

# Are You Cursed? What Yeshua Says

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## MAIN VERSES

[Luke 18:9](#) • [Luke 18:14](#) • [Matthew 5:8](#) • [Genesis 9](#) • [1 Kings 11:1](#) • [1 Kings 16:31](#) • [Luke 10:13](#) • [Matthew 11:21](#) • [Matthew 11:24](#) • [Matthew 15](#) • [Mark 7](#)

## Worship and Welcome

Amen. Shabbat Shalom. Welcome to Founded in Truth. Let's all gather. Stand as we worship our Lord. Lord, I find you in the seeking. Lord, I find you in the doubt. And to know you is to love you. And to know so little else. Oh, I need you. Sing this to him. I need you. Oh, how I need you. Lord, I find you in the seeking. Lord, I find you in the doubt. To know you is to know how I need you. Yes, Lord, we need you. We welcome you here in this place, Lord. We thank you for your presence, Lord. Thank you for meeting us here. We love you. His rising eyes are turning to you. We turn to you. His truth. We find strength to face today, a present washed away. You are the God who gives all life. We welcome you here. You're the sound of God's return to you in your kingdom. Broken eyes on me, you make us new. Because when we see you, we find strength to stay, so washed away. Come have your way among us, Lord, in our hearts and our praise be enthroned in our praises today. We worship you. We love you. You are the God who saves us every day, Lord God. You save us—it's just a whisper. Breathe in me a new song. You take me back, and I'll remember the joy of my first love. Be my song. How can I contain this love? I cannot contain this love. Be my song. How can I contain this love? I cannot contain this love. For what we lack, Your blood has covered. What we get is what you paid for. It is through your death our lives are reborn, the joy of myself, my song. How can I contain this love? How can I contain this love? I'll shout, I will sing of your love for me. I'll shout, I will sing of your love for me. And fill you all around. I'll shout out. I'll shout, I will sing of your love for me. And fill you all around. I'll shout, I will sing of your love for me. I can't feel you. I can't contain this love. My song. And I can't contain it. It's to be my song. And I can't contain this love. My song. And I can't contain this love. Just give him praise.

## The Hunger for More

Thank you, Lord. You are so worthy. No matter what we're going through, the stress of the week, the worries, we lay them at your feet, Lord God, and we give you praise in the good times and the bad times, whatever we're going through, Lord, because you are greater. You are greater than anything, Lord. It's always the right time to worship. Praise my song. How can I contain this love? How can I contain this love? How I live for the moment when I'm still in your presence. All the noise dies down. Lord, speak to me now. You have all my attention. I will linger and listen. I don't want to miss something. Lord, I know my heart wants more of you, wants something new, so I surrender all I want. I am within your love, being done by who you—my desire is to know you deeper. Open up again, throw my fears into the wind. I am desperate for a touch of you. You're the fire in the morning. You're the cool in me. The breath in my soul. Oh, the life in my bones. There is no hesitation in your love and affection. It's the sweetest of all. Lord, I want more of you, want something new, so I surrender. It is to live within your love, being done by who you—my desire is to know you deeper. Open up again, throw my fears into the wind. I am desperate for a touch of heaven. I open up my heart to you. So do what only you can do. Yeshua, I have. Open up my heart to you. Do what you can. Do what you can. Open up my heart to you. Do what you can. Open up my heart to you. Open up my heart to you. To do what only you can. Yeshua, have your way. Open up my heart to you. To do what you can. Sing that for my heart. My heart is for you with a passion. My heart is for you. Lord, that's our prayer today, Lord God. We're hungry for you. We've got to stir up the passion for you, Lord. If we can't honestly say that we have a hunger and a passion for you, Lord God, I pray that you would give us that hunger, give us that desire, Lord. Lord, we need more of you in our lives, less of us. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts. We love you, Lord. We thank you for meeting us here today, Lord. Continue to speak to hearts and minds through your word. Your word is truth, Lord God. I pray your word would dispel the fear and the doubt and the worry, for in your presence is fullness of joy, fullness of life. Lord God, better to be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of the wicked. Lord God, we just want to be with you. Again, thank you for meeting us here. Thank you for being our awesome God. We give you praise. We give you thanks. Hallelujah. In Yeshua's name, amen.

