

**Welcome to TFW's Mountain Moments. I am Judith Garton. We have been working on lessons for our prayer journals, and this is another great one in that topic.**

**Scripture says...**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you,..." Matthew 5:43-44 WEB*

In these verses, Yeshua delivered to his disciples a message that applies to us now, too. These are some deeply challenging words of counsel. If there is any question about who he means, he tells us which people to consider our enemies. Those who:

- ~~ Curse us. Which means someone who speaks, invokes, or expresses evil upon us.
- ~~ Hate us.
- ~~ Mistreat us.
- ~~ Persecute us.

We may find these people are strangers, our friends, or even family. We may also run into them as co-workers, someone we are hired to do a job for, or someone we employ. It is difficult to know in what areas of life we might find conflict these days. No matter the circumstances, we are to try and focus on the two greatest commandments of loving God and loving our neighbor. A quick note here that our neighbor isn't just someone who lives next door to us or across the street. Our neighbor is anyone nearby, or our countrymen (and yes, women!).

How are we to treat them? We are to love, bless, do good to, and pray for our enemies – whether they love us, hate us, curse us, forgive us, mistreat or persecute us, it matters not. We are to PRAY for them.

**Today let's explore, though, HOW can we bring ourselves to pray for our enemies? Especially if praying FOR them might appear to be approving of sin, or sinful lifestyle?**

**First, I believe we ought to know what enemies we have. I see our enemies appear in two different types, both with the potential to do what Yeshua described in Matt 5: curse, hate, mistreat, or persecute us.**

**1) is someone where there is a direct issue with or between us. This is a person who believes they have been wronged BY us, or whom we believe has wronged us.**

**And 2) there are those people who could be interpreted as an enemy of Yahweh and His teachings. Which, by default, may be an enemy of our beliefs, lives or lifestyle**

**because we stand for Yahweh's teachings and truth. This latter one is who we will see more and more frequently in coming times.**

We live in an upside-down world. And each day it seems verses like the ones in Matthew 5 become more and more complicated to apply in our lives. Often we think of our "enemies" as ONLY those people who have literally wronged or harmed us in some way. A personal enemy who has hurt us, tarnished our reputation, caused emotional harm to someone we love, or even physically harmed someone.

This CAN be an enemy, but in this ever changing and flexible world, we may run across someone who is more of a "spiritual enemy" or an enemy of Yahweh more and more frequently – especially with so much sin and immoral behaviour being excuse and tolerated. Someone who has habits or lives a lifestyle, possibly even works for a company, that is contrary to the teachings of Yahweh – and we may find ourselves in the position to have to stand up for truth and righteousness as a representative of Abba. When we do this it may cause conflict between us.

No matter which enemy it is, what we will be discussing can apply and guide us in both areas. However, I am going to be focusing mostly on the enemy of the Body of the church, or of the Biblical doctrines. The enemy of Yahweh, so to speak. I am doing this because we recently had a conversation here at home over the work Jim does as part of his being bi-vocational, which means, earning an outside living while being in ministry. Just quickly – many in ministry do this when ministry is not paying for itself.

Over the last few years, we have seen several examples of an enemy of Yahweh's teachings brushing through our life for a few moments or days, while Jim works or from situations in family or friendships. We will see people who work for a questionable corporation or in a job position which goes against Yahweh's moral teachings. If I say something as simple as infanticide or diversity, I hope you will understand the industries of which I am speaking.

Often in cases like this, as believers, we may find a need to pray for these people, and it may present in ways we hadn't anticipated. You see, someone who is caught up in the moral depravity of our world still may be a father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter or so on. They may have obligations and responsibilities at home that they **have to** be able to keep because those obligations are Biblically correct. For example, taking financial care of wife and children, caring for the elderly, court ordered obligations, **ARE** just some of the responsibilities which they may need to meet, and their job may be their only current way to accomplish that.

We might find ourselves feeling as though we should be praying AGAINST these people and praying against them in a powerful way. Thoughts may cross our mind about praying they lose their job, aren't able to find a new one, or that they suffer the consequences of

their actions. In what we feel as justifiable words, we may find ourselves praying things which go against what Abba really wants for us to pray for this person. We need to be in tune with the Holy Spirit at these times so we CAN HEAR what it is that these people TRULY NEED in their lives, and in the lives of those close to them.

