

The Broken Wall

“Finding True Peace”

I. SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:14 – “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation”.

II. THE BERLIN WALL

Next week, this coming Friday, June 12, it will have been 33 years since then US President Ronald Reagan delivered a speech that is known as the “Tear down this wall!” speech; it is also known as the Berlin Wall Speech. You see, Germany was a divided country back then, brother into an East and a West Germany.

The East Germany’s government had built a wall that had divided the country; it was called the Berlin Wall. East Germany claimed that the wall was built to keep its enemies out. But before the Wall's erection, 3.5 million East Germans had ignored East Germany’s emigration restrictions and defected by crossing over the border from East Berlin into West Berlin... and from there they could then travel to West Germany and to other Western European countries.

The Berlin Wall was a guarded concrete barrier that physically and ideologically divided Berlin between 1961 and 1989. Construction of the Wall was started by Eastern Germany on August 13, 1961, and was completed virtually overnight. The Wall cut off West Berlin from surrounding East Germany, including East Berlin. This barrier included guard towers placed along large concrete walls, accompanied by a wide area (later known as the "death strip") that contained anti-vehicle trenches, beds of nails, and other defenses. As a result, between 1961 and 1989, the Wall prevented almost all such emigration.

While during this period, over 100,000 people attempted to escape, and over 5,000 people succeeded in escaping over the Wall, the estimated death toll from those who failed range from 136 to more than 200 in and around Berlin.

Back then, 33 years ago this coming week, a speech was delivered by then US President Ronald Reagan, that we have come to know as the “Tear Down This Wall!”, or the “Berlin Wall” speech.

III. "TEAR DOWN THIS WALL!"

The "Tear Down this Wall" speech was delivered by United States President Ronald Reagan in West Berlin on June 12, 1987. He had just attended a G7 Heads of State summit in Venice, Italy. (Comment: Venice right now is being flooded by an unusually high tide, the 3rd highest ever for the month of June.) So after his G7 meeting, President Reagan announces that he would take a side trip to Berlin. As a result, 50,000 people in Berlin began to demonstrate against his arrival. Ang by the time of his arrival, wide portions of Berlin had to be closed off to prevent any further protests. But despite these protests, President Reagan gives his speech, and called on then General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, who pretty much governed East Germany, to open the Berlin Wall. The name of this speech is derived from a key line in the speech where the President says: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!": The speech went like this:

"We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace. There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev... Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

IV. THE BIBLE'S "TORN DOWN" WALL

Did you know that the Bible, through the Apostle Paul, talks about a "torn down" wall? Today's "torn wall" scripture, found on the front of the bulletin, is from Ephesians chapter 2:

"For He – [MASHIACH YAHUSHA (Christ Jesus)] Himself is our peace, Who has made both one, and has *broken down the middle wall of separation*" (Ephesians 2:14).

You will recall from last week's message, that there is symbolism for the two (2) leavened bread loaves that we discussed... that the Bible tells us that as we *emerge* from our dwellings for the "Shavuot" [Pentecost] feast of YAHUAH [the LORD] ... that took place just seven (7) to eight (8) days ago... that we are to leave our homes and present these leavened loaves to the Priest...

The leaven in the loaves we learned, represent sin. The two (2) leavened loaves we learned, were both the Jews and the Gentiles. We also learned last week from the book of Acts that there were two (2) outpourings of the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit] in the early church: the one (1) that fell in the upper room on the Jews and Jewish proselytes (found in Acts 2) and the one (1) that fell on the Gentiles: Cornelius, his family and friends, and others that had gathered there (found in Acts 10).

We learned that as we – each and all, are to emerge from our dwellings – our houses – at Shavuot [Pentecost], to bring ourselves as sinners (as the leaven in the loaves) and as two (2) groups of believers – Jews and Gentile – united into one (1) body, as a gift offering to our High Priest YAHUSHA [the LORD].

