

THE COLLECTIVE ANXIETY

I'd like to commission everyone to do something in the days and weeks to come. First, remember what it was like when you were younger. Remember how there seemed to be a lot more joy and happiness; how there used to be more liberty and freedom. Do that for a day or so and then go out and look at the state of people nowadays. Notice how you don't see as many smiles; laughter is at a minimum and joy and happiness have just seemed to wane away like a slow-moving outgoing tide. Things are not the same folks, even though we're conditioned to think that things haven't changed.

I was reflecting about myself the other day. I have always been a happy person; some would argue a little too lighthearted. I've noticed that over the past few years I've turned into a cynic. I sort of expect things to be bad, and when things are bad, I just chalk it up to being right; but when things go well, I wonder why they're going good. Some would say that my attitude is wrong; that it is exactly what a believer in Yeshua should not be. The model that most people have regarding Believers in Yeshua is that we're supposed to be those nauseating people that, no matter how bad things are, put on that smile. I think that most people that act like that do so because if they had to face the facts, their world would just crumble and they would lose faith altogether. Perhaps their faith is built on the facade of being happy; but what the heck, maybe I'm wrong and they are just plain happy; who knows. I do know that I am a realist; I see things in black and white; sometimes gray, but I cannot put on a facade when things look bleak. If the world sucks and society is going down the drain then there is a reason to be cynical; there is a reason to question everything that we see, hear and feel. That doesn't mean that we don't cast our burden onto Yeshua; we do for sure, but we don't pretend that the world is getting better and we don't see things through rose colored glasses.

My wife is one of those people who can look at the good in everything. She knows that whatever happens, Yahweh is in control and we just need to trust in Him. I also trust in Yahweh, but my way of looking at things is that yes, Yahweh is in control; and yes, everything works out for his purposes; but there are times to mourn, be sad and yes, even get pissed off. Having grown up in Bergen County, New Jersey, I know what people can be like. I've seen the ugly side of people; those who will smile at your face but plunge the dagger into your back. I've seen the pacificity of people who just look the other way when other's lives are being wrecked by totally wicked people. They don't want to get involved because they themselves might be harmed by

acting in behalf of the downtrodden. I've seen just how ugly people can be and how they can escalate when they go unchecked.

Because I am the way that I am, I speak out against things and protest against injustices. If a "Christian" is not acting like a Christian should act, I will tell them. I know that people come in all sorts of flavors, especially when it comes to the type of correction that will work on them. I also know that there are exceptions. For instance, let's look at a person who likes to bully others. That bully could either be a sociopath who won't understand anything but a good but whooping; or he could be a person that has been so traumatized at home that he lashes out at others. Yahweh gives us discernment on how to act toward such a person.

I have a very good friend; a brother in Yeshua and a man that I dearly respect. You might know him; his name is Jim Wilhelmsen. Jim and I both love Yeshua and we both have strong callings from Yahweh. Both of us have similar backgrounds. We were brought up in families where we were loved; we both did things in our youths that we regret, and we both grew up in city environments. I would say that we are alike in 99 percent of things. Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity! There is a difference however between us. Jim is from Northern European extraction, which means he tends to look at things from a purely Protestant field of vision. I was brought up Protestant also, but come from Jewish and Italian roots. Jim is a lot like my wife in his way of looking at things; he gives people the benefit of the doubt right off the bat. Myself, I tend to stand back for a little while, observe the people and then make a determination. If they're just having a bad day, week or month I can cut someone slack. However, if they're just plain blowing it they're going to hear about it and depending on their personality, they will get a gentle talking to or a swift kick in the gluteus maximus, but in love of course.

When I was growing up my dad was adamant that if someone messed with you, you messed with them. It was a more "eye for eye" mentality, and for our neighborhood it worked quite well. In many Mediterranean societies (of which Jewish and Italian are both), being passive is seen as weakness and passivity does nothing but make aggressors more aggressive. For instance, when I was a young boy in grade-school there was another boy named Paul who thought that I should be his practice target. Now, in the Protestant way of looking at things, you let the bully pummel you while you show him love, and if you survive, he will see love and want love and that should make him change. I have done that on occasion, and it does work, but it individual specific. My dad, when he heard that I was having trouble, brought me out into my aunt's backyard and taught me how to throw punches and protect myself. The next week when

Paul acted up, I drove my fist into his solar plexus, he doubled over and I thought that I had killed him. Oy, the worry that I went through about that. I mustered up the courage to go back to the schoolyard and saw that Paul was okay, but he feared me. Paul NEVER bothered me again, as a matter of fact, he took a liking to me.

