



Matthew Lesson 10

June 16, 2020

Scriptures from TLV

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

7:1-29

Matthew Chapter completes the “Sermon on the Mount.” Through the first six chapters and concluding with this one, we have seen Yeshua portrayed as Moses giving Israel the *Torah* from Mount Sinai. This symbolism was not lost on his disciples who were well aware of Moses words in Deuteronomy: 15 “*Adonai your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst—from your brothers. To him you must listen. ... 18 I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I command him. 19 Now whoever does not listen to My words that this prophet speaks in My Name, I Myself will call him to account*” (Deuteronomy 18:15; 18-19). Of course, Yeshua is speaking with much more authority than Moses. It is the author of *Torah* Himself who is now delivering *Torah*, teaching and instruction for Israel. As John 1:1 tells us: 1 *In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John 1:1). According to John, Yeshua, the Living Word, created everything: 2 *He was with God in the beginning. 3 All things were made through Him, and apart from Him nothing was made that has come into being* (John 1:2-3). And, the writer of Hebrews confirms Yeshua’s superiority over Moses: 3 *For He has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses, even as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. 5 Now Moses surely was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, for a witness of things to be spoken later. 6 But Messiah, as Son, is over God’s house—and we are His house, if we hold firm to our boldness and what we are proud to hope* (Hebrews 3:3-6).

1 “*Stop judging, so that you may not be judged. 2 For with the judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you*” (Matthew 7:1-2). The Greek word rendering the word “judge” is “*krinō*.” It originally meant “to separate,” as in separating the grain from the chaff. It has since come to mean to distinguish between things; to have an opinion. This of course is what we would consider judging. Here again, my thoughts go to the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. Was Yeshua still pointedly speaking to them? They would say one thing and then do another and then were also passing these attitudes on to their disciples. Yeshua later said: 15 “*Woe to you, Torah scholars and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel over land and sea to make one convert. And when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourself*” (Matthew 23:15). Here again, these were the hypocritical Pharisees and not the good Pharisees.

3 “*Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the beam in your own eye? 4 Or how will you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and look, the beam is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite, first take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye*” (Matthew 7:3-5). Yeshua

said to these same hypocrites, “Why are you looking at the *kárfhos*, the small speck of dust which the wind blew into their eye and not notice the *dokós*, the foundation beam of a house blocking your vision in your own eye. Hypocrite, correct your spiritual vision and then you will be able to help others with their spiritual vision. And, this is a good message for us too. We sometimes are hypercritical of others while we ignore our own inconsistencies. As Yeshua said, we will be judged with the same level of judgment. Yeshua’s words seem to be about the scribes and Pharisees religious judgment. They were critical of how others were serving G-d.

6 “Do not give what is holy to dogs or throw your pearls before pigs; otherwise they will trample them under their feet, then turn and rip you to shreds” (Matthew 7:6). The word translated as holy is *hágios*, meaning different; unlike the other. This would seem to agree with the Hebrew, *kadosh*, which we usually understand to mean “set apart for ADONAI.” While this may appear that Yeshua is now saying, “judge,” after He said not to judge, He is really saying that we are to use discernment in our discussion of spiritual things, things which have deep meaning for us. Some of Solomon’s wisdom seems to be similar to what Yeshua is saying: 8 Do not correct a scoffer or he will hate you. Rebuke a wise man and he will love you (Proverbs 9:8). Strong’s Concordance renders scoffer as scorner; “a person who expresses contempt or disdain for someone or something.” Yeshua seems to be saying that we should judge carefully; that we should discern to whom we are speaking before opening our heart. Certainly, we are to be His witnesses, but talk to and listen to the person first. If you discern him or her to be unreceptive to what you would share, don’t do it.

7 “Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened. 9 “For what man among you, when his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or when he asks for a fish, will you give him a snake? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him (Matthew 7:7-11)! This is obviously about prayer. Our Father wishes us to ask of Him. He already knows what we need, but we can’t receive if we don’t ask. Yeshua’s brother *Ya’acov* said: 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 (James 4:2). Cravings, envies and wars seeking things are not the way to get. You have to ask. But, then, we must ask in accordance with ADONAI’s will. *Ya’akov* continues: 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives so you may spend it on your passions (James 4:3). Ask, seek and knock are three different ways to speak about prayer. Yeshua was saying that “if you ask, seek or knock before the Father, He will answer you.” It may not be exactly what you asked for, but it will be what you need. If we love our children and want to give them the best, how much more does our Father in heaven love us and wish to give us good gifts. We do not give our own children everything they ask for, but give them what we know that they need. It is the same with ADONAI. What you got may not be what you prayed to receive, but He knows it is what you need. The Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Luke is in a little different order than in Matthew. In Luke chapter 11, one of his disciples asked Yeshua to teach them how to pray in the manner that John taught his disciples. 2 “Then Yeshua said to them, “When you pray, say, ‘Father, sanctified be Your Name, Your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation” (Luke 11:2-4). After saying this, Yeshua continued to teach about prayer. In Luke 11:5-8 He told of a person going to a friend in the middle of the night to ask to borrow three loaves of bread. The friend may immediately refuse him, saying that the door is locked and they are in bed. But, even if

