faith we need to spread the Good News. Pour out miracles of healing and deliverance on Restoration. Use us to bring souls into Your kingdom. Amen!

May 4 at sundown - Day 24
Today is day 24 of counting the Omer
Today is day 24 out of Egypt
Today is day 24 of Messiah Resurrected

The Tragedy of Absalom (2 Samuel 15:1-6)

Absalom's Revolt

1 Now it came about after this that Absalom provided himself with a chariot, horses and 50 men as runners before him.

2 Absalom used to rise up early and stand beside the road to the city gate. Whenever anyone had a suit to come to the king for justice, then Absalom would call to him and say, "What town are you from?" Should he answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel,"

3 Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but there is no one assigned to you by the king to hear you."

4 Moreover, Absalom would say, "If only I were appointed judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or case would come to me, and I would get him justice!"

5 Also, whenever anyone approached to bow to him, he would stretch his hand, take hold of him, and kiss him.

6 So Absalom kept doing this to everyone of Israel who came to the king for judgment. Thus Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

Reflect:

Absalom had a craving for his father's power and status. This was despite the fact that God had clearly allowed David to remain as king after he murdered Uriah the Hittite to steal his wife (2 Samuel 12) because David repented when confronted about his sin, and asked God for mercy. God forgave David because He was a man after God's own heart. When we examine the character of Absalom, we see the contrast between the father and his son. He was a vengeful, unrepentant murderer. He was deceitful and used cunning to advance his own agenda. His ego and arrogance led him to attempt to have his father killed. He even slept with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel! He refused correction and failed to learn from David's failings. Absalom's story shows us that there are no shortcuts with God and there is no easy path to becoming a person of integrity. Gaining it often takes going through adversity and learning patience. When we turn our lives fully over to Yeshua, we have the assurance that He will help us become people of integrity. Then we can be free to abandon our own agendas and

embrace all the good that God plans for us! He has each one of us on a path that will have it's own ups and downs but will ultimately lead us into the fullness of Yeshua's call on our lives.

Prayer: Lord help us to be free of our own agendas. Help us to empty ourselves out so you can fill us with the Holy Spirit. Lead us and guide us into truth, especially about the motivations of our hearts and the true intentions of our actions.

May 5 at sundown - Day 25
Today is day 25 of counting the Omer
Today is day 25 out of Egypt
Today is day 25 of Messiah Resurrected

Passover 2.0 (Numbers 9:1-12)

Second Month Passover

1 Adonai spoke to Moses in the Sinai wilderness in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt saying,

2 "Bnei-Yisrael is to observe Passover at its appointed time.

3 You are to celebrate it at its appointed time, at twilight on the fourteenth day of this month, with all its rules and regulations."

4 So Moses told Bnei-Yisrael to observe Passover.

5 They celebrated Passover at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month in the Sinai wilderness. In accordance with all that Adonai commanded Moses, so Bnei-Yisrael did.

6 However, there were some men who could not celebrate Passover because of being defiled by a dead body. So they came to Moses and Aaron on that same day,

7 and these men said to him, "We have become unclean because of a dead man's body. Why should we be kept from presenting the offering of Adonai at the appointed time with the rest of Bnei-Yisrael?"

8 Moses answered them, "Wait, and I will inquire what Adonai commands concerning you."

9 Then Adonai spoke to Moses saying,

10 "Say to Bnei-Yisrael saying: If any man, whether you or your descendants, becomes unclean because of a dead body, or is away on a long journey, he may yet observe Adonai's Passover.

11 They are to celebrate it at twilight on the fourteenth day of the second month. With matzot and bitter herbs they are to eat it.

12 They are not to leave any of it until morning, or break any bones. When they celebrate Passover they are to observe all its regulations.

Reflect:

God wants us to keep His ways, but sometimes there are extenuating circumstances. In this case, the people in question weren't able to keep Passover because they were ritually unclean. In other words, their impurity kept them from taking part in the joyful celebration God had ordered the people of Israel to take part in. Instead of allowing them to be excluded, God made

a provision for them and for future generations to be able to celebrate Passover 2.0 (Passover in the second month). This ruling would be especially pertinent during the revival of King Hezekiah when he restored the Passover to Israel. It is easy for us to read the scriptures as a list of do's and don't's, but they are so much more than that. The entirety of the law and the prophets is not just rules and the threat of judgement for breaking them; instead it is provision of commands for our benefit, rulings that come from our gracious God who is rich in mercy and compassion towards us in our fallen, sinful state.

Prayer: You are a God who is rich in grace and compassion towards us. Remind us that alongside of your commands there is grace as well and that when we fall short or face obstacles to obedience that You will always make a way to restore us. In Yeshua's name, amen.

May 6 at sundown - Day 26
Today is day 26 of counting the Omer
Today is day 26 out of Egypt
Today is day 26 of Messiah Resurrected

On Point, On Mission (Matt 28:16-20)

Authority to Make Disciples Everywhere

16 Now the eleven disciples went to the Galilee, to the mountain Yeshua had designated.

17 When they saw Him, they worshiped; but some wavered.

18 And Yeshua came up to them and spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach ha-Kodesh,

20 teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And remember! I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Reflect:

Since 2015, the leadership at Restoration has felt called to send our people on medical outreach trips with our ministry partner, JVMI (Jewish Voice Ministries International). Our people have gone to Ethiopia and Zimbabwe to answer the call of Matthew 28! This passage leaves no doubt—Yeshua desires us to go into all the world and facilitate the spreading of the Good News. I believe that when we as the Messianic Community that represents North Seattle undertake these missions, we not only bring glory to God but we also experience the prophetic call of the Jewish people to be a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6-7). Is God calling you to serve in these medical outreaches or to support them by giving to Restoration's Mission's fund?

Prayer: Lord, we want to fulfill the calling You gave us to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. Help us to fulfill our very Messianic calling to bring salvation and deliverance wherever You might call us to go. Help us to continue to be

generous with our finances in giving towards these outreaches, and also to consider whether You have called us to go on a trip as well! In Yeshua's name, amen!

May 7 at sundown - Day 27

Today is day 27 of counting the Omer

Today is day 27 out of Egypt

Today is day 27 of Messiah Resurrected

Better Than Sci-Fi. (Revelation 4:1-11)

The Heavenly Throne of Adonai

1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door was standing open in heaven. And the first voice, which I had heard speaking with me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

2 Immediately I was in the Ruach; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One seated on the throne.

3 And the One who was seated was like jasper and carnelian in appearance, and a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders dressed in white clothes with golden crowns on their heads.

5 And out from the throne come flashes of lightning and rumblings and clashes of thunder—and seven torches of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

6 And before the throne was something like a sea of glass, like crystal. In the middle of the throne and around it were four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind.

7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like an ox, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.

8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes all around and within. They do not rest day or night, chanting, "Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh Adonai Elohei-Tzva'ot, asher haya v'hoveh v'yavo! Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts, who was and who is and who is to come!"

9 And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the One seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

10 the twenty-four elders fall down before the One seated on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever. And they throw their crowns down before the throne, chanting,

11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, For You created all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created!"

Reflect:

Four living, six-winged creatures? This imagery in this passage sounds more like sci-fi than scripture. The vision John had is not from a B-movie but instead an illustration of worship that has been and will be happening in God's throne room for eternity. It is an introduction into a reality that we can tap into when we offer praise to Adonai—we can begin to receive a fuller understanding of His presence and power. It might be best to put it this way: **we may intellectually know that God is near, but when we worship we can FEEL His presence.** When we worship, we enter into a supernatural experience that releases the joy of Lord that can

change our perception of our circumstances. We can know firsthand that God is near and willing to be called upon!

