

October 2019

Dear friends of ministry to the Jewish people,

There was only one thing missing. Just one. But it's the most important thing.

I am writing to you the day after Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. It's a day I go to synagogue every year to be with my people. To pray for them as they ask God for forgiveness. To ask God to open their hearts and their eyes to see the one I found, and who found me...Messiah Jesus.

For my people the Day of Atonement is a day of holiness, awe, repentance, and...uncertainty. No one leaves synagogue certain that their name will be written in the book of life. Judaism today is a religion based on works. Hoping that good deeds will outweigh the bad. For me it is a day of thanksgiving. My atonement has been secured in Jesus. However, it is also a day filled with a deep burden for the majority of my people who do not know the assurance of relationship with God and eternal life with him.

Going to a large synagogue might be intimidating for some. But I was raised in one. So, I feel at home with the prayers, the liturgy, and the people.

The Yom Kippur service goes on all day, from 9 am until 8 pm with no breaks. Everyone fasts. No food or water for 24 hours. Most people attend for a few, perhaps several, hours. Everyone is there for the Torah service and the sermon. That's when I go.

The rabbi at the synagogue I attend on Yom Kippur is a brilliant man and quite well spoken. **This year his message was on suffering and why God allows it.** He began by telling the story of a family who left the synagogue because the wife wanted more sermons on the blessings that come from following the commandments (law) and the suffering that comes from disobeying the commandments. He went on to explain that life is not so simple. Not so black and white. He made several important points...

- **Suffering is not always due to sin.** Life is full of suffering regardless of sin. (Jesus discusses this issue)
- **Repentance brings us closer to God and closer to each other.** When we repent and turn to God it is not only for us but for those around us who have been affected by our sin. (Jesus talked about this as well)
- **Prayer in the midst of suffering helps us to grow.** We should not pray for ourselves only, but for others. When Jewish people are in mourning it is traditional when visiting the mourner's home to wait for them to engage in conversation. It's a way to bring them out of their suffering to comfort and acknowledge others



even in the midst of their own loss. (Jesus addressed this issue)

- **Giving charity and helping others when we suffer is one of the greatest ways to embrace suffering. For as we help others while we suffer the sting of our own suffering is lessened.** When we comfort others in the midst of our suffering it gives meaning to the suffering. (Jesus also spoke of this)

The rabbi's message was wonderful. Moving. Honest and true. **The one thing missing. A personal relationship with God through Messiah Jesus. The only way to God. The Way. The Truth. The Life.**

Unknowingly the rabbi covered the importance of the law and the beatitudes in Matthew 5, repentance, prayer, giving, several of Jesus' parables, and the value of suffering as expressed by Jesus, and Paul in Romans and 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. Of course there is nothing in the New Testament not represented in Old. The writers of the New Testament only had the Old Testament. **The one problem with his message: Jesus just wasn't there. The New Testament cannot exist without the Old. The Old without the New just doesn't work.**

That's why I go to synagogue. To see. To hear. And to pray for my people. **They need him. Desperately.**

When you receive this letter we will be in Israel leading a tour. After the tour we will be joined by a few people from a mission committee of a local church. Their visit is to explore making Israel a mission country that they will visit on a regular basis for short term outreach. We will be taking the team to engage in sharing the message of Jesus to the Jewish people in Israel through...

- Connecting with established on the ground outreaches to the Jewish community in Israel.
- Church planting. (We are meeting with congregational leaders in Israel)
- Homeless, addiction, and prostitution outreach.
- Ministry on college campuses.
- Engaging in conversation directly with people on the street in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

The Gospels tell us Jesus wept over Israel. God asks us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122). He will never forget the people of Israel, both those in the land and scattered around the world.

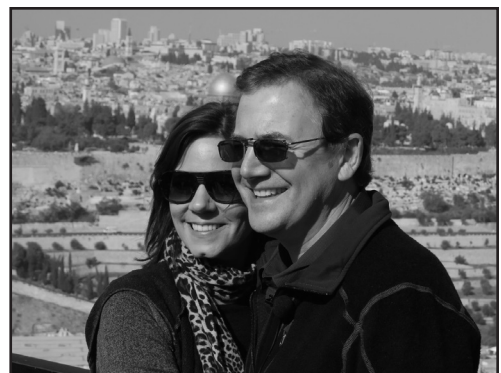
Her people are on His heart today. Today I hope you'll feel a stirring in your heart as well.

Please never forget the great debt we owe to the Jewish people. Without them we would not have our church, our bibles, communion, or baptism. He came to us through them. The Apostle Paul planted churches to reach gentiles so that they (the gentiles) would take the blessed truth of Jesus back to the Jewish people. (Romans 11:13)

They've given us so much. The greatest gift we can give back to them is the gift of Jesus.

We need your help now more than ever.

With gratefulness in Messiah,



Murray