I have examples in my OWN life where I have prayed MY opinions, and not listened to Yahweh. One example is when I prayed for what I THOUGHT was the right thing, but it did not end the way I wanted. Years ago, having conflict with someone who deeply wronged me, I prayed Yahweh would reveal their "TRUE HEART." I did this because I believed they had, somewhere in them, a pure, kind, loving heart. I could not accept that the way things were playing out was how their heart truly was inside, angry, bitter, hateful, hardened. But my prayers didn't go quite as I expected.

The person's heart turned more bitter and angry week by week, and things got much worse – I literally cried one day to Yahweh and asked him, "WHY? I don't understand!" I did not like His answer. He said, "You prayed what YOU believed was right to pray, and NOT what I wanted of this person. So, I answered YOUR prayer as you prayed it – for their TRUE HEART to be revealed. You SHOULD have asked for a PURE heart to be revealed. A heart filled with my Holy Spirit."

Ouch.

I should have taken into consideration that their need was for Yahweh to soften and change their heart, but instead, my asking for their "TRUE heart" only revealed that they had a lot of bitterness and anger deep inside. The way that this person acted out toward me truly was what was in their heart. I felt horribly responsible for the direction things had gone. And I changed my prayers to what Abba's desire truly was. What I realized is KEY to our discussion today – this person IS ABBA'S CREATION! Although they may not have experienced the change of heart spoken of in scripture, this person was still deserving of a chance to change and to accept Yeshua fully into their life. Plus, if willing to accept it, they have just as much right to that change of heart promised in scripture as I have.

***Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10 KJV***

They deserve this answer to prayer, too. Have you ever found yourself praying for a change in someone else and realized some if not more of that change needs to be in YOUR OWN HEART? That happened for me through this experience.

THIS is why I am asking you to consider a prayer challenge to pray for our enemies this next week. I am asking you to pray for your personal "enemies" but also for those who are enemies of Yahweh's Word. Sometimes we do not truly realize WHAT we should be

praying on their behalf. We need to listen to Yahweh, and pray for what that person truly needs.

When we are aware of someone involved in a life, job or business that is not in line with Yahweh's teachings, or someone has a business that, in general is a biblically sound business, but maybe the owners' or employees' practices may not line up with Yahweh's principles, we may want to pray for them. Take a breath and truly discover WHAT should be PRAYED.

We KNOW that we should be cautious, and we ought not pray for anti-Yahweh businesses, people or policies to stay in place, profit, succeed, or thrive. Yet have you ever thought about the PEOPLE as individuals? Let me explore something with you I shared recently with Jim.

As a career counselor, he often has to write for people who are looking in jobs, industries, or departments that go against Biblical standards. Many go greatly against Yahweh's moral teachings. These would be spiritual enemies in that they are pushing forward Satan's objectives, not Yahweh's. We don't want to pray for success of Satan's objectives.

One day I asked him: "Do you ever pray for those people who hire you? I mean truly heartfelt prayer as you begin or close out their account? Every single person you work for may be a single parent, a supportive parent, or the sole bread winner. They may have a family or extended family for whom they provide or bills to pay, just like we do. And they NEED to be able to do fulfill that responsibility." And I continued..."God tells us to pray for our enemies, why not pray for them? Even though they are OUR enemies or Abba's because of jobs they hold, Why not pray? As you begin and close out each job, pray for each person in these ways,"

and then I gave the following suggestions:

-- God, this person is involved in a business of the adversary, please bless me with the right wording to direct this person to a job which exposes them to people of faith, to people who can impress upon their lives, Your path for them. Please bless them with wisdom, knowledge and understanding of right and wrong, from your perspective. May they be guided and directed to truth and righteousness. Abba, I pray you may be able to remove them from this sinful life. Please help me to do all my work for You, and for your purpose.

-- I pray for this person, Abba, that they recognize a divine appointment in their lives, someone who will be able to impress upon them Your truth, to guide and direct them to a righteous life and family.

-- Father, I pray for the family of this person that they be lead away from false teachings, both moral and spiritual. I pray that this person be guided and directed to follow you.