Prayer: Lord help us to worship You wholeheartedly. Help us to be open to Your Spirit and to be quick to default to worship and prayer. Reveal Yourself to us when we worship You! Amen!

May 8 at sundown - Day 28
Today is day 28 of counting the Omer
Today is day 28 out of Egypt
Today is day 28 of Messiah Resurrected

The Catalyst (Luke 8:4-15)

5 "The sower went out to spread his seed. As he sowed, some fell beside the road and was trampled; and the birds of the air ate it up.

6 And other seed fell on rock; when it came up, that seed withered away because it had no moisture.

7 Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it.

8 And other seed fell into the good soil; and when it came up, it produced fruit a hundredfold." While saying these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

9 Now His disciples were asking Him what this parable meant.

10 Then Yeshua said to them, "To you has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to the others it is given in parables, in order that 'Seeing, they may not see, and hearing, they may not understand.'

11 "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

12 Those beside the road are the ones who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.

13 But those on the rocky places are the ones who, when they hear, accept the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a season, and in a time of testing fall away.

14 Now that which fell into the thorns are those who were hearing; but as they go along the way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and they do not bear mature fruit.

15 But the seed in the good soil are those with a praiseworthy and good heart, who have heard the word and hold it fast and bear fruit with patient endurance.

Reflect:

This passage speaks about two important dynamics in our lives that God wants us to understand. The first is our potential, the other is the importance of obedience to His word. When we come into relationship with Yeshua, we can begin to realize our potential. When we incorporate God's word into our lives and make it what we order our lives and choices around, we move past just realizing our potential and begin to maximize it! The daily reading of God's word becomes a catalyst for the kind of growth He wants us to experience in our lives. Instead

of blindly making decisions on our own, we can have the assurance that He is with us in our choices because we have aligned ourselves with what He says!

At Restoration, we place the utmost importance on the reading of the scriptures. As participants in the community that God has called us to, let us remember to take time to read the scriptures daily and make them the center of our lives so we can fully maximize our potential!

Prayer: Abba, we know the scriptures can bring us life. Help us to read the scriptures daily and to act on them. We desire to know You better. Speak to us through your word. Amen!

May 9 at sundown - Day 29
Today is day 29 of counting the Omer
Today is day 29 out of Egypt
Today is day 29 of Messiah Resurrected

Everyone Belongs in the Family of God (Acts 10:1-48)

The Centurion's Vision

1 Now in Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Cohort.

2 He was a devout man, revering God with all his household. He gave tzedakah generously to the people and prayed to God continually.

3 About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

4 He stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" The angel said to him, "Your prayers and tzedakah have gone up as a memorial offering before God.

5 Now send men to Joppa and call for Simon, also named Peter.

6 He is being entertained as a guest by Simon the tanner, whose house is beside the sea."

7 When the angel speaking to him had left, he called two of his servants and a soldier from among those attached to his command.

8 After he explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

9 The next day, as the soldiers were traveling and approaching the city, Peter went up to the rooftop to pray, at about the sixth hour.

10 Now he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they were preparing something, he fell into a trance.

11 He saw the heavens opened, and something like a great sheet coming down, lowered by its four corners to the earth.

12 In it were all sorts of four-footed animals and reptiles and birds of the air.

13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14 But Peter said, "Certainly not, Lord! For never have I eaten anything unholy or unclean."

15 Again a voice came to him, a second time: "What God has made clean, you must not consider unholy."

16 This happened three times, and the sheet was immediately taken up to heaven.

17 Now while Peter was puzzling about what the vision he had seen might mean, behold, the men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house and appeared before the gate.
18 They called out and began to ask whether Simon, also called Peter, was staying in this place as a guest.
19 Now while Peter was mulling over the vision, the Ruach said to him, "Look here, three men are looking for you.
20 But get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitating, because I Myself have sent them."
21 Going down to the men, Peter said, "Here, I'm the one you're looking for. What is the reason for your coming?"
22 And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well-spoken of by all the Jewish people, was directed by a holy angel to summon you to his house and to hear a message from you."
23 So Peter invited them in to be his guests. The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him.

Peter Goes to Cornelius

24 The following day he entered Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends.
25 As Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.
26 But Peter pulled him up, saying, "Stand up! I too am just a man."
27 Talking with him, Peter went inside and found many people gathered.
28 He said to them, "You yourselves know that it is not permitted for a Jewish man to associate with a non-Jew or to visit him. Yet God has shown me that I should call no one unholy or unclean.
29 So I came without objection when I was sent for. I ask, then, what is the reason why you sent for me?"
30 Cornelius declared, "Four days ago at this hour, I was praying minchah in my house. Suddenly, a man stood in front of me in shining clothes.
31 He says, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your tzedakah remembered before God.
32 Therefore send to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is also called Peter. He is staying in the house of Simon the tanner, by the sea.'
33 So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."
34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said, "I truly understand that God is not one to show favoritism,
35 but in every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.
36 You know the message He sent to Bnei-Yisrael, proclaiming shalom through Messiah Yeshua —He is Lord of all.
37 You know the message that has spread throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the immersion that John proclaimed.
38 You know how God anointed Yeshua of Natzeret with the Ruach ha-Kodesh and power— how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him.
39 We are witnesses to all He did, both in the Judean countryside and in Jerusalem. They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree,
40 but God raised Him up on the third day and caused Him to be visible—

41 not to all the people, but to us, witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God. We ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.

42 And He commanded us to proclaim to the people and to testify that He is the One ordained by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

43 All the prophets testify about Him—that everyone who puts his trust in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”

The Ruach Falls on the Gentiles

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Ruach ha-Kodesh fell on all those hearing the message.

45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were astonished, because the gift of the Ruach ha-Kodesh had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter answered,

47 “Can anyone refuse water for these to be immersed, who have received the Ruach ha-Kodesh just as we did?”

48 So he commanded them to be immersed in the name of Messiah Yeshua. Then they asked him to stay for a few days.

Reflect:

Cornelius was a man who feared the God of Israel. He was considered righteous by the Jews, devout, reverent, and generous. By birthright he was a Roman, but somehow seeing the Jewish people worship their God had touched him deeply and stirred his heart. He moved towards God, and God saw what was in his heart and responded. What God did through Cornelius's acts of faith forever changed the kingdom; the disciples realized that Yeshua wasn't just for the Jewish people—Yeshua was for everybody! This is an important part of who we are at Restoration. Jews are Jews, Gentiles are Gentiles, and everyone belongs in the family of God. Everyone. You don't need a birthright or special distinction. All you need is Yeshua. This is a simple message that we need to share with all who will hear it.

Prayer: Lord, I want to know more about You. Speak to me like You did to Cornelius. I want to hear from You. Teach Restoration in this season to lead people to know and follow Yeshua. In Yeshua's name, amen.

May 10 at sundown - Day 30

Today is day 30 of counting the Omer

Today is day 30 out of Egypt

Today is day 30 of Messiah Resurrected

Smooth Sailing (Exodus 16:1-4)

1 They journeyed on from Elim, and the entire community of Bnei-Yisrael came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after leaving the land of Egypt.

2 But the whole congregation of Bnei-Yisrael murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3 Bnei-Yisrael said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of Adonai in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat, when we ate bread until we were full. But you have brought us into the wilderness, to kill this entire congregation with hunger."

4 Then Adonai said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. The people will go out and gather a day's portion every day, so that I can test them to find out whether they will walk according to My Torah or not."