he will not get up and lend you the bread because of your friendship, if you keep knocking, he will get up and give it to you just to get you to stop knocking. Yeshua didn't say it exactly like that, but that seems to be His intent. Dr. Robert Lindsey in his book *Jesus, Rabbi and Lord*, says that these verses are funny. Yeshua was using humor. How could He compare His Father, the One who has given Israel so much, deliverance from Egypt and much more, to a grumpy man who doesn't want to get out of bed. And, then Luke gives the parallel to Matthew 7:7-11: 9 "So I say to you, 'Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.' 11 What father, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 And if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Ruach ha-Kodesh to those who ask Him" (Luke 11:9-13)! Here they are side by side: 7 "Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened. 9 "For what man among you, when his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or when he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him (Matthew 7:7-11)! Verses 9 and 10 in Luke and verses 7 and 8 in Matthew are essentially the same. There are differences in the remaining verses, but the intent is the same. There is a Jewish literary method called *kol v'homer* or "light and heavy." It usually takes the form of "if that, then how much more this." We can see the "that" in us, human fathers, and the "this" in our heavenly Father. If we would give our sons a fish when they ask of us, how much more will their heavenly Father give them the Holy Spirit. He does wish to answer us positively, but many times what we are asking for is incompatible with His will for us.

12 "So in all things, do to others what you would want them to do to you—for this is the Torah and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). Yeshua seems to be referring to Leviticus 19:18: 18 "You are not to take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am Adonai" (Leviticus 19:18). Yeshua's statement is what is usually called the "Golden Rule." I don't know where it got the name "the Golden Rule," but there are references to similar thoughts in other religions as well. In Israel, a generation before Yeshua, there were Hillel and Shammai, the heads of two houses of study. There is story about a non-Jew who came to Shammai and said he would agree to be converted if he could teach him the entire *Torah* while standing on one foot. Shammai sent him away. One account I read said that "after beating about the head and shoulders, he sent him away! But, Hillel welcomed his question, saying: "That which is hateful to you do not do to another; that is the entire *Torah*, and the rest is commentary. Go and study." That is basically the reverse of what Yeshua said. Yeshua knew all about Hillel and knew what he had said. But, obviously, He preferred to be positive and said it differently: "do good to others," while Hillel was semi-positive when he said: "don't do what is not good to others." Once when Yeshua was asked what was the greatest commandment in the *Torah*, He said: 37, "You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 The entire *Torah* and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37b-40). I would say that Yeshua was agreeing in part with what Hillel said when he said: "the rest is commentary; go and study." Hillel just left out one major thing: "You shall love the L-rd your G-d!

13 *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. 14 How narrow is the gate and difficult the way that leads to life, and those who find it are few”* (Matthew 7:13-14). This could be called a parable just as many of Yeshua’s words in this chapter could also be called. This a simple story about two paths with two gates. The Greek *pýlē* (poo'-lay) refers to a large door or entrance gate to a city. Yeshua says that there are only two choices; one road and gate which leads to destruction and the other which leads to life. The broad way could be called the easy way and the narrow way the difficult way. Is Yeshua referring to salvation here? I think that essentially He is. The narrow way leads to life, life with G-d; eternal life. And, throughout the Gospels, Yeshua has shown us the way. If we’re not imitating Him, our Master, we are on the wrong path. If that’s where we are, Yeshua is always willing to receive us back on the right path. *Teshuvah*, repentance and return is the answer. Don’t get too friendly with the world. It is full of traps. The way of the world is the opposite of the narrow way which leads to life.

15 *“Watch out for false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruit. Grapes aren’t gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles, are they? 17 Even so, every good tree produces good fruit, but the rotten tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will recognize them by their fruit.”* (Matthew 7:15-20). A prophet in Yeshua’s day was someone who spoke for G-d, bringing His message to Israel. Yeshua was very likely still referring to the hypocrites, the scribes and Pharisees, as false prophets. Prophets should also speak for G-d today, but some have ulterior motives and speak for their own evil desires. “A wolf in sheep’s clothing” has become a familiar phrase to us. This is someone whose words say one thing while his intentions are something else, possibly to deceive, someone who proclaims themselves to be something that they are not. One kind of false prophet which comes to mind is those preachers on TV who sell “healing water” and “healing prayer cloths” for just a gift of fifty dollars or a hundred dollars. ADONAI knows them, those who use soothing words to “fleece the flock.” They are the bad trees and good fruit can’t come from them. They will be chopped down and thrown into the fire. By saying fire, Yeshua was probably referring to Gehenna, the symbolic place of punishment for the evil. Yeshua used the Hinnom Valley outside Jerusalem as a visible example. It was the place where children formerly were sacrificed to the false god Molekh. In the 1st century it was a burning, smoking garbage dump, a visible symbol of “hellfire.” These evil ones are recognized by their fruit. Yeshua’s brother said: *16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, not hypocritical* (James 3:16-17).

