

Obedience Brings a Reward

Does Adonai delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Adonai? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22a).

I love this verse. We are called to obedience to *Yah Adonai* and Scripture makes it clear that obedience *is better than sacrifice*. I believe that as far as we are concerned here in *Kol Simcha* we are definitely prepared to obey. What is often hidden from us is that *Obedience Brings a Reward*.

In last week's message on *Parashat Tol'dot* we saw that *Esau* disregarded his parent's admonition about marrying *Hitti* women. *Esau* was concerned only with himself (self-centered) and with those things that brought him personal satisfaction. This is another Biblical example of children indulging in what the world has to offer using the resources (at the expense) of the parents. This is a reminder of the saying: *What the parents allow in moderation, their children excuse in excess!* *Isaac* is old, but he is not in his death bed yet and, in fact, he will live many more years. What parent would send away one of his sons in his later years? But the thought of potentially more of the same behavior from *Jacob* as from *Esau* would not only kill *Rebekah* but also ultimately destroy *Isaac*. We see that *Jacob* obeys immediately. Is there a reward in instantaneous and immediate obedience?

Also in last week's message, I shared that *Isaac* sent *Jacob* away with this blessing: *"¹So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, commanded him and said to him, "Don't take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. ²Get up, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take for yourself a wife from there, from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. ³Now may El Shaddai bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you so that you will become an assembly of peoples. ⁴And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you that you may take possession of the land of your sojourn, which God gave to Abraham" (Genesis 28:1-4).* Let us consider the blessing in detail: *"May El Shaddai (The Almighty) bless you."* This immediately reveals *Yah Adonai* can do everything (*The Almighty*) since nothing is impossible with Him. Then, *"(May He) make you fruitful and multiply you."* *Jacob* will have many male children, but He doesn't even have a wife! *"...you will become an assembly (congregation) of peoples."* His children will become *diversified people*. *"So you may take possession of the land of your sojourn, which Adonai gave to Abraham."* Notice that *Jacob* receives the *Abrahamic* blessing; he will be destined to be the *father of many nations* and possess the land of Israel. Scripture tells us that when *Esau* saw that *Jacob obeyed his father and mother* (Vv. 7) in a despicable and contemptible response (*"⁸Then Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were contemptible in his father Isaac's eyes"*) he took for himself an additional wife from the *daughters of Ishmael*. The correct action should have been to *obey first* and not after doing it your own way initially. *"¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long upon the land which Adonai your God is giving you."* Or *"Honor your father and mother"* (which is the first commandment with a promise),³*"so that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth"* (Ex. 20:12 & Eph. 6:2-3). *Jacob* obeyed immediately (*grudgingly?*) or maybe he just *complied* with his dad since the verse indicates that he was *sent away* and not that he left on his own volition. Even in this scenario, *Obedience Brings a Reward*.

In today's *Parashat Vayetze* we see *Adonai's* blessing fulfilled. While *Jacob* is sad leaving everything that means anything to him – home, parents, family, wealth, and comfort when he sees *Rachel*, it is all forgotten. *Jacob's* obedience to his parents brings him his beloved *Rachel*, plus her sister, a large family, and prosperity. *Adonai* gave him everything that was prophesied in his father's blessing. I believe the same is true today – sons and daughters reap great promises and blessings by the simple act of obedience to their parent's *righteous instructions*.

Adonai's Will is not hidden from us – we do not have to guess anymore about what He wants for our lives. He wants us to *sh'ma* – to *prove that we heard His Word by our actions*. This is called obedience. Our ancestors said: “*Na-aseh V’Nishma*” (see *Ex. 19:8 and 24:3*) - “*all the words Adonai has spoken, we will do and we will obey.*” Unlike our forefathers who were hearing His Words for the first time, we have an advantage because we have His written Word and His *Torah*. We need not be deceived anymore because we can live our life *according to His Will*. These are not my words or your parent’s words – these are *Adonai's Words*. Scripture has given us the benefit of having an absolutely reliable roadmap for our lives therefore, *will you obey and reap a great reward?*

Scripture shows us the cyclic nature of life (*Eccl. 3:15*). But we *CAN* break this cycle of iniquity and it is time to break the train of consequences that plague us. There is *great reward awaiting us if we obey*. We can with *His Spirit* on our side and with *His Strength* change the course of history. I challenge us to rise and become a *generation of over-comers*. By faith we are that generation. *Shabbat Shalom!*