## **Shabbat Shalom: A Message on the Cursed**

Do you ever find yourself searching for meaning? So, Shabbat Shalom. The message of this—the title of this message is a little dramatic, but that's okay—Cursed. And we're going to be speaking about cursed people today and people who are not cursed. And what happens when a cursed person encounters the arms of Yeshua and what is the result of that. But before we dive into that, I would like to explain something. We don't read too much liturgy here, do we? Well,

these prayers go back as far as the 3rd or 4th century BCE, but were officially adopted into Judaism sometime around the 2nd or 3rd century AD. And so if you would, if you don't want to participate, that's fine, just stay seated, no big deal. If you would like to participate in just some of these prayers, please stand. And how we're going to do this, we're just going to go through them. I'm going to have them on the screen, and I'll speak them, and we'll just make it easy. So you just say amen after each blessing. And they're going to go something like this. Like I'll say, blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who gives the rooster understanding to distinguish between the day and the night, right? And that's a good blessing. Thank you, God, for the days that we have and that your creation cries out to your order in them. And then we would all respond by saying amen, unless you don't agree and then you don't say amen.

## The Blessings of the Dawns

Amen. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who opens the eyes of the blind. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who releases the bound. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who straightens the boat. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who clothes the naked. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who gives strength to the weary. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who spreads forth the earth above the waters. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who guides the steps of man. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who provided me with all of my needs. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who girds the Jewish people with might. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who crowns the Jewish people. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has not made me a Gentile. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has not made me a slave or to work a job that is beneath me. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has not made me a woman. Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids. And blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us concerning the words of his Torah. Amen. You can be seated.

## The Shift of Enthusiasm

I loved how the enthusiasm of the amen would shift depending on the blessing. And some of these blessings, we may be very excited to—yes, amen!—and then others, we may be like, hey, wait a second. This section of prayer is called the Blessings of the Dawns. Morning prayer still

prayed today in Orthodox Judaism. Of course, it is 2018 and decades have gone by where many communities, Jewish communities, have looked at these prayers that have been around officially in Judaism since the 2nd or 3rd century AD and are rooted actually in Greek prayers found in, or the concept and the display and the arrangement found in Greek petitions around the 4th century BCE. And reformed and more conservative Jewish communities have changed several of these blessings, specifically the one revolving around gender. And they've taken it and they've made that into the commandment. Instead of it saying, thank you, God, who didn't make me a woman, they've changed it: Thank you, God, who has made me who I am. And among the Orthodox community, see, the men still say and praise God for making them a man and not a woman. But if you're a woman and you want to participate in the morning prayers, then you would simply say, thank you, God, for simply making me who I am. While your husband would say, thank you, God, for not making me her.

## Understanding Scripture

When we read the Bible, we need to realize one thing, or two, really. One, I am not God and I am not the author of this book. And when we understand, when we realize these things, we can experience the freedom in Christ and the love of God and the grace of God in our lives unrestrained from what we want the Bible to say. Does anybody hear me? Does anybody understand? Anybody ever read the Bible sometimes and is like, I didn't want to say that?

Turn the page. That doesn't fit in my theological box that I have molded based on the rest of Scripture. I mean, read all the Scripture right here. This is supposed to happen. The Messiah is supposed to do this, and he's supposed to say this. He's not supposed to talk to those people, and he's not surely supposed to condemn those people, and he's not supposed to heal those people before these people. And why would he even approach that person way out there? When there are other people, I feel like he should probably approach first way over here.

This book, the Bible, that you hold in your hands is a book filled with stories, poems, myths, parables, love, war, violence, peace, restoration, and it's a testimony of who our God is. And it's an amazing, amazing library that we hold in our lap and in our hands. And it's fascinating because about a third of the words that Yeshua speaks in the synoptic Gospels are all parables. In the synoptic—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John doesn't really have any parables. He has a few stories like the Good Shepherd and stuff, but no parables. John was not interested in that angle of the tradition of Yeshua. He had another angle.

## The Four Gospel Perspectives

And it's amazing because, ever since about the 3rd or 4th century, biblical scholars and believers have tried to reconcile the different angles of all four Gospels and try to make them mesh into one solid story. And these books were written by four different authors from four different points of view. Mark is the oldest author that we know among the Synoptic Gospels. And the reason why Mark and Matthew and Luke are called the synoptic gospels is because they follow the same synopsis. They all are based in relatively the same foundation angle, the same story.

So Matthew and Luke, many scholars believe, were inspired to start their gospels with the main framework that Mark had already and build upon it. And we'll get to a little bit of that later. Mark comes at it from an angle of Yeshua is king. Right? Right here, right now, this is the king of Israel. This is the anointed king, the royalty. Matthew, of course, was written to a Jewish audience. Luke was definitely written to a broader audience, not just a Jewish one. And John, he's obsessed with portraying Yeshua as the Passover lamb.

Four different themes that harmonize with each other but are not exactly the same story because they're different authors. About 30% of the synoptic Gospels are parables. And parables are meant to impact our lives when we read them, to point out something that a simple bullet point slideshow could not possibly convey—something that would penetrate beyond face value. And when Yeshua started telling a story, people understood that they needed to be engaged in it. They needed to listen and become part of that story.

