Possessing Your Promised Land

**8—A BETTER LIFE**

July 3, 2022

**EZZAT GHOBRIAL, FATEN KHALIL, CAMP. PASTORS + ARABIC CONGREGATION**

* From Cairo, Egypt… Married in 1985… very well educated
* One was a **physician** (him) and the other an **electrical engineer** (her)
* Came to US in 2013… led Arabic cong. @ Nazarene church
* Pastor Ezzat and Faten work together as a ministry team
* One daughter Christine, 36 … lives is Orange County
* One son Michael, 33 …lives in Anaheim and works in IT.
* The Rock Anaheim Arabic Church led by Pastor Ezzat and Faten
* Services begin **next Sunday**, July 10 in the Office Conference Room.
* **interest meeting** – Int. in joining or helping… conference room after service
* Help us get the word out

**LET’S OPEN OUR BIBLES TO DEUTERONOMY 8.**

**Deuteronomy 8:1 (NKJV)** “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may **live** and **multiply**, and **go in** and **possess** the land of **which the Lord swore** to your fathers.

**INTRODUCTION**

**IN ONE SENSE, LIVING LIFE IS ABOUT TRADING THINGS. EVERY DAY WE TRADE OUR TIME TO ACCOMPLISH, OR GAIN, OR DO THINGS WE WANT TO DO. AT NIGHT, WE TRADE  THOSE THINGS WE WANT TO DO FOR SLEEP. WE TRADE MONEY FOR FOOD, HOUSING, CLOTHING, AND ENTERTAINMENT. WE TRADE WORDS WITH ONE ANOTHER TO SEE BENEFIT AND IMPROVED CONDITIONS IN VARIOUS SECTORS OF OUR LIVES.**

**TODAY, GOD WANTS TO TALK TO US ABOUT TRADING. TRADING THE LIFE THAT OUR FLESH WANTS TO LIVE FOR THE LIFE GOD PLANNED FOR US. TO THE IMMATURE, IT FEELS LIKE A LOSS, BUT TO THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND, IT’S THE BIGGEST GAIN ONE CAN HAVE. IN FACT, IT’S NOT MERELY A PREFERRED  OUTCOME, IT’S THE ONLY OPTION.**

**IF YOU ARE BORN AGAIN, YOU’RE A SPIRIT HAS THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE. WILL YOU CHOOSE WHAT YOUR FLASH WANTS TO DO… FLESH THAT HAS NO SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING OR AWARENESS? OR WILL YOU DO WHAT GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO DO, WHICH WILL SEEM TO YOUR FLESH AND MIND LIK LIKE YOU ARE LOSING.**

**THERE IS A LOT AT STAKE WITH GOD‘S MESSAGE TODAY. LET’S LISTEN CLOSELY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THEN ASK GOD TO HELP US MAKE ALL THE RIGHT DECISIONS.**

**WE MUST CIRCUMCISE THINGS**

**Joshua 5:1–12 (NKJV)** So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel. **2** At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.” **3** So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. **4** And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. **5** For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. **6** For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord—to whom the Lord swore that He would not show them the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, “a land flowing with milk and honey.” **7** Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. **8** So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. **9** Then the Lord said to Joshua, “This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day. **10** Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. **11** And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. **12** Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

**CIRCUMCISION WAS GIVEN AS A SIGN OF THE COVENANT. IN OTHER WORDS, IT SHOWS WHETHER OR NOT YOU’RE IN COVENANT WITH GOD.

DAVID CALLED GOLIATH AND UNCIRCUMCISED PHILISTINE.