And this is the exact meaning behind today's scripture. For the Scriptures read:

“But now, in MASHIACH YAHUSHA [Christ Jesus] you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the MESSIAH [Christ]'s blood. For He Himself is our Shalom [Peace] — He has made us both [Jew and Gentile] *one* and has broken down the middle wall which divided us by destroying in His own body the enmity (feud, hostility) occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. He did this in order to create in union with Himself from the two (2) groups [Jew and Gentile] a single [unified] new humanity and thus make shalom [peace], and in order to reconcile to YAHUAH [God] both in a single body... by being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus in Himself killing that enmity.” (Ephesians 2:13-16)

“Also, when He came, He announced as shalom [peace] to [those] far off and shalom [peace] to those *nearby*, Good News that through Him we both have access in one RUACH [Spirit] to the Father.” (Ephesians 2:17-18)

“So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers. On the contrary, you are fellow-citizens with YAHUAH [God]'s people and members of YAHUAH [God]'s family. You have been built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with the Cornerstone being YAHUSHA [Jesus] the Messiah Himself. In union with Him, the whole building is held together and it is growing into a holy temple in union with YAHUAH [the LORD]. Yes! In union with Him, you [a sinner, whether Jew or Gentile] ... *yourselves* are being built together into a spiritual dwelling-place for YAHUAH [God]!” (Ephesians 2:19-22) Yes... this is no less than “the welding together of RUACH [Spirit]-filled disciples into one organism—the living body of MESSIAH [Christ]” that we have discussed last week...

... that happened after the first Shavuot [Pentecost] 2,000 years ago and is expected to happen again following Shavuot [Pentecost] in the present age.

V. RE-EMERGING AS A UNITED BODY

Now brothers and sisters... today, as countries, states and provinces are reopening after the COVID-19 pestilence, have you re-emerged from your dwelling? As “houses of worship” have been given a conditional permission to reopen, have you re-emerged to present yourselves as a first-fruits offering, “a holy temple in union with YAHUAH [the LORD] ...!”?

“I beseech you therefore, brethren [and sisters], by the mercies of YAH [God], that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to YAHUAH [God], which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of YAH [God].” (Romans 12:1-2)

We are told, and we have learned from our recent study in the book of Hebrews:

“Therefore, brethren [and sisters, we are to] have boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of YASHUAH [Jesus]” by our holy, living sacrifice... (Comment: John Ramirez’s questions this week: “Who is with you in the Holiest place?” Are they united with us in holiness of purpose? Compare to the Holy and Outer court.) ...

“by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of YAHUAH [God], let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you [and I] see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:19-25)

Yes, I’m asking you again not: are you yet still afraid to re-emerge from your dwellings? In case you haven’t noticed, while you hesitate, the world is re-emerging... without hesitation.

Some are re-emerging from their dwellings to places of work. It was reported just last night that the “U.S. economy added a surprise 2.5 million jobs in May” and that “the U.S. May unemployment rate fell to 13.3%”

... and yet not *all* are re-emerging from their dwellings to work; some are re-emerging en masse, many to protest... many in “division”, in anarchy... in a hateful and violent way, committing acts of evil and destruction:

- In the United States, protests following the death of George Floyd have now lasted for over a week.
- In the Philippines, protesters are sounding the alarm over a new anti-terror bill that some fear will suppress free speech.
- Protests in Hong Kong have reignited after Beijing set out to impose national security legislation.
- In Toronto, the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet while police were in her apartment led to protests against racial inequity.
- Israelis are protesting the killing of a teacher at the hands of Israeli police and are rallying in solidarity with United States protesters.
- In Brazil, residents have turned out to protest police brutality and to weigh in on ongoing investigations against the country's president.
- Chileans are protesting coronavirus lockdowns and food shortages.

And yet, while the world is protesting what they consider to be their “truth”, their “righteous” causes... in contrast, you and I are told that we are to offer ourselves as a righteous “living sacrifice unto YAHUAH [God]”, and that we are “not to be conformed to this world”... despite whether the world thinks their causes to be righteous or not... that doesn’t matter. Instead, if we are YAHUAH [the LORD]’s chosen people, whether Jew or Gentile, then we are to offer our righteous “reasonable service” until Him instead of acts of a worldly nature.

I know from my own witness and from the testimony of others... that many of our group have re-emerged from our dwellings since Shavuot [Pentacost] to offer deeds of love and kindness toward our Christian brothers and sisters: gifts of food, grocery store gift cards, offers of personal service, etc. And yes! This is exactly what a picture of our “reasonable service” should look like.