And these stories that Yeshua told always revolved around the fundamental idea of who God is. Who is God in this story and who am I? And when we understand that these parables are meant for us to become sucked into, they can change our lives just like they did the many, many people before us and in their time.

## **The Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector**

And so today we're actually going to dive out of my favorite book, Matthew, and we're going to dive into the book of Luke. So please turn with me to Luke chapter 18, and we're going to read over a very familiar parable today. Luke chapter 18, and we're going to start in verse 9. So it's not the first parable in Luke chapter 18, it's the second. We'll get into it. Everybody kind of caught there? Luke chapter 18. Everyone that has a digital Bible is already there. Everyone's flipping pages. Found the tab, turn. Luke chapter 18, verse 9. Here we go.

"And he also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt."

So Yeshua, right off the bat, has a specific audience that he wants to be sucked into this story. We don't know exactly who he's talking to. Some scholars think it was just his disciples. Some thought it was the Pharisees. Some thought it was everybody. It's irrelevant. Who's he talking to now, today, this morning? He's talking to us. And so he's speaking specifically to us—memories of Sunday school are now flooding back, right? Pharisee? Who's the Pharisee?

## Understanding the Pharisees

So in 2018, raised Christian, the Pharisee is automatically, in our mind, the bad guy. Automatically has to be the bad guy. But let's take a time machine back to the first century. And I have a little bit of commentary here. I didn't put it up on the slide, but it's from Zonderman's Bible Backgrounds commentary. It's beautiful and just an overview of who the Pharisees were. So you guys can kind of gauge and get sucked into this parable just a little bit more. So you ready?

"The Pharisees, one of the several religious parties within Judaism, probably arose from the Hasidim, the pious Jews who fought with the Maccabees against the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes. All right. I already like them. The word Pharisee is probably derived from the Hebrew term meaning separatist and was applied to this group because they separated themselves from those who did not follow their rigid standards of righteousness. While the Sadducees were primarily upper class aristocrats who dominated the Sanhedrin and the temple worship, the Pharisees appear to have been primarily middle class businessmen and merchants more involved in the synagogue communities rather than the temple. They were community leaders. Josephus claims the Pharisees numbered only about 6,000 in Judea in the first century.

And the most distinctive character of the Pharisees was their strict adherence to the Torah, not only the written law of the Old Testament, but also the oral law, a body of traditions that expanded and elaborated on the Old Testament law. Their goal was to build a hedge around the Torah so as to guard against possible infringement."

So you could say that the rabbinic Pharisees of the first century would have been labeled the guardians of the Torah. This was a title that you would give to the rabbinic Pharisees of the first century. They were the guardians of the Torah, and that's how they saw themselves. If they could have some hoodies or sweatshirts or t-shirts or bumper stickers, that's what would be on the back of their donkeys—"Guardians of the Torah."

## Living Out the Torah in a Changing World

"Their expansions of the Torah were also intended to apply its mandates to the changing circumstances in life, and the common people had much admiration for the pious Pharisees."

So these are the guys that would take the Torah... And living in the first century, not everything—I mean, if we just take the Torah at face value, it doesn't quite fit into the first century culture that they currently live in. And so the Pharisees had a way of still being absolutely strict with the obedience of the Torah, but also applying it in new contemporary ways so that they could actually keep the commandments that they possibly couldn't in different ways.

And it was something that was very admirable. And these were the guys that you wanted to be. These are the guys that you look up to in the community. As a child growing up, you'd see the Pharisees—the rabbis—walk down the street, and you'd see your parents give them so much honor and respect because these were the leaders of the people and heroes of the Judean people with the Maccabees.

## The Corrupt Tax Collectors

And then we have the tax collector. The Roman government, together with local authorities, as they were expanding their empire and taking over, imposed a range of taxes on its citizens, from direct polls to land taxes, to indirect tolls, to customs, even to taxes on goods in transport, right? Can you imagine such a country and nation that would just tax you so much, right? And so this is what the Romans did, but the Romans had no way—they felt the best way to get their taxes was to contract it out. Less liability, you don't have to give them any employee benefits, just contracted out.

The tax collectors were contractors of the Roman Empire to collect the taxes that you owed. And on top of that, the tax collectors could charge whatever they wanted, above and beyond what the Romans themselves wanted to pay. In most areas of the Roman Empire, this was not regulated, which means extortion.

"I need three hundred dollars if you're going to transport this donkey across town or across whatever." "I thought the levy was only \$100, but this is my area and this is my county and it's \$300 here." "I'm so poor. My son is sick. I need to get him to a doctor. We're about to lose the house, pay a mortgage." "I need this money." "Sorry, you can't transport these goods through here unless you pay me." "But please have mercy." "No."