I am hoping these will spark in you ideas you can pray FOR. You aren't praying for their success within the business which goes against Yahweh. But you are praying for them to find a way away from that, AND that their hearts be changed to a heart like Yeshua's.

What if those people get angry with you for whatever reason? If they get cranky with you, you could pray, Abba, this person is angry, disgruntled, hateful and not understanding what I am counseling/explaining to them. Please soften their hearts and open their minds to hear my explanations. Bless me to understand their plight, their issues, and word my message to them to bring them peace and direction.

You see, I have had my moments, too. Where I have felt as though I am justified in praying against a person. Where I have believed I am right in doing so. We MUST remember, vengeance is Yahweh's, not ours.

One thing I do is that I see the possibilities in people's lives, in their hearts. Some would say, giving them the "benefit of the doubt." I tend to try to explore what could be going on "behind the scense." Never making excuses for them, but simply to delve into a deeper understanding of their plight or life. You see, I see each one is someone Yahweh loves, even if not following His ways or path for them.

Switching briefly to those who have wronged us or with whom we have conflict, sometimes, our hearts may feel deeply pinched by what has happened against us. Or in these other cases, we may feel our heart pinched by what someone is involved in – some industries are packed full of pure evil from the adversary and this may cause us great turmoil for the harm which happens. Those pinches may cause us to feel we ought to pray harshly. Yet if we are tempted to do so, we might want to consider the teachings of Yeshua to His disciples recorded in Luke:

*And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Luke 9:54-56a KJV*

In my ministry, I have actually heard a sister profess loudly how she prayed often for others, especially for her enemies. Over time, it came out that what she prayed for was vindictive and angry. When she believed someone had wronged her, she often prayed that something bad would happen to that person in return, and that GOD would do it to them. Remember in the beginning when Yeshua said to pray for our enemies, even those who curse us – who invoke or express evil wishes upon us? THIS would be an example of that situation. It broke my heart. Because those are not prayers of Abba. Should we come

across this, in ourselves or in others, we ought to heed the warning of not knowing from which spirit is being spoken.

Whether you have experiences in your personal life, church, volunteer positions, at your job, or other places in life where you come in contact with people who work in jobs such as I have mentioned, or if you are dealing with someone who has caused you drama personally, look inside your heart, and ask Yahweh to guide you to prayers that will help this person overcome.

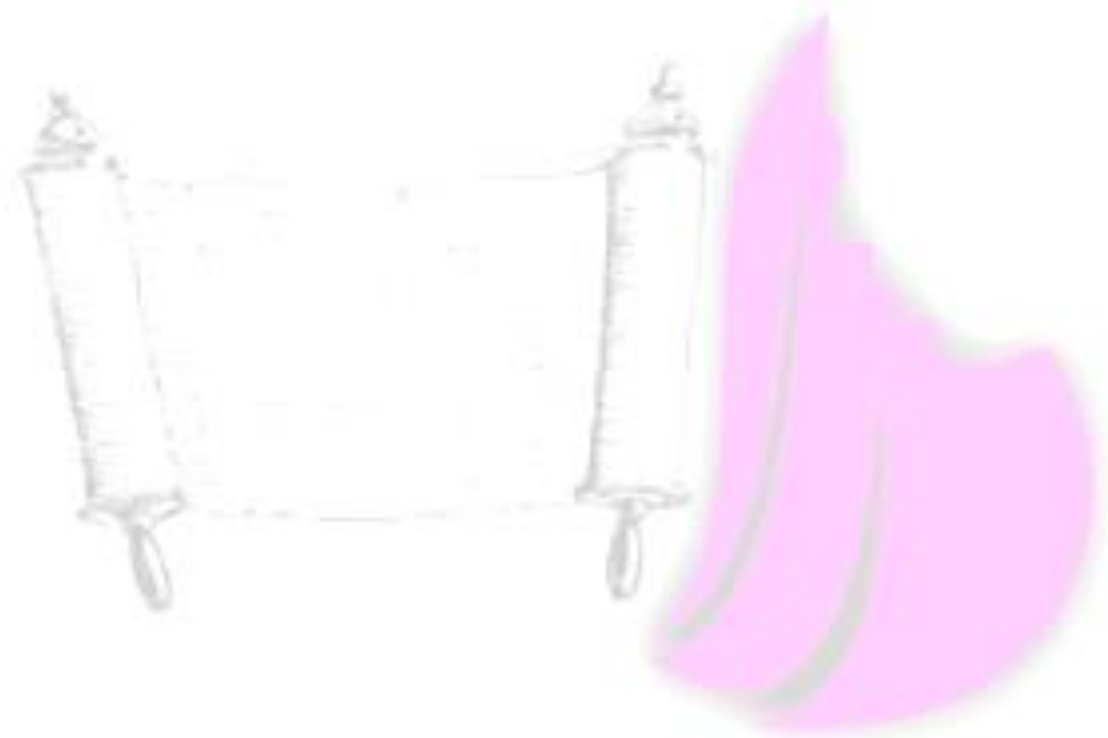
**Recently I saw a meme that goes well with this – maybe the ultimate enemy. The meme read: “Yeshua KNEW the heart of Judas, and he STILL washed his feet.” HOW TRUE that is and how we ought to look at that thought as we explore HOW we should pray for our enemies. HOW did Yeshua wash the feet of Judas?**