Did you know, that the house of Cornelius, that includes his relatives, friends and those others that were gathered... that before they *all* received the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit], they were "giving to the poor" (Acts 10:31)? That just confirms that these gifts of kindness that some of you are doing are definitely a "reasonable service". But what else should we be doing during this time?

Did you know that before the Cornelius Gentile's received the first Pentecost rain, that they were gathering together? For Dr Luke says that there was "a large gathering of people" (Acts 10:27) who were "praying" together (Acts 10:30). So we, too, each one of us as members of His body... we should be gathering together... praying together... performing "holy" deeds that only validate that each one of us is truly a member of The One body of MESSIAH [Christ], united by the RUACH [Spirit], into our Righteous Father.

You may want to tell me today that we *are* gathered together and praying together via our virtual gatherings, especially during our mid-week service. Yes, while I am definitely in support of such meetings that allow us to extend our unity to others, we must *also* realize the fact that before the Jewish group received the first Pentecost rain, that they were gathered "all together in one place" (Acts 2:1), before "*all of them* were filled with the RUACH HA'QODESH [Holy Spirit]", and "the RUACH [Spirit] *enabled* them" (Acts 2:4). Compare that to the directive that we are to "leave our dwellings" to present our sacrifice.

VI. BREAKING DOWN THE WALL OF SEPARATION

Even today, dear brothers and sisters, there remains a divide amount YAHUAH [God]'s body: His church. Our Savior's purpose, going all the way back to His long prayer recorded in John 17, is to have a united body, a united church... He allowed His personal body to be broken so that we would be united, unbroken spiritual body in Him. His prayer for us is "that [My people] *all* may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21)... "that the world has not known You [Father]" (John 17:25), but "that the love with which You [Father] loved Me may be in [My people], and I in them" (John 17:26).

You and I must recognize that in YAHUSHA [Jesus], that "He Himself (and only in Him) is our Shalom [peace], who has made [us] both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation" between us, whether we are Jew or Gentile...

Whether a member of His worldwide Body in the US, in the Philippines, in Hong Kong, Toronto, Israel, Brazil, Chili, or of any other nation, tribe or tongue!

Yes! We are at Peace – individually and collectively as a congregation – if we truly believe AND truly live a life that says to the world that MESSIAH [Christ] has truly broken down the middle wall of separation between us.

“But now, [brothers and sisters] in MASHIACH YAHUSHA [Christ Jesus], you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Christ’s blood. [Remember] for He Himself is our Shalom [Peace] — [for] He has made us both one and has broken down the middle wall which divided us by destroying in His own body the enmity (feud, hostility), occasioned by the [legalities] of ordinances of the Torah. He did this in order to create in union with Himself from the two (2) groups... into a single [unified] new humanity and thus make shalom [peace].” (Ephesians 2:13-15)

Today, are you a part of the emerging, unified body of MASHIACH [Christ]: *not* conformed to this world, but offering yourself instead as a living and righteous sacrifice until Him? And by offering yourself to Him, are you shining a righteous “light” into a dark world, through your reasonable service?

Or are you a part of... “conformed” to... a dark world that is emerging... who is protesting... seeking their own path, their own “righteous” causes...

... that is in contrasts to the righteousness of our Savior?

VII. TODAY’S PRAYER

Dear Father,

I pray that we can each achieve a level of love and civility toward one another today... where You... Your Shalom [Peace], your RUACH [Spirit] overwhelms us...

...where the walls of hatred and division are broken down... where our truly righteous protest is directed against our internal ruach [spirit] of violence, our internal ruach [spirit] anger... that live within us, and not directly toward others.

I pray today... that we will begin to produce non-stop acts of love and kindness toward one another... yes, deeds of love and kindness that only the RUACH HA’QODESH [Spirit] can produce in us, through our unconditional love and union with our ADONAI [Lord] and Savior.

Yes dear Father, this is my prayer today. Yes dear YAHUAH, this is the prayer of Your people today. Prayed through the almighty name of your Son and our Savior YAHUSHA HA'MASHIACH [Jesus Christ].

Amen.

References & Credits:

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