This was not a Roman doing this. This was a Jewish man saying this to his Jewish neighbor. Zacchaeus, chief tax collector, was a weasel, and he would have been considered the scum of the earth in his community—a wee little man. Yeah, he was an extortioner. So tax collectors are

definitely the bad guys, right? We kind of see that. I'm transporting back—tax collectors are like the pedophiles that kick puppies in the first century. Let me say something that really hits it home. That's how bad they were.

## The Prayer in the Temple

And a tax collector goes up to the temple, and a Pharisee goes up to the temple. Right? Verse 11: "And the Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust adulterers, even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I give tithes on all that I get."

The Pharisee seems pretty humble, like a righteous guy, right? I mean, he's just saying—he's thanking God for the blessings that God has given to him. He fasts twice a week, and according to the Mishnah, only the extremely pious and faithful to the Torah would participate in fasting twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays. And he tithed, something every truly devoted follower of God does, right? Pretty outstanding guy, this Pharisee.

## The Pharisee and Tax Collector

And is he keeping Torah? Yeah, he's keeping Torah. Probably a lot better than most folks. What a role model. But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, God be merciful on me, a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but everyone who humbles himself will be exalted.

Now imagine being in the first century and Yeshua speaking these words. And he just told you that your role model is the one who does not walk away justified and right with God. It is the tax collector that walks away being made right with God. Imagine the shock and how that shakes you to the core. Yeshua came to start a revolution instilled by God himself. I truly believe this when I read the gospel accounts. And it trashed the way that every single person fought. Just ruined it. The Pharisee did everything he was supposed to, except he felt his righteousness was something he did to please God. And thanked God that he was not like those who were far away from God. Thank you, God, that I can experience you. Thank you, God, that I am favored by your presence. Thank you, God, that I have your attention. Thank you, God, for making me a man. Thank you, God, for not making me a Gentile. Thank you, God, that I'm not one of those that could never, ever even step foot in close proximity to your glory.

## What Was the Function of the Temple?

Guys, what was the function of the temple? I got prizes today. What was the function of the temple? It was the place—so heaven was the place where heaven meets earth. You don't eat Snickers, do you? You do? Because I figured someone was going to be crunchy granola all organic, so I got some sesame seeds here too. Sunflower seeds, whatever. Can we do it? Oh! All right. Pass it back. Pass it back. There we go.

The temple. Okay, everybody. The temple. And I did that on purpose because this is one thing I really want to continue repeating and I will always repeat. The temple was the place where the reign of God and the presence of God, heaven kissed earth. That's what it was viewed as and that was what its function was. These two men went to the temple to have an experience with God. To enter in, even though in a temporary state, enter into heaven on earth. That was the viewpoint in the first century. They would come to the temple and they would offer praise. They would worship, repent, give thanks, meditate, and commune with God in this place. And Yeshua says that the tax collector walked away justified, walked away being made right with God. Wow. The tax collector walked away after beating his chest knowing that he's not worthy of knowing. Knowing that he doesn't have all of the answers. Knowing that he is a sinner. Knowing that he has nothing to offer back to God. Knowing he does not deserve God's love, he walked away experiencing the faithfulness of God in his life. Justified, being made right, if you will, a legal term. And the Pharisee who kept the Torah right down to the last detail, whose sole concern was to be holy, to be set apart, not like all the Gentiles, not like the sinners, but like God, he walked away in the position that the tax collector showed up in. Not justified.

## The Trap in the Story

Notice the two men went up to pray and only one went down. Imagine standing in front of Yeshua when he tells this parable, trying to imagine how difficult it would be to struggle with his assertion. Why wouldn't the Pharisee be justified? He did everything that God required, except he had some warped views on his own righteousness. But still, he was doing everything he was supposed to. He was obviously righteous. The error of the Pharisee is that he thinks he can be obedient to God and still have disdain for people like the tax collector. That's the Pharisee's error. I can be obedient to God's word. I can represent God's kingdom. And I can still look down on others. He thought he could fulfill what the Torah demands without the commandment of love. And he did everything but that one commandment. I mean, if you do 99%, it should count for something.

The Pharisee. Thank you, God, for not making me like a Gentile. Thank you, God, for not making me like a slave. Thank you, God, for not making me like a woman. Thank you, God, for not making me an adulterer. Thank you, God, for not making me like the lost out there. Thank you for not making me like the tax collector. Guys, there's a huge, huge lesson here that should affect us all in one way or another. And we yearn to side with the tax collector. Maybe some of you, maybe a little older, look at the story now and you have lots of experience and you've read the story a million times. And maybe every single morning you wake up and you say, thank you, God, for forgiving me. I want your forgiveness. I repent this morning. And maybe you're looking at this and being like, yeah, I guess. I'm more like the tax collector. Maybe you're looking at the Pharisee and you're saying, thank God I'm not like the Pharisee and all of his self-righteous arrogance. Thank God I'm not like him. I've encountered Yeshua now, and I'm not like that anymore.