Reflect:

Often when we are going through a transition that takes us from a bad situation to a better one there will be turbulence. In moments like these we may desire to go back to the bad situation because we perceive that it was better, or at least more familiar, than the unknown place where we are heading. I find that we often do this with sinful behavior. When we are confronted with the need to change and start to act on it, sometimes the desire to paint a rosy picture of the sinful behavior sets in. It's only natural; change is not easy and the sinful behavior was pacifying the issues we did not want to deal with. When moments like these come along when we need to make sure that we remember God's faithfulness. Though we may go through trials and testing, it is important to understand that Yeshua's "divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). There isn't a rough patch in our lives that we can't go through with Him; His divine power will be all we need to pass through our present troubles and onto smooth sailing.

Prayer: Lord we want to take hold of all that You have for us. When we struggle to have faith, help us to remember Your faithfulness. Strengthen those of us who are going through trials and testing. Show us that You're moving us to a better place! Amen!

May 11 at sundown - Day 31
Today is day 31 of counting the Omer
Today is day 31 out of Egypt
Today is day 31 of Messiah Resurrected

Increase by decreasing (John 3:25-36)

25 Now an argument came up between John's disciples and a Judean concerning purification.
26 They came to John and said, "Rabbi, the One who was with you beyond the Jordan, the One you testified about—look, He is immersing, and all are coming to Him!"

27 John answered, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.

28 You yourselves testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah,' but rather, 'I am sent before Him.'

29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the best man rejoices when he stands and hears the bridegroom's voice. So now my joy is complete!

30 He must increase, while I must decrease."

31 The One who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaks. The One who comes from heaven is above all.

32 And what He has seen and heard, He testifies to that; yet no one receives His testimony.

33 Whoever receives His testimony has certified that God is true.

34 The One whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Ruach without limit.

35 The Father loves the Son and has given everything into His hand.

36 He who trusts in the Son has eternal life. He who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Reflect:

Times change for all of us. Sometimes we will be in the spotlight and other times we will be called upon to step aside for someone else. This was the case here: John's ministry was coming to close, and Yeshua's ministry was just getting started. There was no rivalry on John's part; he had a clear vision of what God had called him to do, and he faithfully executed his task. When he was done being the harbinger of the Messiah's coming, John had the humility to step aside and allow God's plan to move forward. He decreased so that Yeshua could increase. How many of us can say that we're willing to take a back seat in God's plan? How many of us can say we're willing to allow others to go ahead of us and be used to glorify God instead of seeking glory for ourselves? We need to keep in mind John's words: "No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from Heaven." Those are incredible words that encapsulate the attitude of surrender that he had cultivated in his heart. He had a sensitivity to God's Spirit and understood that God was doing a new thing, and he had the humility to embrace it! When we choose to follow John's example and "decrease" when God leads us to it, in reality we are elevating God. In turn, He elevates us by giving us blessings that only come when we learn to surrender to His will.

Prayer: Lord help us to understand that there are different seasons in our lives, and give us the humility to embrace them and seek You for and what You require of us in those seasons. When You call us to a different role, remind us that it is not a lesser role. We want to submit to Your will and surrender to Your call. We love You wholeheartedly and desire to serve You! Amen!

May 12 at sundown - Day 32
Today is day 32 of counting the Omer
Today is day 32 out of Egypt
Today is day 32 of Messiah Resurrected

God's Mercy at Work (Genesis 7:11-23)

11 In the six-hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on this day, all the water sources of the great deep burst open, and the windows of the sky were opened.

12 Then there was rain upon the land 40 days and 40 nights.

13 On that same day Noah, along with Noah's sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's wife and the three wives of Noah's sons with them, entered the ark,

14 they and every animal according to its kind, and all the livestock according to its kind, and every crawling creature that crawls on the land according to its kind, and every flying creature according to its kind, every bird, every winged creature.

15 So to Noah and into the ark they went by twos—all flesh in which was the spirit of life.

16 Those that came, male and female of all flesh, came just as God commanded him. Then Adonai shut him in.

17 The flood was forty days upon the land, and the waters increased and lifted the ark, so that it rose above the land.

18 The waters overpowered and became very mighty over the land, and the ark drifted on the surface of the water.

19 The waters completely overpowered the land so that all the high mountains beneath the entire sky were covered.

20 The waters rose 15 cubits higher, as the mountains were covered.

21 All flesh perished—those that crawl on the land, the flying creatures, livestock, wild animals, all creatures that swarm upon the land, and all humankind.

22 Everything that had the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils—everything on dry land—died.

23 So He wiped out all existence that was upon the surface of the ground, everything from people to livestock, to crawling creatures, and to flying creatures of the sky. They were wiped out off the land. Only Noah and those with him in the ark survived.

Reflect:

Traditionally the 32nd day of the Omer is the day that Noah and his family entered the ark. The days of Noah were marked by apostasy so profound that God could only judge it by destroying nearly every living thing. While this punishment may sound overly harsh we must remember that God is sovereign, and that although He hates sin His desire is to preserve life instead of taking it. He could have easily just pushed the reset button on humanity and started over with Adam 2.0. It is in this passage that we see the *chesed, the mercy of God at work*. God had a plan for humanity that did not start with Adam and end with Noah, but rather one that worked to redeem all humanity. From Adam to Noah and then from Noah to Yeshua, we can see God faithfully working to redeem creation and restore it to right relationship with Himself. During times of apostasy and what seems like wrath, we must remember that God is working intently to bring about restoration and deliverance to mankind.

Prayer: Lord help us to know that even in confusing times You are in control. Help us to remember that You preserve the righteous and are willing to pour out mercy on sinners. In Yeshua's name, amen.

May 13 at sundown - Day 33

Today is day 33 of counting the Omer

Today is day 33 out of Egypt

Today is day 33 of Messiah Resurrected

Better Than TED (1 Timothy 3:1-13)

Qualifications for Oversight and Service

1 Trustworthy is the saying: "If any man aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a good work."

2 An overseer, then, must be beyond criticism—the husband of one wife, clear-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

3 not addicted to wine, not violent but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money,

4 managing his own household well, keeping his children under control with all respectfulness.

5 (But if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's community?)

6 He must not be a new believer, or he may become puffed up and fall into the same judgment as the devil.

7 Furthermore, he must have a good reputation with those outside, so that he will not fall into disgrace and the devil's trap.

8 Servant-leaders likewise must be dignified, not double-speaking, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

9 They must keep hold of the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

10 Also let them first be tested—then let those who are blameless serve as servant-leaders.

11 Women likewise must be dignified, not backbiting; clear-minded, trustworthy in every respect.

12 Let servant-leaders be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.

13 For those who have served well as servant-leaders gain for themselves a good standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Messiah Yeshua.

Reflect:

There are many, many books on leadership. Along with each of these books is a seminar you can attend, a TED talk you can watch, or some other form of media you can consume in the quest to be a good leader. While many of them may be helpful, it is important to understand that God has His own standards for leadership, and none of them involve being a CEO or some kind of big shot! This chapter reflects that a Godly leader must have a life marked by spiritual fruit and servanthood, born out over time. At Restoration, we seek to be and to raise up leaders that are focused on serving God by serving others. God has already been faithful in providing us with leaders with hearts that seek after God and that exhibit Godly character, and we believe that He will continue to do so! While no leader is perfect, it is important to remember that anyone involved in spiritual leadership needs our support and prayers.

Prayer: Father, take care of my leaders. Keep them and their families safe. Provide for their needs and help me to remember to pray for them. In Yeshua's name, amen.