Now, some might think that I take that approach to most aggressors, but that is not true. About ten years ago I was working with a few Muslims. One fellow seemed to be a nice guy but decided to test me one day. I did something that he didn't like (can't remember what it was) and he read me the riot act. I didn't deserve that sort of talk aimed my way but for some reason the peace of Yahweh came over me. I let him rant and rave in front of his fellow Muslims and the rest of the crew at work. I tried to make amends and calm him down during his tantrum, but it didn't work. Afterward, I apologized for setting him off and walked out of the room to do another job. This man afterward, didn't talk to me for three months. The best that I can surmise is that one of two things happened. Either he was embarrassed because he lost control, or he saw my lack of fighting as a weakness. In either case, after a year went by, we were talking a lot again and during a quiet time we began to talk about religion. I didn't preach the Gospel because I didn't feel that it was time for that, but I did get to tell him that I had studied almost all religions, including Islam, and from what I could see, faith in Yeshua was the only thing that held any water for me. That was a very big step for him, to even listen to that. I know that my words will sprout in his life someday and he'll get saved through faith in Yeshua. Do you see how we need to listen to the Ruach Ha Kodesh in regard to such situations?

There are a lot of bullies out in the world today. They range in levels all the way from high government offices to the arrogant neighbor next door. Here's a factoid that many "Christians" tend to forget. PEOPLE IN THE WORLD ARE SUPPOSED TO ACT WORLDLY, SINFUL AND REPROBATE. On the other hand, Christians are not supposed to act that way. However, part of the collective anxiety is that Christians aren't out evangelizing people anymore, they've become (not all, but many) just as worldly if not more worldly than the people of the world. Anger, hatefulness, malice and darkened hearts are manifest in many churches and many individuals. Many have chosen to serve two masters and they are starting to love the world and despise the brethren. It was the Apostle John who said that if any man hates his brother, the love of Yahweh is not in him. There are myriads of people who wear the name of Mashiach Yeshua, but there is no love in them. "When the Son of Man returns, will he find faith upon the Earth?" Well, if you don't have love in your heart, then you don't have faith; the two go together.

When I was a little boy we played at a playground that had blacktop instead of grass. There was a girl named Linda that lived across from the playground so she was always there. There was a sandbox in the playground too, and when a group would get the sandbox, they would call all of their friends to play there too. Now, Linda was one of those little girls who would harass everyone that she could and when she would not get her way she would go home and complain to her mother, acting like she was a victim. Of course, her mother believed her and then came over to read us the riot act. I have never liked when people do this sort of thing. As boys back in my day, you were a sissy if you did such things. If you were a jerk you were brought about to see things correctly and if you ever complained so that your parent came out and fought for you then you were shunned for a very long time, until you straightened out.

In our world we see this sort of thing happening all of the time. There are some elements of our society that rape, pillage, plunder and kill yet when they are called to the carpet about their actions, they blame their condition on everyone but themselves. Muslims are another good example. They act nice to get your confidence, then when they have it they attack you, but when you protest, they play the victim, claiming that they are being victimized because of their faith. To add to the collective anxiety, Christians do the very same thing. Some will do any number of evils, but when they're called out about what they do, they call the person doing the calling "judgmental," "mean" and/or "unchristian like."

Can you see what is adding to the collective anxiety? Can you see why there is no joy anymore; why everyone looks downcast? "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many will wax (grow) cold. There is iniquity throughout our land! In addition to the collective anxiety, there is a collective apathy in our land and in the Church. We don't want to offend anyone; we would rather live and let live. That is a lie straight from hell. Many people in sin will say that you have no right to correct them. Notice I say correct or convict, not condemn. People have grown too close to freedom, as the world defines it. The world defines freedom as individual autonomy; everyone is an independent nation who all decide to live together. It never works that way. Believers in Yeshua are supposed to be One in Mashiach. He is the vine and we are the branches and if we're in Him, we don't have our own will or purpose; we are slaves to Him; bondservants, ambassadors etc.

We live in a world where we're told that we're free, but everyone wants to dictate what is right and what is wrong; and it is the people who are dictatorial. Are you really free if you are told who you can like, who you can hate, who you can correct and who you dare not correct? The answer is no; that is slavery to the world. I am confident in my notion that the reason why

most people don't preach the Gospel of Yeshua Ha Mashiach anymore is because they are told that it offends people, that it is insensitive to their feelings and how dare you think that your religion is the true way to God. If you're told what to think, what to say and what to do, and that you will fall into disfavor, or even go to jail because you tell the truth, that is not freedom, it is slavery.

So, what I said sure sounds insensitive, huh? Well, what is more insensitive; telling a person that they are going to hell in an effort to save them, or keeping quiet so that they will go to hell because you were a good little slave to this world. It's a question that hits many upside the head like a 2×4 and it hurts. But perhaps getting hit by a spiritual 2×4 is what many people need. Do you think you'll be more remorseful being shunned for a time in this temporal existence, or will you be remorseful when you see so many of those you feared talking to as they are cast into the Lake of Fire? Are you going to love people straight into hell or are you going to show them how they err so that they will get on the only path to Heaven, Yeshua?

I'm calling people out of the collective anxiety and the collective apathy. To hell with the idea of political correctness. To hell with the notion that you will offend someone. To hell with the world's view that you are being insensitive and uncaring. Come out of the world's collective and come into the Kingdom of Yahweh. Be sensitive, but sensitive to the voice of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit). He, not the world, has your best intention and Yahweh's best intention at heart. He will show you when to love in tenderness or love in firmness. He knows the hearts of the people that you will be dealing with and He knows how to best get Yahweh's message across to them. Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.