And so Yeshua does something amazing in this story, and he sets a trap for every single one of us today. The moment that you say, thank God that I'm more like the tax collector, thank God I'm not like the Pharisee, that's the moment that you have become the Pharisee in the story judging the tax collector. You have become the point of the parable as soon as you say, thank God I'm not like the Pharisee. Ouch! Ouch! You can come full circle right back to square one without even realizing it. See how easy it is to deceive ourselves? That's why I started the message out with the morning prayers. I wanted to try to trigger some of you with an emotional bias already walking into the parable. Did it work? Maybe.

## A New Creation Is Coming

See, when we realize Yeshua was bringing something new, it should make us uncomfortable. When he speaks about a new creation being birthed into this world, it should intimidate us. Because the world that we have become comfortable with, Yeshua said was going away. The prophet said it was going away. Isaiah speaks, Behold, I have a new thing. [Jeremiah 31](#), Behold, there's going to be something new. The God of Israel said, This world's going away. And you need to be prepared to enter into the new thing that's coming, the new creation. Well, not only I will reign, but my reign will be reflected and recognized from the mouth of all creation. It's coming. It's here. It's among you. And it should make us very, very, very uncomfortable.

That Yeshua comes and says that a new birth, a new creation, a new heaven and earth, a restoration is happening. And then he makes this proclamation, and it's happening through me. Through me. In Yeshua, God's kingdom is birthed. And we have a choice to be a part of it, or we can take the I'm a believer bumper sticker and slap it on our old creation. And act as if we've

actually crossed over. And act as if we're not uncomfortable standing in our old mold of how we think the world should be and how we're comfortable with. In this creation, your outward signs, your traditions, even keeping the commandments—simply keeping the commandments isn't enough for entry. Your heart determines your entry. That's what [Matthew 5](#), 8 says. Blessed are the pure of heart. Why? They will see God. And we can all sit here and say, yeah, well, I mean, I got the heart. I believe, I get it. Your heart determines your entry.

## Entry Comes from the Heart

The tax collector, the ISIS fighter, the pedophile, the rapist, the prostitute, the thief, the abortion physician. In this story, they are the tax collector walking away made right with God. And the Pharisee is left in his own self-righteousness, thanking God that I've never been as low as they have in my life. The tax collector experienced God in his life because he poured his heart out before God. And he said, Father, I have nothing else to give. I don't even want to look up to the heavens. This is my heart, and it's awful. And it's yours if you want it, but it's all I have to give.

See, God came to do battle with the root of evil and sin in this world. And when I say evil and sin, I don't simply mean breaking the commandments. Paul seems to assert that there's something bigger that lies underneath the surface of when we do sinful things, and it's sin with a capital S, and it dwells within our hearts. It's what the Torah argues with the Israelites. This is what you need to change first. And they struggled with it. The sinful actions come from the heart. It's not what goes in your body that makes you unclean. Remember those words? It's the one thing Israel always struggled with.

## Yeshua Goes to Sidon

In Matthew, Yeshua intentionally travels to an area called Sidon. Everybody say Sidon. Or if you wanted an accent, you can do the Z instead of an S. Sidon. Sidon. That wasn't a Star Trek show. Anyway, Zidon. So Yeshua decides to travel to this place called Zidon. What is Matthew trying to tell us when he says this? Who cares? It sounds like a cool place. Zidon. It's cool to say. He even yells at the Judean cities full of the Torah observant Judeans that rejected him. And what does he say? And Luke, Matthew says it as well. [Luke 10](#), 13. It's two accounts. Woe to you, Horazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida, you communities. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre or Zidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Zidon than you.

## The Curse of Canaan

Instantly, the Jewish readers would have understood why Luke and Matthew are making this assertion. What does Tyre and Sidon have to do with anything? See, Sidon is first mentioned all the way back in Genesis, and it takes us to a story. I want to dig a little deeper, all the way back to Genesis chapter 9. This is a story of a man by the name of Noah. Noah takes a boat ride, right? And this is right after the big story where the author kind of asserts, indirectly, that divine violence doesn't take care of violence on the earth. God creates a rainbow and a covenant that he's never going to do this again.

Noah gets off the boat, plants a vineyard, and grows some grapes. He makes some wine. Noah gets hammered. Noah ends up naked. Then Noah's son Ham comes in, sees his dad naked, and goes to his brothers and says, hey, dad's naked. So they come and bring a blanket and toss it over him. And when Noah wakes up, he's ticked. He's ticked.