May 14 at sundown - Day 34

Today is day 34 of counting the Omer

Today is day 34 out of Egypt

Today is day 34 of Messiah Resurrected

Let Him Do It! (Exodus 10:1-29)

Locusts, Darkness

1 Then Adonai said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, because I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, so that I might show these My signs in their midst,

2 and so you may tell your son and your grandchildren what I have done in Egypt, as well as My signs that I did among them, so you may know that I am Adonai."

3 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, "This is what Adonai, the God of the Hebrews, says: How long would you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, so

they may serve Me.

4 Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your borders.

5 Then they will cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the ground. They will eat the remainder of what escaped—whatever is left from the hail— and eat every tree that grows for you out in the field.

6 Your houses will be filled, as will the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen since the day they were on the earth until today!" Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

7 Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Send the men, so they may serve Adonai their God. Don't you realize yet that Egypt is being destroyed?"

8 So Moses and Aaron were brought to Pharaoh again. "Go, serve Adonai your God," he said. "But who will be going?"

9 Moses answered, "We will go with our young and our elderly, our sons and our daughters. We will go with our flocks and our herds—for we must have Adonai's feast for Him."

10 But he said to them, "So may Adonai be with you, if I ever do let you go, with your little ones. See clearly now! Evil is in your face.

11 Not so! Go now—the men—and serve Adonai! For that's what you were seeking." Then they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

12 Then Adonai said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so they may come up onto Egypt and eat every plant in the land—everything the hail has left."

13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and Adonai brought an east wind over the land all that day and all night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

14 The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and rested on the entire territory of Egypt. So dense—there was nothing like it before them, nor will there ever be again.

15 For they covered the face of the whole earth so that the land was darkened, and they ate every plant in the land and all the fruit from the trees that the hail had left. No green thing remained, not a tree or a plant of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

16 Then Pharaoh quickly called for Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against Adonai your God and against you.

17 Now forgive my sin, only this once, please! So pray to Adonai your God—just so He would take this death away from me!"

18 So he went out from Pharaoh and prayed to Adonai.

19 Then Adonai turned the wind from the west, very strong, and it carried off the locusts and drove them into the Sea of Reeds. Not one locust remained in all the territory of Egypt.

20 But Adonai hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let Bnei-Yisrael go.

21 Then Adonai said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, and there will be darkness over the land of Egypt—a darkness that may be felt."

22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days.

23 They could not see one another, nor could anyone rise from his place for three days. Yet all Bnei-Yisrael had light within their dwellings.

24 Pharaoh called Moses and said, "Go, serve Adonai. Only let your flocks and your herds remain. Your little ones may also go with you."

25 But Moses said, "You must also put sacrifices and burnt offerings into our hand, then we will do it for Adonai our God.

26 Our cattle must also go with us—not a hoof may be left behind. We must take from them to serve Adonai our God. We ourselves will not know how we will serve Adonai until we arrive there."

27 But Adonai hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was unwilling to let them go.

28 So Pharaoh said to him, "Go away from me! Take heed never to see my face again, because on the day you do, you will die!"

29 "Right!" Moses said. "You said it! May I never see your face again!"

Reflect:

Sometimes God will ask you to do hard things. In this example, God was commanding Moses to go back to Pharaoh and keep repeating what God was commanding him: ***Let My people go!*** Moses could have caved in and not gone to Pharaoh for any number of reasons; anxiety, fear of failure, or unbelief that God could or would do as He said. We all go through this... Maybe it is that moment in the office where you are called upon to give a presentation but are afraid to stand up in front of a crowd, or when you are called upon to perform a task that you feel totally inadequate to do. God often puts us in situations that expose our weaknesses instead of catering to our strengths. He does this so that He can show *His power through you!* He's not asking you to do it; He's asking you to let Him do it! Similarly, all we are seeking out of this fast can't be accomplished by our own efforts because human efforts always fall short. God wants to use us, even in our weaknesses. Let's resolve to let Him do it!

Prayer: God, I need your help when life gets hard. Please help me not to fear and to trust that You will get me through it no matter how bad things get. In Yeshua's name, amen.

May 15 at sundown - Day 35

Today is day 35 of counting the Omer

Today is day 35 out of Egypt

Today is day 35 of Messiah Resurrected

CHAZAK (Be Strong) (Daniel 10:1-21)

1 In the third year of King Cyrus of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The oracle was true and concerns a great war. He understood the message and gained insight through a vision.

2 "In those days, I, Daniel was mourning for three whole weeks.

3 I ate no rich food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I anoint myself with oil, until the end of three weeks.

4 "Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was beside the bank of the great river, the Tigris,

5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a man dressed in linen with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist.

6 His body was like yellow jasper, his face like a flash of lightning, his eyes like fiery torches, his arms and his feet like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the roar of a multitude.

7 "Only I, Daniel, saw the vision; the men that were with me did not see the vision.

Nevertheless, such a great terror fell upon them that they fled and hid themselves.

8 So I was left alone to see this great vision. My strength drained from me and my vigor was destroyed; I could not summon any strength.

9 Yet I heard the sound of his words. When I heard him speaking, I fell on my face in a deep sleep with my face to the ground.

10 "Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.

11 He said to me, 'Daniel, highly valued man, carefully consider the words I am speaking to you. Stand up! For now I have been sent to you.' When he spoke this word to me, I stood up trembling.

12 "Then he said to me, 'Don't be afraid, Daniel! For from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. I have come because of your words.

13 However, the prince of the kingdom of Persia resisted me for 21 days, but behold Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me because I had been detained there with the kings of Persia.

14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future days. For the vision concerns days yet to come.'

15 "While he was speaking these words to me, I bowed my face toward the ground and was speechless.

16 Then behold, one who resembled a human touched my lips. I opened my mouth and spoke, and said to him that stood before me, 'O my Lord because of the vision, anguish has overcome me and I have no strength.

17 For how can this servant of my Lord speak with my Lord since no strength remains in me and no spirit is left in me?'

18 "Again the one who looked like a man touched me and strengthened me.

19 Then he said: 'Highly valued man, do not fear! Shalom to you. Be strong, now! Chazak!' "Even as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, 'Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.'

20 "Then he said: 'Do you understand why I have come to you? Now I must return to fight against the prince of Persia! When I go, behold, the prince of Greece will come.

21 But first, I will tell you what is recorded in the writing of truth.' (No one strengthened me against these, except Michael your prince.

Reflect:

Daniel was a Jewish exile living in a foreign land. God had shown up in his life in powerful ways, rescuing him from being thrown into a fiery furnace and keeping him safe after being thrown to the lions. He knew what God could do, and how He could work miracles in the lives of those who put their trust in Him. Daniel's dedication to his Creator and his desire to see and understand God's plan are examples we can follow in the here and now. Through fasting and prayer we can petition Yeshua and ask Him to help us see our sins and to repent of them. When we do this, He will be faithful to show us His plans for us personally and as a congregation. He will also show us the depth of His love for us as well as for those who need to know of His love and mercy.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, be merciful to me and forgive my sins. Help me to see You for who You are. Show me Your plans and use me to reach people with the message of Your love. Help us as a community hear from You about Your heart for all people to know You and how we can be a part of it. Amen.