GOD PUT THE COVENANT SCAR IN A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE COULDN’T SEE IT FROM THE OUTSIDE.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, CIRCUMCISION IS OF THE HEART.… WHERE PEOPLE CAN’T ALWAYS SEE IF YOU’RE REALLY IN COVENANT WITH GOD… BUT GOD CAN SEE IN YOUR HEART WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE CUT AWAY YOUR FLESHLY DESIRES AND YIELD TO GODS COMMANDS.**

**IN ACTS 15 PAUL CONFRONTED A DOCTRINE THAT THE BELIEVERS IN THE JERUSALEM CHURCH AND MOST ALL OF THE 12 APOSTLES OF JESUS BELIEVED… THAT GENTILES (NON-JEWS) WERE REQUIRED TO BE CIRCUMCISED TO BE SAVED… AND AFTER A LONG AND MAJOR DISCUSSION, WITH PETER AND JESUS’ BROTHER JAMES SIDING WITH PAUL, THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOWED ALL THE OTHER APOSTLES AND ELDERS (THE MANY PASTORS) OF THE CHURCH THAT CIRCUMCISION WAS NOT REQUIRED FOR GENTILES BECAUSE SALVATION DOES NOT HAPPEN BY SOMETHING WE DO TO THE FLESH, BUT RATHER BY SOMETHING A CIRCUMCISION THAT HAPPENS IN YOUR HEART.**

**HOWEVER, IN THE VERY NEXT CHAPTER, ACTS 16, AFTER SETTLING THAT GENTILES DO NOT HAVE TO BE CIRCUMCISED TO BE SAVED, PAUL TOOK A YOUNG DISCIPLE NAMED TIMOTHY WHO WAS CALLED TO BE IN THE MINISTRY AND HE MADE HIM GET  CIRCUMCISED. WHY? BECAUSE MANY JEWS STILL BELIEVED IF YOU WEREN’T CIRCUMCISED THEN YOU WERE REALLY COMMITTED TO GOD… AND PAUL KNEW THAT PART OF TIMOTHY’S MINISTRY CALLING—HIS PROMISED LAND—WAS TO REACH JEWS.**

**JESUS SAID, EVERY BRANCH THAT BEARS FRUIT THE FATHER PRUNES THAT IT MAY BEAR MORE FRUIT.**

**WILL YOU ALLOW GOD TO PRUNE YOU SO THAT YOU CAN BEAR MORE FRUIT?**

**SOME PEOPLE, UNLESS THEY ALLOW GOD TO PRUNE THEM WILL NOT EVEN BE SAVED.**

**Matthew 16:13–26 (NKJV)** When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” **14** So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” **15** He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” **16** Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” **17** Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. **18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. **19** And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” **20** Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. **21** From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. **22** Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” **23** But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” **24** Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. **25** For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. **26** For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

**THE PROPHET MICAH BEMOANED HOW FEW RIGHTEOUS THERE WERE**

**Micah 7:2–6 (NKJV)** The faithful man has perished from the earth, And there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; Every man hunts his brother with a net. **3** That they may successfully do evil with both hands— The prince asks for gifts, The judge seeks a bribe, And the great man utters his evil desire; So they scheme together. **4** The best of them is like a brier; The most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; The day of your watchman and your punishment comes; Now shall be their perplexity. **5** Do not trust in a friend; Do not put your confidence in a companion; Guard the doors of your mouth From her who lies in your bosom. **6** For son dishonors father, Daughter rises against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man’s enemies are the men of his own household.

**MANY PEOPLE DON’T REALIZE THAT JESUS QUOTED THIS PASSAGE**

**Luke 12:51–53 (NKJV)** Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. **52** For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. **53** Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

**WHAT IS JESUS SAYING? … JESUS IS SAYING THAT THINGS HAVE GOTTEN SO BAD ON THE EARTH THAT MOST OF THE RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE ARE SINNING AND COMPROMISING … AND BECAUSE OF SIN, FAMILIES ARE DIVIDED…**

**… SO WHAT DOES JESUS DO? … HE IS GOING TO USE THE SHARP SWORD OF THE WORD OF GOD**

**Hebrews 4:12–13 (NKJV)** For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. **13** And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

**WHAT IS HE SAYING? … THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS SO ALIVE… AND SHARP… AND SEES EVERYTHING… IT DOESN’T MISS A THING… THE WORD OF GOD KNOWS WHO THE RIGHTEOUS ARE AND WHO THE WICKED ARE …**