Now, the biblical author did not give us any details about why he was so ticked in that society. There are a lot of theories out there about what happened. Let's just say if some of these theories are right, Noah wouldn't have cursed Ham — he would have killed him. So this is something about honor and shame. But the point here is what Noah did. He cursed Ham and his lineage — primarily his oldest son, Canaan. All of you, cursed.

Has anyone ever been cursed by a parent? Can you imagine the devil? This wasn't something that washed off. All of the favor from your father, gone. All of the pride from your father, gone. All of the blessing and encouragement from your father, all the wisdom that he wants to give you to have us, gone. You're cursed. It was devastating. And it didn't just stop with you — it was infused in your entire lineage at this point. Ham's lineage was cursed. And from Canaan to Sidon, Canaan's oldest son, cursed.

It's amazing because throughout Scripture, we see that Israel has a lot of fights with the Canaanites, right? And even with Sidon, the Sidonites, Israel goes to war with them. Why were they going to war? It all started from a curse, the words that were spoken from Noah's mouth. The curse of a father will always infect more than simply your child. There's a lesson here about how to treat your children, and how to love, and how to forgive.

## The Sidonites in Scripture

And so the Sidonites were accursed people, and they were evil people, just like the Canaanites. And I got ahead of myself — the Sidonites are mentioned several different times throughout

Scripture. King Solomon married a Sidonite woman in [1 Kings 11.1](#), which resulted in her leading him into worship of other gods. Okay, not a good thing, right? After Israel split, Ahab, a king of Israel, decided to marry a Sidonite woman. Can anyone guess who that is, in [1 Kings 16.31](#)? Jezebel. She was a great role model for our daughters.

Jezebel was responsible for pushing the worship of Baal onto Israel and slaughtering all of the Israelite prophets, murdering them in the most brutal ways. Guys, exit ramp. Please, guys and girls, when you say that a woman has a spirit of Jezebel, it instantly reveals to me that you're lacking biblical knowledge. Because unless a woman is slaughtering the prophets of God and forcing the kingdom of God into idolatry, she is not biblical Jezebel.

Just because a woman might have an attitude towards you, or be a little rebellious, or may do things differently, or may speak abrasively to you — just because of that does not mean that you should label her the spirit of Jezebel, because you're really labeling the inadequacy in your own self, that you can't man up or woman up and meet conflict where it is and resolve a problem. You have to resort to labels of sheer nonsense.

Now, [Revelation 2](#), Yeshua calls a woman Jezebel in the church, and this woman is seducing the young men in the whole community, seducing them into idol worship. If the woman — men and women — that you want to put this blanket label on is not seducing the men in the community into sexual immorality and bowing down to idols, I would petition you: have some wisdom. It's very easy to say, Jezebel, you have the spirit of Ahab, and you, the weak little man — I don't know, men don't have a label that we can just throw on them. Korah, maybe? I don't know. Sorry, that's a soft spot for me, because I hate seeing people avoid conflict by simply writing people off and labeling them such horrible things if they're not representing those things they're being labeled. It's a cop-out. Don't sit back and say, thank God I'm not like her.

Sidonites, I apologize. The prophets, such as Joel and especially Isaiah, tell the Sidonians that they are going to experience a terrible fate. Ezekiel just doesn't hold back — in [Ezekiel 27](#) and 28 and 32 he's just savage in how he describes these Sidonians, these cursed people. Jeremiah says that on the day of the Lord, the Sidonians will have no help. What imagery do you get when he says that? The Sidonians are not great guys. Why? They're cursed, right? They're cursed. It's a cursed people.

And then walks in Yeshua, into Zidon, the place of the cursed people. Generations of animosity have built up against the Sidonians, to the point where no Judean in their right mind would ever even walk in there, much less engage with someone there. This traces all the way back to Noah, except for the one exception of Elijah and the widow. Everyone else? Pagans. Cursed

pagans. We are the ones that God loves. We are the ones that are faithful. We are the ones that are on God's side. And the Sidonians are not on God's side — they are our enemies, and they must be God's as well. Obviously, they had never read the book of Jonah. But Yeshua goes to Sidon. Why? Why?

## Yeshua Goes to Sidon

Matthew chapter 15 records this. "And Jesus went away from there and withdrew into a district of Tyre and Sidon" — which is modern-day Lebanon — "and a Canaanite woman from the region came out and began to cry out, saying, Have mercy on me, Lord." What? What'd she call him? Lord, son of David — a name for the Messiah, the anointed king who's coming to restore all things. "Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David. My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." But he did not have an answer for her. He didn't talk. He just kept walking.