Continuing with the theme of false prophets, Yeshua said: *21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, and drive out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name?’ 23 Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness”* (Matthew 7:21-23)! These verses open up the discussion about whether or not a person can lose salvation. Is “once saved, always saved,” a true statement? If we look at Scripture which seems to relate to this, we can find about an equal number in support of the answer yes and the answer no. My opinion, I say again, my opinion on this is that you can lose your salvation. The other side of the coin is called “falling from grace.” Can we, if we have a powerful salvation

encounter with Yeshua, lose eternal life? As I understand Scripture, when we trust in Yeshua, we receive the promise of salvation. If the person who said yes to Yeshua was sincere and his intentions were to follow Him as Master, he received the promise of salvation. If, however, after a few weeks, months or years, he falls back into his old pattern and stops serving Yeshua, he is on shaky ground. He must repent and return. There are also those who very shortly after trusting Yeshua, continue to be drunkards, adulterers and sinners of all kinds. In the first case, there are those who may have prophesied in Yeshua's name and cast out demons in Yeshua's name. But, He says, "I never knew you." Some would say that their prophecy and miracle working was not real, but from the evil one. But, the writer of Hebrews explains it a different way: *4 For it is impossible for those who once were enlightened—having tasted of the heavenly gift and become partakers of the Ruach ha-Kodesh, 5 and having tasted the good word of God and the powers of the olam ha-ba, 6 and then having fallen away—to renew again to repentance, since they are again crucifying Ben-Elohim for themselves and publicly disgracing Him* (Hebrews 6:4-6). To me, this says that those who received the gift of salvation and the Holy Spirit into their spirit and received a promise of the world to come, the *olam haba*, and then fell away cannot return to a place of salvation. This seems harsh, but I know that ADONAI is merciful and will listen to a sincere plea to return. The truth is that this is not a black and white subject. It depends upon the mercy of G-d, which is great. My belief is that if a person can sincerely repent, they will be forgiven. But there are those whose consciences have gone too far and they can't return. Consider Judas. He was very sorrowful after he betrayed Yeshua, but could not bring himself to repentance. *Sha'ul* said: *1 Now the Ruach clearly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, following deceitful spirits and teachings of demons 2 through the hypocrisy of false speakers—whose own conscience has been seared* (1Timothy 4:2). The "latter times" had already begun when *Sha'ul* wrote these words to Timothy. He said that the Holy Spirit said to him that some will fall away from the faith. Does this mean from salvation or just from appearing to be a follower of Yeshua? We don't know. The truth which upon which I think we can all agree is that "once saved, always saved" is true, but who it applies to is only known by the Father. He knows whose repentance and confession of Yeshua is true because He sees the end from the beginning. Personally, I don't believe that discussing this question can be productive. Trying to win the argument will not improve unity. Let others believe what they want.

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house; and yet it did not fall, for its foundation had been built on the rock. 26 Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall" (Matthew 7:24-27). What does Yeshua mean by "hearing these words and doing them?" Isn't He really saying this person has trusted Me and is following in My example? This person is a true disciple and has built his spiritual life upon the rock. What is the rock? *Sha'ul* said this of Israel in the Wilderness: *4 ... all drank the same spiritual drink—for they were drinking from a spiritual rock that followed them, and the Rock was Messiah* (1Corinthians 10:4). In this, we can immediately see the "living water" that Yeshua spoke about to the Samaritan woman: *14 "But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never be thirsty. The water that I give him will become a fountain of water within him, springing up to eternal life"* (John 4:14). In John 7 He explains what this living water that brings eternal life is: *37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Yeshua stood up and cried out loudly, "If anyone is thirsty, let him*

come to Me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, 'out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now He said this about the Ruach, whom those who trusted in Him were going to receive; for the Ruach was not yet given, since Yeshua was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39). So, what is the rock. It is the Messiah. He is the rock and living water flows from Him. The foolish man heard Yeshua's words, but did not trust in Him. And, when the storms of life came, he had nothing to rely on. But, the man who built on the rock, on Messiah Yeshua, was secure.

28 Now when Yeshua had finished these words, the crowds were astounded at His teaching, 29 for He was teaching them as one having authority and not as their Torah scholars (Matthew 7:28-29). Thus ended Yeshua's presentation to Israel as the second Moses bringing forth the Word of ADONAI from the mountain. The people received His word as being from Heaven. Apparently, the people were not that enamored with the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees anyway. But, Yeshua's words were powerful to them; words of life. His message from the mountain for us today is that if we trust in Him and His Father who sent Him, we can live our lives in the world, secure in His promises and also have the hope of the world to come. *Shalom aleichem!*