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**May 16 at sundown - Day 36**  
**Today is day 36 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 36 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 36 of Messiah Resurrected**

### **God-Developed Leaders (1 Peter 5:1-6)**

#### ***Shepherds Lead by Example***

*1 Therefore I appeal to the elders among you—as a fellow elder and witness of Messiah’s sufferings, and a partaker also of the glory about to be revealed—  
2 shepherd God’s flock among you. Watch over it not under compulsion but willingly before God, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.  
3 Don’t lord it over those apportioned to you, but become examples to the flock.  
4 When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.  
5 Likewise, you younger ones, submit yourselves to the elders. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”  
6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may lift you up at the appropriate time.*

#### **Reflect:**

Peter learned a lot of lessons this way. He was a natural leader, one who had limitless energy and a “can-do” attitude. He was quick to volunteer, and people must have really liked him. God uniquely equips leaders like Peter. God gives them natural gifts and abilities to help them fulfill their calling, but they still must learn to lead. Oftentimes this process is marked by more failures than successes. It is the leader’s job to follow after God and wait for Him to produce results instead of trying to make it happen on their own. For leaders (particularly young ones), it is difficult to learn to wait for God’s timing and to recognize what season God has them and their flock in. They need discernment, support, and other leaders speaking into their lives to help them hear God’s voice. Above all, good leaders are servants who seek the good of others before their own. This is the example that Yeshua laid out for all of us, but is particularly a quality He develops in those He calls to leadership.

**Prayer: Father, thank You for the leaders You have raised up and the new leaders You are raising up in our congregation. Teach our leaders to hear Your voice, and show them how to lead your flock. Please give them the support, discernment, and encouragement that they need along with the humility to listen to others You have called to speak into their lives. In Yeshua’s name, amen.**

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**May 17 at sundown - Day 37**  
**Today is day 37 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 37 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 37 of Messiah Resurrected**

## **The Joy of Renewal (And Smashing Idols) (2 Chronicles 30:23-31:1)**

*23 Then the whole congregation decided to celebrate seven more days—so for another seven days they celebrated with gladness.*

*24 Hezekiah king of Judah contributed 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep to the congregation, and the officials contributed 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep to the congregation, and great numbers of kohanim consecrated themselves.*

*25 The entire assembly of Judah rejoiced with the kohanim and the Levites, and all who had assembled from Israel, both the strangers coming from the land of Israel and the residents of Judah.*

*26 There was great joy in Jerusalem, for nothing like this had happened in Jerusalem since the time of Solomon son of David king of Israel.*

*27 Then the Levitical kohanim arose and blessed the people, and Adonai heard their voice, for their prayer reached heaven, His holy dwelling place.*

### **Restoring the Kohanim and Levites**

*1 When all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the towns of Judah and smashed the pillars, smashed the Asherah poles and demolished the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, as well as throughout Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all Bnei-Yisrael returned to their towns, each to their own property.*

### **Reflect:**

To say Hezekiah's father Ahaz was a king who didn't follow after God is an understatement. He made idols that turned the people away from God and into idolatry. While worshipping these idols, he even had his own children burned alive. God gave Him and the kingdom of Judah over to their enemies, and the subsequent occupation by foreign invaders left the Land in disarray. After his death, Hezekiah his son took the throne. Hezekiah feared God and desired to do what was right. This sparked a renewal that began a spiritual transformation among the people of Israel. The Israelites turned to God in such numbers that there were not enough Kohanim (priests) around to handle the offerings of cattle that were being brought into the Temple. Those in Jerusalem agreed; they needed to celebrate a 2nd Passover (see Day 25 of this devotional for information on this special holiday). The result was a great joy that was felt by all those in Jerusalem! Afterward the people (of their own volition) decided that Ahaz's idols needed to be torn down in order for them to worship the One true God.

**Prayer: Abba, please help us to turn to You with all of our hearts. Pour out Your spirit and bring renewal to our city, our nation, Israel, and the whole world. Bring great joy among us as we worship You! Amen!**

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**May 18 at sundown - Day 38**  
**Today is day 38 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 38 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 38 of Messiah Resurrected**

## Oh yes you can! (Jeremiah 1:1-19)

### **The Call of Jeremiah**

*1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the kohanim who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.*

*2 The word of Adonai came to him during the days of King Josiah of Judah, son of Amon, in the thirteenth year of his reign.*

*3 It continued during the days of King Jehoiakim of Judah, son of Josiah, until the end of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah of Judah, son of Josiah—until the exile from Jerusalem in the fifth month.*

*4 The word of Adonai came to me, saying:*

*5 “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I set you apart— I appointed you prophet to the nations.”*

*6 Then I said, “Alas, Adonai Elohim! Look, I don’t know how to speak! For I’m still a boy!”*

*7 But Adonai answered me, “Do not say ‘I’m only a boy!’ For to everyone I send you, you will go, and all I command you, you will speak.*

*8 Do not be afraid of them! For I am with you to deliver you.” It is a declaration of Adonai.*

*9 Then Adonai stretched out His hand and touched my mouth and Adonai said to me, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.*

*10 See, today I have appointed you over nations and over kingdoms: to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”*

*11 Moreover, the word of Adonai came to me, saying, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” I answered, “I see an almond branch.”*

*12 Then Adonai said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I am watching over My word to perform it.”*

*13 The word of Adonai came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” I replied, “I see a boiling pot that is tilting away from the north.”*

*14 Then Adonai said to me: “From the north, disaster will be poured out on all the inhabitants of the land.*

*15 Behold! I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north.” It is a declaration of Adonai. “So they will come and each will set up his throne at the entry of the gates of Jerusalem, against all her surrounding walls and against all the cities of Judah.*

*16 I will pronounce My judgments on them for all their wickedness— they have forsaken Me, offering incense to other gods, worshipping the works of their hands.*

*17 Now, you, gird up your loins! Get up and tell them everything that I order you! Do not be terrified by them, or else I will terrify you before them.*

*18 Look, today I have set you up as a fortified city— an iron pillar and bronze walls— against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its princes against its kohanim, and against the people of the land.*

*19 Though they will fight against you, they will not win, for I am with you, to deliver you.” It is a declaration of Adonai.*

### **Reflect:**

We can learn a lot from this passage about God’s commissioning of Jeremiah’s ministry. Here we see a young man filled with doubt about his abilities. It is important to note that God didn’t answer Jeremiah’s doubt with good advice. Instead, He answers Jeremiah’s “but I can’t’s” with a series of “don’ts”: Don’t say you can’t do it, don’t say you’re too young, and most importantly

don't *fear*. He reminds Jeremiah at the end of his commissioning that He *made* Jeremiah and that overshadowed any of his limitations or circumstances. The same is true for us today. Instead of looking at ourselves and what we lack, we can take hold of who God created us to be. We can become people created by Him to tell others of His love and the salvation that they can have when they invite Yeshua into their hearts. This is at the core of being Yeshua's disciple and our calling here at Restoration.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, empower me with Your Holy Spirit so that I can move forward with courage, conviction, and tenacity. I give all my fears to You and I want to trust that You have good plans for me. Amen.

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**May 19 at sundown - Day 39**  
**Today is day 39 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 39 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 39 of Messiah Resurrected**

## **Reaping Bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:6-13)**

### ***Sowing and Reaping Generosity***

*6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.*

*7 Let each one give as he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion—for God loves a cheerful giver.*

*8 And God is able to make all grace overflow to you, so that by always having enough of everything, you may overflow in every good work.*

*9 As it is written, "He scattered widely, He gave to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."*

*10 Now the One who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness.*

*11 You will be enriched in everything for all generosity, which through us brings about thanksgiving to God.*

*12 For this service of giving is not only supplying the needs of the kedoshim, but is also overflowing with many thanksgivings to God.*

*13 Because of the evidence of this service, they praise God for the obedience of your affirmation of the Good News of Messiah and for the generosity of your contribution to them and to everyone.*

### **Reflect:**

We may often look at our household bills and the things our families want with nervousness. There may be an unspoken fear that we may run out of resources, that our kids won't be living the fullest life possible with the best possible outcome. Instead of being fearful about our lack of resources or losing them, Paul is challenging us to look at giving and generosity in a different way. He is showing us that "reaping bountifully" isn't the result of keeping resources to ourselves but instead the result of being generous! At Restoration we call this being irrationally generous. As a congregation we give out 12.5% percent of the tithes and offerings we receive to charitable organizations such as Seattle Children's Hospital, the Everett Pregnancy Resource Center, Seattle Union Gospel Mission and many more. We

firmly believe being irrationally generous is a discipline that God has called us to, and we encourage those who attend to do the same!

