



Shavuot – The Path of Scoffing or the Path of Transformation

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Initial Thoughts

1. Shavuot Firstfruits: it is the firstfruits of the wheat harvest; it is a sign that more of the harvest is yet to come
2. Launching Point: Shavuot is not a destination but a launching off point
3. Change Agent: most change is slow and gradual; at times God will zap us good but that's not the norm
4. Shavuot Meant for Our Good: Don't waste this day/season

B. Practical Application Points

1. Thankfulness: Thankfulness for the firstfruits of the harvest in our own life, home, or family; at times we have to hunt for gratefulness when we are in a difficult season
2. Intercession for More – asking God to bring more
 - a. God gives more when Believers pray for each other
3. Consistent, Persistent Obedience: A long obedience in the same direction is what we're looking for
4. Good Path and the Bad Path: I was mindful of where I wanted to be, but came across some helpful steps on both of those paths

II. THE PATH OF SCOFFING OR THE PATH OF TRANSFORMATION

A. Path of the Scoffer (Bad Path)

1. FOLD – The Scriptures speak of four main negative outcomes that come under pressure: Fear; Offense; Lust; Deception
 - a. we make very bad decisions when we are in fear
2. The Way of the Scoffer: this involves leading to scoffing related to the promises of God. This is impacted significantly by delay related to God's timing for breakthrough or answered prayers (2 Peter 3:3); Jude 18
3. The Progression of the Scoffer - 1. Indifference (we don't really care) → 2. Cynicism (negative and doubt the word and power of God) → 3. Disdain (more open in our irritation and anger towards God and His ways) → 4. Contempt
4. Repentance is Key: repent so that times of refreshing may come from the Lord (Acts 2:38) – the motivation of repentance is a heart that's free.

B. Path to Divine Transformation (Good Path)

1. The Steps to Transformation: 1. knowledge (godly & helpful information) → 2. conversation (with God) → 3. illumination (little touches of revelation on our spirit) → 4. inspiration (renewed motivation to live/walk righteously) → 5. transformation
2. Keep Moving: Take another step on the path to transformation

C. Conversation Involves our Mouth

1. Complaining to God...is called prayer—conversation involves using our words to talk to God
2. Complaining to Others...is called gossip or slander—when we do this, we defile ourself and others; it's not just “venting”
3. It Helps to Talk to God: The primary motivation to bridle our tongue is not to be done just because it's the way of integrity and the right thing to do; but primarily for the enjoyment/breakthroughs we get when we go to the Lord with our words.
4. Bottled up Words Have to Go Somewhere: If we stop up the dam of words (by refusing to slander and gossip about those we are frustrated with), that “dam water” will have to go somewhere – when we consistently take it to the LORD, He brings release, godly change, and breakthrough.
5. Praying with Others Can Help: We can be helped in growing in our prayer life by spending time in corporate prayer with other Believers who are seeking after God. This accountability will help us grow. In Malachi 3:16-18, God describes a group of Believers who came together to talk to God and to honor Him. He promised to reward them for these actions.

D. Come to Me – only by coming to Him can we experience needed transformation

1. Not Just Bible Knowledge: Yeshua rebuked a segment of leadership who knew the Bible really well and thought that they had life by mere Bible knowledge. He rebuked them for not coming to Him to experience transformation and find the life they needed (John 5:19)
2. Taste and See; this is one of two tests in the Scripture, where we are encouraged to put God to the test. David states that this will work and that God appeals to us to come to Him to experience what we need. The other test in Scripture is related to tithing and can be found in Malachi 3:8-12; we are to be wholehearted and persistent in our pursuit of these divine tests and give God time to validate His word.

E. Personal Assessment

1. ...But This is Painful to Hear: If you have an ache in your heart that you are so far from God and it's painful to hear of this exhortation to come to Him, then this is one of the first signs of lovesickness with the LORD; this ache is actually a good sign; if you didn't care then there would be apathy and indifference and not an ache in your heart; we are to let that ache drive us into consistent and persistent conversation with Him.
2. ...But I'm so Far from God: But you don't know how bad I've been and how far from God I am – God was so merciful and gracious to David and many others in Scripture; He will be gracious and merciful to you too if we come to Him in our weakness, sin, and brokenness.
3. Repent and Hit Delete: If you are far from God and in need then we are to come to Him, repent, hit delete and start again. He is the One who invites us to come boldly to His presence to find mercy and grace to help in our time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16)
4. God Will Run to Us: Only time God is ever seen running is in the story of the Prodigal Son returning; when the Father saw him coming down the road He ran toward His son (Luke 15:20); He runs to us in our brokenness when we turn back to Him in our need.
5. We Need the Body: When struggling, we need to continue to draw together with Believers who are going after God. There is safety and help for us in this place.

III. DAVID'S EXAMPLE

(Initially Psalm 34 & 1 Samuel 21; then Psalm 56 & 1 Samuel 27-30)

- David learned many of his lessons in the crucible of challenge and difficulty.
- Psalm 34 was written after a time of great fear and compromise in David's life.
- He had lied to the high priest (1 Samuel 21:1-2) which ultimately led to Saul through Doeg murdering all the priests and their families except for Abiathar who escaped to David (1 Samuel 22:11-23).
- He had gone into the land of the Philistines to find fleshly protection from Saul after he found out that Saul was trying to kill him.
- The Philistines recognized him and then David feigned madness in an attempt to escape from King Achish
- It was after this experience that David wrote Psalm 34 and explained how to grow in and experience the fear of the LORD
- David got into this same predicament again six years later when he again went into the land of the Philistines once more after he had a word from the LORD not to go there (1 Samuel 27-30)
- He was in compromise, lied again (to King Achish), and was only miraculously spared from going to war against the Israelites in 1 Samuel 29.
- He and his men then returned to their town Ziklag and found it had been destroyed and all their possessions and family was gone (1 Samuel 30:1-2).
- They cried until they couldn't cry any more (1 Samuel 30:6)
- The men talked of stoning David (1 Samuel 30:6)
- David found strength in the LORD and sought the LORD who promised that they would recover everything (1 Samuel 30:6-8)
- It was at this point at Ziklag when David had lost everything and his men wanted to kill him; and after he had been in compromise for several months that David wrote Psalm 56 and specifically stated 56:9
- "This I know: God is on my side!"

- David had multiple experiences where he in the midst of his sin and compromise turned to God and expediently received God's grace and mercy.

For further study: I highly recommend Mike Bickle's 28 part teaching series *Studies in the Life of David* (2015); specifically notable for this teaching was 8. *David's Trouble in Nob & Gath (1 Samuel 21 & Psalm 34)* & 14. *David in Ziklag: Compromise & Recovery (1 Samuel 27-30)*

IV. SNIPPETS OF DAVID'S THEOLOGY

- A. Difficulties are Assured for God's People:** We will not be able to avoid challenge and difficulty (Psalm 34:19; Psalm 91:15)
- B. YHWH is Rich in Mercy:** This mercy is not based on our current track record but upon freely receiving and responding to His mercy in the here and now.
- C. God Responds to Brokenness:** A broken spirit, God will not despise – this was one of David's key themes (Psalm 34:18; 51:17)
- D. I Love You YHWH:** David was the first one in Scripture to declare his love to YHWH. He recorded this in Psalm 18 after he had been rescued from Saul and all his enemies.
- E. God Delights in Us:** If we love Him, we will walk in obedience to His commandments and the Father will love (enjoy, delight in) us (John 14:21)