**He taught a great lesson to us through his words to the disciples recorded in *John 13:12-17 WEB* So when he had washed their feet, put his outer garment back on, and sat down again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me, 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You say so correctly, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Most certainly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his lord, neither one who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.**

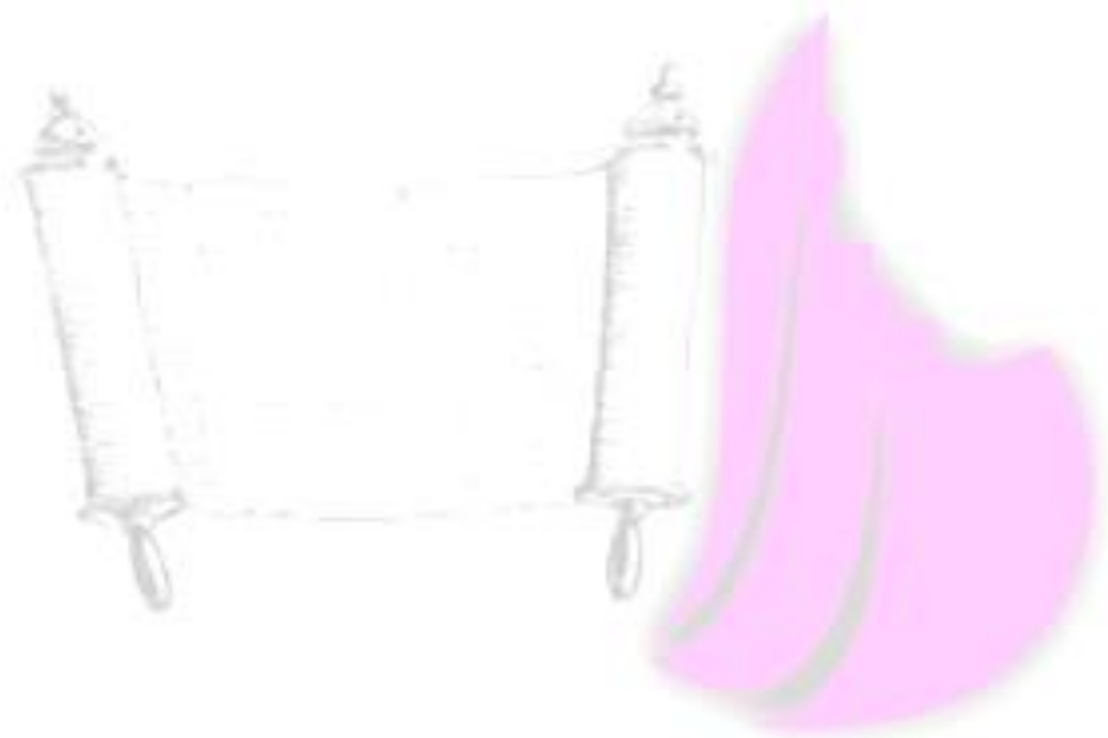
Blessings and Shalom....



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