**Prayer: Lord, show us how to be irrationally generous. Help us to understand that you want us to sow into our congregation's finances and the lives of others. In Yeshua's name, Amen.**

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**May 20 at sundown - Day 40**  
**Today is day 40 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 40 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 40 of Messiah Resurrected**

## **Now Is the Time (Acts 1:1-11)**

### **When Will Yeshua Restore the Kingdom?**

- 1 I wrote the first volume, Theophilus, about all that Yeshua began to do and teach—*
- 2 up to the day He was taken up, after He had given orders by the Ruach ha-Kodesh to the emissaries He had chosen.*
- 3 To them He showed Himself to be alive after His suffering through many convincing proofs, appearing to them for forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.*
- 4 Now while staying with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father promised—which, He said, “you heard from Me.*
- 5 For John immersed with water, but you will be immersed in the Ruach ha-Kodesh not many days from now.”*
- 6 So when they gathered together, they asked Him, “Lord, are You restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?”*
- 7 He said to them, “It is not your place to know the times or seasons which the Father has placed under His own control.*
- 8 But you will receive power when the Ruach ha-Kodesh has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*
- 9 After saying all this—while they were watching—He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.*
- 10 While they were staring into heaven as He went up, suddenly two men stood with them in white clothing.*
- 11 They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you keep standing here staring into heaven? This Yeshua, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.”*

### **Reflect:**

The fortieth day is an important day in the counting of the Omer. There are only ten days left to Shavuot and on this day Yeshua ascends into heaven. The focus of his ascension was to encourage his disciples with the words, “You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Interestingly, they really don’t go to the ends of the earth for another fifteen years. They continue to focus on Jerusalem and Samaria and Jewish people. In Acts 10, about fourteen years later, Peter shares the Gospel with a Gentile

named Cornelius and he and all of his household turn to Yeshua. This opens the doors to the ends of the earth and the disciples begin to travel all over the known world telling the nations the story of Yeshua and encouraging them to put their trust in Him. Yeshua leaves the disciples with a command and after he is gone they just stand there. They're so amazed by what just happened that an Angel says to them, "Why do you keep standing here staring into heaven?" The Angel's message is essentially, "Stop staring and get to work!" The real work doesn't begin right away; it takes time. Think about the last fifteen years and how many things have changed. Maybe now is the time to do the things that God has called you to do?

**Prayer:** Lord, I don't want to wait and stare into Heaven, I want to do the things that you have called me to do. I know you have a greater purpose than I am living out right now. Help me to live a life worthy of the great calling that I have received. Amen.

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**May 21 at sundown - Day 41**  
**Today is day 41 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 41 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 41 of Messiah Resurrected**

### **God's Got This (Philippians 4:4-13)**

*4 Rejoice in the Lord always—again I will say, rejoice!*  
*5 Let your gentleness be known to all people. The Lord is near.*  
*6 Do not be anxious about anything—but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*  
*7 And the shalom of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Yeshua.*  
*8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any virtue and if there is anything worthy of praise—dwell on these things.*  
*9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—put these things into practice, and the God of shalom will be with you.*

#### ***The Secret of Contentment***

*10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me (though you were concerned before but lacked opportunity to show it).*  
*11 I am not saying this because I am in need—for whatever circumstance I am in, I have learned to be content.*  
*12 I know what it is to live with humble means, and I know what it is to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of contentment—both to be filled and to go hungry, to have abundance and to suffer need.*  
*13 I can do all things through Messiah who strengthens me.*

#### **Reflect:**

Sometimes we want something so bad that the desire for it can drive us crazy. It doesn't matter if it is that new job, that special relationship, or that new item that everyone is buying. They can all lead us to a place of discontentment with the gifts that God has already given us. Read

Philippians 4:6-7. This passage tell us not to worry about anything but pray about everything! It tells us that in doing so God will give us a peace that others cannot understand. He will guard our hearts against all harm and danger. It is good to know that God is listening to your prayer requests and providing you peace and protection. Getting the answers back from God can take time, but the patience we develop while we wait upon the Lord leads us to contentment and gratitude. This is the place where restoration and healing can begin in your life and the lives of others.

**Prayer:** Lord, I want to live a life free from anxiety and depression. I want to put my full trust in You and to be content. I want to have peace in my heart. Help me live my life for You and hear Your voice. In Yeshua's name, amen.

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**May 22 at sundown - Day 42**  
**Today is day 42 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 42 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 42 of Messiah Resurrected**

### **Learning to Follow (Numbers 10:13)**

*11 On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted up from above the Tabernacle of the Testimony. 12 Then Bnei-Yisrael set out on their travels in the Sinai wilderness. The cloud came to rest in the wilderness of Paran. 13 So they set out the first time by the mouth of Adonai by Moses's hand.*

#### **Reflect:**

For forty years the children of Israel followed the physical presence of God in the form of cloud by day and a fire by night. On this day, in the second year of wandering in the wilderness, the cloud lifted and moved and the children of Israel packed everything up and followed. Can you imagine how amazing it must have been to follow the physical presence of God? Or how odd it must have been to be walking in circles for forty years because of the people's failure to take the Promised Land as God had commanded? Maybe you have had a similar experience, but instead of wandering in the desert you've been stuck in a pattern that's left you wanting more. The good news is that we can encounter the tangible presence of God when we accept Yeshua into our lives! After we do this, the Holy Spirit will come into our lives to lead us out of the negative patterns we're stuck in and into an amazing and awesome future. All we have to do is surrender our desire to lead and learn to follow!

**Prayer:** Lord, I surrender to my desire to lead you. Instead I want to follow. I want you to guide my steps and life in a brand new way. I want to see and feel the tangible Spirit of God in my life. Amen.

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**May 23 at sundown - Day 43**  
**Today is day 43 of counting the Omer**

## Today is day 43 out of Egypt

### Today is day 43 of Messiah Resurrected

### Equilibrium (2 Peter 1:1-10)

#### **Greetings**

*1 Simon Peter, a slave and emissary of Messiah Yeshua, To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Messiah Yeshua:*

*2 May grace and shalom be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Yeshua our Lord. Qualities for Living Forever*

*3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and virtue.*

*4 Through these things He has given us His precious and magnificent promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, since you have escaped the corruption that evil desires have brought into the world.*

*5 Now for this very reason, making every effort, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;*

*6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, patience; and to patience, godliness;*

*7 and to godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, love.*

*8 For if these qualities are in you and increasing, they keep you from becoming idle and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.*

*9 But anyone who lacks these qualities is blind—nearsighted because he has forgotten his cleansing from past sins.*

*10 Therefore, brothers and sisters, make all the more effort to make your calling and election certain—for if you keep doing these things, you will never stumble.*

#### **Reflect:**

Bringing balance to the many competing elements of our lives is challenging. Whether it be taking care of our families, doing our jobs well, or dealing with circumstances outside of our control (illness, not being able to find a job, death of a loved one), we can become physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted. Instead of being able to find stability in our lives, we can often feel like we are destined to live in constant chaos! God has a better way for us to live; He wants to bring all of these opposing forces into a state of balance, a state of equilibrium. He wants to do this by empowering our faith with seven key elements of His nature (virtue, knowledge, patience, self control, godliness, brotherly love, and love). He does this by hardwiring these elements into our character, by making us more and more like Yeshua each day.