**… AND TO SPARE THE RIGHTEOUS, HE’S GOING TO SEPARATE THOSE WHO ARE WICKED FROM THOSE WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS… HE’S GOING TO CIRCUMCISE THE WICKED FROM THE RIGHTEOUS AND MAKE A CLEAR DISTINCTION TO THAT THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO FOLLOW HIM MAY BE SAVED.**

**LET’S READ WHAT JESUS SAID NOW FROM MATTHEW’S GOSPEL… AND MAY IT ALL BECOME CLEAR TO YOU IN JESUS’ NAME**

**Matthew 10:34–39 (NKJV)** “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. **35** For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; **36** and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ **37** He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. **38** And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. **39** He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

**EX – I Know a man who had walked away from the Lord… and while he was away he got married and had children… but God, because of His abundant grace, continued reaching out to this man, and eventually penetrated the callousness of his hard heart… and God poured out His love upon him and wonderfully saved him… again. But the man’s wife did not understand what was happening. How could her husband just change like that? How could he now want to listen to different music, watch different things, talk differently, and not want to participate in any sin? It didn’t make sense to her. And though he tried to win her, and at least keep the marriage together for the sake of the kids, she basically gave him an ultimatum… he had to choose… it was either stay married to her or follow Jesus, but it couldn’t be both. It was one of the toughest decisions anyone could have to make. And thank God… he made the decision to take up his cross… and to die to his life here on earth that he might have eternal life through Jesus. She ended the marriage and he continues to walk in love with his family… but he chose Jesus.**

**EX - Mark 10 - the rich young ruler**

**EX - Judas, one of the 12, could not circumcise the opportunity to increase his wealth**

**EX - There are certain things that I know God has called me not to do to fulfill my ministry assignment. Many believers today—including many ministers—drink alcohol… but Kimberly and I know that God has not called us to**

**EX – Jesus’ Church group studies**

* **Privacy**
* **Preference**
* **Pride or embarrassment of not having the home or money you’d like… Jesus always wants to use what we have, not what we should have or want to have**

**EX – Jesus’**

**EX - God calling Kimberly and me to sell our home and move to a new neighborhood… and it opened the door to new land and ministry.**

**EX - My girlfriend**

**EX - I quit college twice… I knew down inside I wasn’t in the right place**

**SOME SACRIFICES NEED TO BE MADE BEFORE THEY START**

**EX - God gave me a job at a grocery store making $4.00 an hour… that was a raise from what I was making at In-N-Out… which was more than I was making at Jack in the Box. God blessed me and promoted me at the grocery store and I was able to start Bible college … and God strengthened me to work really hard… but when they offered to bring me into management, I graciously turned it down.**

**EX - I left my job working at the grocery store and accepted a position as youth pastor making about 25% of the salary.**

**EX - Pastor Ezzat and Faten left their careers as a physician and an electrical engineer to pursue their promised land**

**EX - Sesame Street Song — You’ve got to put down the ducky (Ernie, if you want to play the saxophone)**

**EX - TV & Entertainment**

**EX – The disciples left their nets… positions… professions… security**

**EX – Michael Card’s song: Things We Leave Behind**

There sits Simon,
so foolishly wise
proudly he's tending his nets
Then Jesus calls,
and the boats drift away
all that he owns he forgets

[But] More than the nets
he abandoned that day,
he found that his pride was soon drifting away
It's hard to imagine the freedom we find
from the things we leave behind

Matthew was mindful
of taking the tax,
pressing the people to pay
Hearing the call,
he responded in faith
followed the Light and the Way

[But] Leaving the people
so puzzled he found,
the greed in his heart
was no longer around and
it's hard to imagine
the freedom we find
from the things
we leave behind

Every heart needs to be set free,
from possessions
that hold it so tight
'Cause freedom's not found in the things that we own,
[but] It's the power
to do what is right
[With] Jesus, our only possession,
[then] giving becomes our delight
We can't imagine the freedom we find
from the things we leave behind

We show a love for the world in our lives
by worshipping goods we possess
Jesus [said lay] all our treasures aside
[and] "love God above all the rest"

'Cause when we say 'no'
to the things of the world
we open our hearts
to the love of the Lord and
it's hard to imagine
the freedom we find
from the things we leave behind

[deleted final repeat]