And his disciples ran up to him and implored him, saying, "Send her away." Tell her something, because she keeps shouting at us. Yeshua, she's bothering us. This Sidonian, cursed person is bothering us. She's following us. Lord, son of David, please help me. I know that you can heal her. Send her away. And Yeshua's not, "y'all, take care of it, I don't care" — it seems, with the attitude. But he answered and said, "I was sent only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel." You're not it. Go away.

But she came and began to bow down before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Have any of you guys ever read this story before? Does it ever make you — and we can be honest here, right? — a wee bit uncomfortable, the way that Yeshua is carrying himself right now? Can we admit that? I've read this and I'm like, you just called her a dog. Jesus Christ just called her a dog. And this is what we read — this is the reality of what Matthew was writing to us. He's giving Yeshua this tone on purpose. He put a lot of effort into writing this. So if we're thinking this, he meant it for us to think this. It's weird. It messes with you.

But she said, "Yes, Lord. But even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Oh, she got him. Can we say that? Now, whether Yeshua meant for her to get him or not, that opens up a whole philosophical can of worms in the humanity of Yeshua. We're not going to go there. But they played chess, and she checkmated him. And he responds, "Oh woman, your faith is so great." He freaks out. Yes, you get it. Yes, your faith is so great. "It shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once. Whoa. You're a fly on the wall. Wow, wow, wow. This gets me excited.

## Matthew's Version vs. Mark's

And the reason why is because Matthew does something here. He strays from the earlier gospel tradition of Yeshua. Now, as we discussed in the beginning, who's most likely the first biblical author in the synoptic gospels? It's Mark, right? He strays from Mark's tradition of the story. See, Mark's tradition does not say that it was a Canaanite woman. In Mark chapter 7, Mark writes that it was a Syrophoenissa — no, Phoenikissa. Yeah, I speak Greek — a Syrophoenician woman. She was a Phoenician woman because she lived in Phoenicia. That's what the area is. Modern Lebanon.

And during this time, the first century, this was an extremely Hellenized area. This woman was Greek with Phoenician ancestry and lineage. Still a pagan, but let's just be accurate with it. And so the story is about a pagan woman coming to Yeshua, petitioning to see God work, to experience God in her life in an act of saving her daughter from this demon — heartfelt, pouring out everything on her knees, humble and crying out. Yeshua calls her a dog, and she fires back. With boldness and faith and confidence in who he is — whether he was trying to portray it or guard it just to see what she would do — she fought for it. And he turned around and broke character at that moment and was like, you have great faith.

Your daughter's healed. But Matthew, he says that he was only sent for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In this moment, he didn't. He wasn't. He came for her. He came for her in this moment, in this story, and in this place. And that's amazing.

## Matthew's Retelling

Now Matthew's retelling the story, the tradition, what he experienced, what he saw, the oral tradition that he'd been telling. And he's retelling the story and he strays from his contemporaries' recollection of the story. And Matthew wants this reader to see the woman here as more than simply a Greek Phoenician woman. So he doesn't write Syrophoeniksa. He writes Kananaya—I'm going to say that—Canaanite in Greek. He writes that she was a Canaanite.

## The Original Cursed People

The original cursed people, the people that culminated evil in their midst to the point where God finally unleashed the command to wipe them all out, exterminate them. Babies, teens, women, everything, exterminate them. They are exceedingly wicked in the land. Knock them out, take the land. That's who the Canaanites were, right? We remember the conquest stories. The most wicked and vile and unrighteous and immoral and sinful and corrupt people. The

cursed of Noah, the ultimate adversary of Israel. Matthew writes that the woman was a Canaanite.

Does it become weightier at this point? Does the story carry more weight at this point? Why would he write that? And she plays Yeshua's game of illustration here against him. And he responds: "What great faith."

## The Canaanite Conquest Completed

Did Israel ever fully exterminate the Canaanites? No. [Kings 9](#) and 16 talks about even in the time of King Solomon, they were still scattered around the land. No, they never did. So the Canaanite conquest remained open-ended, right? Is this Yeshua concluding the Canaanite conquest, exterminating the wicked, cursed people of Canaan, not through violence, but eliminating their identity in him? Canaanites did not exist in the first century. They had been long gone. The last record we have of them is about 400 or 500 years before this. Matthew did this on purpose to get your attention, to give the story even more weight of what the point of the story was. Think about that.

## A Radical Message

Now part of God's love. Does that rub you the wrong way? A little bit? Think about how people would have responded in his day. Leaving the cities of Judea, he looks at them and says, "Better are the Canaanites, better are the Sidonians for the lineage of Jezebel on the day of judgment. It's better for them than you. They are closer to God than you. They have more faith in God and have experienced a deeper presence of God and have pursued God and have humbled themselves before God and have repented before God and yearned for God's presence in their lives more than you, O Bethsaida, O Chorazin, O cities of Judea." Better to be a cursed Sidonian than a religious person who thinks the Sidonians are cursed.