He wants us to understand that adopting the virtuous elements of His nature will lead us to a better knowledge of who He is and what He stands for. This in turn will lead us to exercise the self-control that we need to overcome sin. This self control will lead us to be a more patient and restrained people. At this point godliness (a state of obedience to God) will naturally lend itself to brotherly love (love of those who believe in Yeshua). Focusing on this kind of love will train our hearts to extend the final element, God's unconditional love towards even our enemies. The synergy we experience when this progression in our lives will empower us to become the purposeful and productive people God wants to be!

**Prayer: Abba, we all have circumstances in our lives that are out of balance. Show us that You want to bring these opposing forces into a state of balance by making virtue, knowledge, self control, patience, godliness, brotherly love, and love a chain reaction that will transform our character and make us more like You. Help us to become the purposeful and productive people You created us to be! Amen.**

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**May 24 at sundown - Day 44**

**Today is day 44 of counting the Omer**

**Today is day 44 out of Egypt**

**Today is day 44 of Messiah Resurrected**

## **Models of Intimacy and Devotion (Ephesians 5:21-33)**

### ***Orderly Relationships: Marriage***

*21 Also submit yourselves to one another out of reverence for Messiah—*

*22 wives to your own husbands as to the Lord.*

*23 For the husband is head of the wife, as Messiah also is head of His community—Himself the Savior of the body.*

*24 But as Messiah's community is submitted to Messiah, so also the wives to their husbands in everything.*

*25 Husbands, love your wives just as Messiah also loved His community and gave Himself up for her*

*26 to make her holy, having cleansed her by immersion in the word.*

*27 Messiah did this so that He might present to Himself His glorious community—not having stain or wrinkle or any such thing, but in order that she might be holy and blameless.*

*28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*

*29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it—just as Messiah also does His community,*

*30 because we are members of His body.*

*31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."*

*32 This mystery is great—but I am talking about Messiah and His community.*

*33 In any case, let each of you love his own wife as himself, and let the wife respect her husband.*

### **Reflect:**

Our culture has tried to redefine the relevance and meaning of marriage for quite some time. Today our culture has adopted same-sex marriages, open marriages, or has declared marriage as an outdated institution that was created "to control people". None of this is true! God instituted marriage between a man and a woman because it reflects the kind of union He wants to have with us! He wants us to experience intimacy and devotion with Him that nurtures our souls and leads us to a deep, lasting, satisfying love that sustains us. Our marriages are to be this way also, reflecting a sacred unity and deep love that is unique to only our spouses. God wants to be at the center of our individual lives and at the center of our marriages. When He is,

the selfless love of Yeshua becomes what marriages are based on and how they grow and flourish!

**Prayer: Lord, help us to understand all you want our marriages to be; models of the love, intimacy, and care that You desire to have with us. Strengthen each marriage at Restoration and help them to thrive! Amen!**

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**May 25 at sundown - Day 45**  
**Today is day 45 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 45 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 45 of Messiah Resurrected**

### **Abraham: the Friend of God (Genesis 12:1-3)**

#### ***Abram Obeys the Calling***

*1 Then Adonai said to Abram, "Get going out from your land, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you.*

*2 My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing.*

*3 My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*

#### **Reflect:**

Abraham was the person who God chose to be the patriarch of the Jewish people. On the outside, this choice seems puzzling. Historical sources name his father Terah as an idol-maker. He wasn't rich, powerful, or elite. When God spoke to him, he was an 80-year-old man married to his half-sister with no kids! He had no legacy to speak of, and certainly brought nothing to the "table".

This is precisely why God chose Abraham. God wanted to make His glory and power known to the entire world and to do it, He chose to use the least likely person! We see that Abraham had an open and willing heart towards the promises that God made to him. Our faith ought to be the same. God wants to take the same promises He made to Abraham and weave them into the fiber of our lives. God wants to show us the same faithfulness, the same protection, and the depth of friendship that He shared with Abraham. When we invite Yeshua into our hearts, the relationship we can have with God is one that is based not just His sovereign ability to protect and provide for us but also on the deep friendship He invites us to participate in.

**Prayer: Lord, help us to know that when we accept Yeshua we enter into the same kind of friendship You shared with Abraham. We want the promises that are in the scriptures woven into our lives. Let these promises be the source of the deep friendship You desire to have with us. In Yeshua's name, amen.**

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**May 26 at sundown - Day 46**  
**Today is day 46 of counting the Omer**  
**Today is day 46 out of Egypt**  
**Today is day 46 of Messiah Resurrected**

### **The ABC's of Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)**

*9 "Therefore, pray in this way: 'Our Father in heaven, sanctified be Your name.  
10 Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
11 Give us this day our daily bread.  
12 And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'*

### **Reflect:**

Prayer is always a good way to start your day. Here Yeshua is teaching us that effective prayer doesn't have to be long winded or complicated. He lays out a few ABC's of prayer to help us communicate with God:

- 1) Remember that God is holy. He's the creator of the universe and worthy of our worship.
- 2) God's plans are better than our plans. Too often in life, we want to take control of the situations we find ourselves in instead of asking God what to do. Making a conscious effort to pause and allow God to speak to us about what we are going through literally brings heaven to earth!
- 3) Asking for provision for today is better than worrying about tomorrow. We can rely on God's faithfulness to meet our daily needs. Worrying about anything more drains our ability to trust God's constancy in our lives.
- 4) Forgiveness is a key element in communication with God. Asking for forgiveness for our sins and then granting it to others who have offended us is key to having a pure conscience before Adonai. When we admit our sins, God will forgive us. When we forgive others, we imitate God and become more like Yeshua.
- 5) Temptation is a reality for all of us. God doesn't lead us into temptation, but we ourselves often choose to toy with the idea of sinful behavior. Satan will try to use these opportunities to derail God's plan for our lives. Asking God for His strength in these moments is crucial to the wellness of our souls.

Let's commit to using these principles to enrich our daily prayer lives!

**Prayer: Lord Yeshua teach us to pray. Help our prayers be effective and heartfelt. Show us that You hear our prayers by answering from heaven with miracles. Help us to turn our lives over to You and keep us from temptation. Amen.**

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May 27 at sundown - Day 47
Today is day 47 of counting the Omer
Today is day 47 out of Egypt
Today is day 47 of Messiah Resurrected

Arriving at Mt. Sinai—Three Days to Prepare (Exodus 19:10-11)

10 So, ADONAI said to Moshe, "Go to the people; today and tomorrow separate them for me by having them wash their clothing;

11 and prepare for the third day. For on the third day, ADONAI will come down on Mount Sinai before the eyes of all the people."

Reflect:

It is interesting that God would have the children of Israel cleanse themselves and their clothing before meeting with God on the day of Shavout. We often talk about "getting into God's presence", but have you ever considered that God wants to be in your presence? The issue is that we are full of sin and if we were to go into the presence of God with our sin we would die because being in the presence of God is terrifying. But, if we follow the instructions and cleanse ourselves of our sin, then being in God's presence can be an amazing experience. For us, as a messianic synagogue, that means we ask God to forgive us of our sin in the name of Yeshua, He forgives us and then we can be in His presence and He can be in ours. It's the design of God because he wants to share His presence with us!

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your tangible presence and your holy spirit. Please forgive me of my sin and wash me clean. I want to experience your presence in new, fresh and exiting ways and I want to lead others into your presence as well. Amen.

May 28 at sundown - Day 48
Today is day 48 of counting the Omer
Today is day 48 out of Egypt
Today is day 48 of Messiah Resurrected

A Walk to Remember (Colossians 1:9-12)

9 For this reason also, ever since we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We keep asking God that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding—

10 to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.

11 We pray that you may be strengthened with all the power that comes from His glorious might, for you to have all kinds of patience and steadfastness. With joy

12 we give thanks to the Father, who qualified you to share in the inheritance of the kedoshim in the light.

Reflect:

The church at Colossae was under attack from false teachers who were denying the deity of Yeshua; they were teaching that He was not actually God. Though Paul had never been to Colossae itself, he addressed these issues head-on. The nature of Yeshua the Messiah as Creator and Redeemer was nonnegotiable, so Paul wrote to them in order to bring his wisdom to bear on this difficult and trying situation. It was critical to him that the Colossians know God in His greatness and glory instead of the picture of God that had been painted for them by these false teachers. He asks God to give them everything they need in order to know the truth about Yeshua as a foundation for every facet of their lives. Throughout the book of Colossians, Paul wants them to remember who Yeshua is and how He has called them to live; to live lives that are dead to sin and alive to the promises of God. He wants their walk with Him to be led by and filled with the Holy Spirit so that they can go on to do good works in the name of Yeshua.

God wants the same for us at Restoration. He wants our hearts to be filled with God's Ruach (His Spirit) and He wants us to allow His Spirit to lead us and guide us in our everyday lives. This will take a focused commitment on our part to spend time with Him in His word and in prayer. As we move forward as a congregation we need to invite Him into our daily lives, the decisions we make, and the actions we take. When we do this, our walk with Him will be filled with the opportunity to do great and mighty things in His name.

Prayer: Lord, we want to know You for who You really are and not just what culture says about You. Fill us with your Spirit and help us to be able to recognize the truth about who You are. Come into our daily lives and make Your home in us; lead us and guide us in every decision and action we take. In Yeshua's name, amen.

May 29 at sundown - Day 49
Today is day 49 of counting the Omer
Today is day 49 out of Egypt
Today is day 49 of Messiah Resurrected

One People, One Direction (Psalm 133:1-3)

Blessing of Unity

1 A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard —Aaron's beard— coming down on the collar of his robes.

3 It is like the dew of Hermon, coming down upon the mountains of Zion. For there Adonai commanded the blessing —life forevermore!

Reflect:

Restoration is made up of many different kinds of people; people of different ages and backgrounds. For us to become the kind of congregation God wants us to be we must have unity! Here the psalmist is talking about a different kind of goodness than what we get from pleasure or food. He's talking about the goodness of God we experience when we are one people headed in one direction. When we crucify our flesh and love one another unconditionally, this goodness becomes plain to see for not only those in our community, but those outside it as well. When they see God's goodness, they will want it in their lives as well!

Prayer: Lord, help us to be one people who are headed in one direction. Help us to seek unity regardless of any differences we might have. Help us to be unified, and to use that unity as an attractational force to draw people far from You near! In Yeshua's name, amen!

May 30 at sundown - Day 50
Today is day 50 of counting the Omer
Today is day 50 out of Egypt
Today is day 50 of Messiah Resurrected

The Next Step (Acts 2:1-47)

The Ruach Fills the Disciples

- 1 When the day of Shavuot had come, they were all together in one place.*
- 2 Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*
- 3 And tongues like fire spreading out appeared to them and settled on each one of them.*
- 4 They were all filled with the Ruach ha-Kodesh and began to speak in other tongues as the Ruach enabled them to speak out.*
- 5 Now Jewish people were staying in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.*
- 6 And when this sound came, the crowd gathered. They were bewildered, because each was hearing them speaking in his own language.*
- 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "All these who are speaking—aren't they Galileans?"*
- 8 How is it that we each hear our own birth language?*
- 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and those living in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,*
- 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and parts of Libya toward Cyrene, and visitors from Rome*
- 11 (both Jewish people and proselytes), Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring in our own tongues the mighty deeds of God!"*
- 12 And they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to each other, "What does this mean?"*
- 13 Others, poking fun, were saying, "They are full of sweet new wine!"*

Peter Speaks to the Shavuot Crowd

- 14 But Peter, standing with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: "Fellow Judeans and all who are staying in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words.*
- 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose—for it's only the third hour of the day!*
- 16 But this is what was spoken about through the prophet Joel:*

17 'And it shall be in the last days,' says God, 'that I will pour out My Ruach on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

18 Even on My slaves, male and female, I will pour out My Ruach in those days, and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will give wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth beneath— blood, and fire, and smoky vapor.

20 The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and glorious Day of Adonai comes.

21 And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of Adonai shall be saved.'

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words! Yeshua ha-Natzrati—a Man authenticated to you by God with mighty deeds and wonders and signs God performed through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know—

23 this Yeshua, given over by God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge, nailed to the cross by the hand of lawless men, you killed.

24 But God raised Him up, releasing Him from the pains of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held by it.

25 For David says about Him, 'I saw Adonai always before me, for He is at my right hand so that I might not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced; moreover, my body also will live in hope,

27 because You will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let Your Holy One see decay.

28 You have made known to me the paths of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence.'

29 "Brothers, I can confidently tell you that the patriarch David died and was buried—his tomb is with us to this day.

30 So because he was a prophet and knew God had sworn with an oath to him to seat one of his descendants on his throne,

31 David saw beforehand and spoke of Messiah's resurrection—that He was not abandoned to Sheol, and His body did not see decay.

32 "This Yeshua God raised up—we all are witnesses!

33 Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God and receiving from the Father the promise of the Ruach ha-Kodesh, He poured out this—what you now see and hear.

34 For David did not ascend into the heavens; yet he himself says, 'Adonai said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'"

36 "Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him—this Yeshua whom you had crucified—both Lord and Messiah!"

Teshuvah—Thousands Immersed

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the emissaries, "Fellow brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Messiah Yeshua for the removal of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach ha-Kodesh.

39 For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far away—as many as Adonai our God calls to Himself."

40 With many other words he warned them and kept urging them, saying, "Save yourselves from this twisted generation!"

41 So those who received his message were immersed, and that day about three thousand souls were added.

New Covenant Community Begins

42 They were devoting themselves to the teaching of the emissaries and to fellowship, to breaking bread and to prayers.

43 Fear lay upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were happening through the emissaries.

44 And all who believed were together, having everything in common.

45 They began selling their property and possessions and sharing them with all, as any had need.

46 Day by day they continued with one mind, spending time at the Temple and breaking bread from house to house. They were sharing meals with gladness and sincerity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord was adding to their number those being saved.

Reflect:

By the time the event of Acts 2 had occurred, many things had changed in the lives of the disciples. Yeshua had been executed, resurrected, and had ascended into heaven. The disciples had lost their leader, and were waiting for instructions on what to do next. Instead of allowing depression or confusion to enter into their minds, they banded together. They prayed and waited patiently for what was coming next. It is certain that they didn't expect the way that God had showed up, but after it was over, there was no doubt that this was what they were waiting for... The next step had come, and it would change not only their lives but countless others from that moment on. As we reflect on what this means, it is important to realize that God wants to work the same way through us. He wants to send His Spirit in a new and powerful way so that lives will be changed, hearts healed, and souls coming to know Him. The possibilities are endless.

Prayer: Lord, I want to experience Your Holy Spirit like the disciples did. Help me to be patient and wait for You when I don't know what to do. In Yeshua's name, amen.