## Prejudice in Religious Circles

Yeshua lived in a culture where prejudice and racism were rampant in religious circles. Thank God those times are over where convictions and beliefs were held in absolutes with clenched fists. Where ideas fueled by arrogance and ideologies of superiority laid a foundation of what we would call faith. The idea of who had God's favor and who was far from God's grace, who was cursed and who was blessed. Man, that idea had tremendous power in the first century. It influenced everybody.

I was thinking the other day, reading through these incidents, and you see the chief priests and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, you see everybody getting upset with Yeshua, and they just want to kill him. And you begin to understand why, because he was so radical and revolutionary in what he said. And I thought to myself, I wonder if we would have the same feelings if he was in our midst right now speaking to us. I wonder if he would open his mouth and mess up every single thing that we thought that our faith was molded around. It's a scary thought. It's a very scary thought.

## **Do You Desire to Know God?**

And Yeshua comes along and makes a bold proclamation that God is interested in something else other than your prejudice and racism and your unwillingness to take the presence of God and the experience of God and the forgiveness and mercy and grace and faith of God to those who you claim are beneath you. Do you desire to know God? Do you desire to see his glory? Do you desire to have an experience with the living God to see his kingdom reign? If that's you, it doesn't matter where you come from. Through him, you can experience mercy, grace, healing, forgiveness, restoration, completion. That's the proclamation of Yeshua, despite what road led you to him. Your curses do not follow you into the arms of Yeshua. And the Canaanite was made right and a part of God's flock through her faith.

## **A New Way of Living**

Lord, son of David, Yeshua talks about this new way of living out the Torah and this new way of looking at creation. Should we kill our enemies? No, you should love them. Should we make judgments about who is in and who is out of God's scope of his kingdom? Well, Yeshua, every single time that happened in the scriptures, Yeshua rushed to wrap his arms around those who were brought low in the outcasts to bring them in and include them. Just include them. Tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes. What about the curse on those people over there? They're the cursed people. It's always been that way. And Yeshua tells his own people, yeah, you got to leave that behind, bro. You got to leave that behind. They don't have to be cursed. They can be part of God's flock. What are you going to do about that?

## **Hard Things Meant to Hurt**

Yeshua said many, many hard things, things that were meant to hurt, to break the mold that we've built around our own religion, to make our flesh struggle and churn so we can be blessed. He said things he knew would hurt so we could be blessed. Just like Jacob after encountering

the angel and walking away with his flesh limping and with a new identity in God. You got to trade one to get the other, right? Thank God I am simply yours. God is bigger than your curses. And if we pour our hearts out to him, if we are not so focused about everybody else around us and looking down on everyone else, if we are able to empty our hearts out for him, we will experience him.

## Are We Still Distracted?

I was reading an article today, this morning, a friend of mine posted it. And it was about a man that was on a beach looking at this beautiful sunrise. And it was just gorgeous to see God's creation. And this woman beside him was on her cell phone. And he saw her yesterday, too, just flicking away. And the only time she'd look up is if the wave got too close to her feet. He's like, "How can this woman ignore God's beautiful creation right then and there? How can she? I mean, look at her, just occupied. She's going to get a crick in her neck and all that mess. Why? She should be ashamed of herself."

And the story goes, the Holy Spirit spoke to this man and said, "You're right. You're right. She's totally distracted now. On everything but me right now. But you are worse off than her." He's like, "What?" "Because you are even more distracted at judging her than you are focusing on me."

## An Ambassador of the King

When Yeshua spoke, it was to establish a new way of living. It was to establish a new way to walk out being human. It was to establish a new way of being an image bearer of God. And it was establishing the correct way to apply Torah in our lives with one foundation, which should be filled in our heart, and that's the command to love and to seek justice for others and to yearn to be used by God, not as a tool or a weapon of judgment, but as an ambassador of the King.

I'm Matthew Vander Els, pastor of Founded in Truth Fellowship, and we hope you enjoyed this message and that it was a blessing to you and your family. Founded in Truth exists to cultivate a fellowship of image bearers that live the redeemed life only Yeshua can give. If this ministry has been a blessing to you, we would love to hear from you. Send us an email through the contact form on our site and tell us how God has used this ministry to edify your faith and your relationship with Him. If you would like to donate to Founded in Truth Ministries and be a part of this ministry's continued impact, you can do so through our website. Thank you for joining us, and we pray that you experience the peace and the joy of God's holy Sabbath. Shabbat

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