

Transcription – A Spirit of Self-Righteousness – Elder Eric

Shalom brethren, Chag Semeach, Shanah Tovah!

Since we're in the wilderness again this year for Sukkot I thought it fitting to give another message on a lesson of the wilderness. And although we've already heard lots of messages we need to learn in wilderness there's still one lesson that we haven't learned ... gone over yet. And it was a big one because a lot of Israelites didn't make it into the Promised Land because of it. And it was because of self-righteousness. So this message is, *Lessons in the Wilderness – A Spirit of Self-Righteousness*.

In **1st Corinthians 10:11**, Paul said that lessons in the wilderness were for our instruction. But did you know that self-righteousness was one of the biggest sins of the sons of Israel in the wilderness? And since it was one of the lessons the sons of Israel had in the wilderness then it is definitely a lesson we need to learn now in the end time.

But does Scripture foretell that the end-time Congregation would have a problem with self-righteousness? **2nd Timothy 3:1** ... and I apologize in advance; I'm going to be going through these verses pretty quickly for sake of time.

2nd Timothy 3:1-2a *But know this, that in the last days disastrous times will be upon us. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, braggarts, arrogant,*

Have you ever noticed that three of the first four characteristics of the brethren in the end time are pride; lovers of money ... I mean lovers of themselves, braggarts, arrogant. And it says that **because of these characteristics** in the brethren that *disastrous times will be upon us*. Now, it's not talking about the state of the world in the end time. **These are the characteristics of the brethren.**

Pride is elevating yourself in your mind, giving yourself a worth above everybody else. But self-righteousness is basically the same because self-righteousness **is a characteristic of pride**. It just so happens to happen more with believers and religious people because believers and religious people want to believe and think and feel that they're more righteous than everybody else. And as **2nd Timothy 3:1** tells us it is one of the biggest ways pride manifests itself among the brethren in the end time. Self-righteousness loves itself. It brags about itself and it's arrogant.

We are living in the Laodicean era and it is self-righteousness that is the major problem of the Laodicean. Just listen to what the Laodicean says, Revelation 3:17:

Revelation 3:17a ... *"I am rich, I have made myself rich, and I have need of nothing"...*

If that is not self-righteousness, I don't know what is. And they don't need anything. They don't need brethren. They don't need elders. They don't even need Yahweh. And they certainly don't need His grace.

And continuing in Revelation 3:17, it says:

Revelation 3:17b *but they do not know that they are miserable, wanderers, poor, blind and naked.*

They're poor because they're so empty, devoid of Yahweh's Spirit because they can't see that they have a spirit of self-righteousness and it makes them feel like they're so spiritual. Yet, they can't see they're wretched state. And they're blind because they **think** they're so righteous. Yet, they can't see that they have a spirit of self-righteousness.

Self-righteousness is such a dangerous sin because it blinds you to it. And whereas all other sins are easier to repent of because they're obvious like: lying, cheating, committing adultery or even breaking the Sabbath, self-righteousness is so difficult to discern because it makes you feel justified. Because it masks itself with a false righteousness that you believe you have. You think you're doing nothing wrong and so you'll do whatever is right in your eyes. But *the heart is deceitful above all things and is incurable, who can know it?* **Jeremiah 17:9**.

In my seventeen years of walking in the truth I've seen some brethren become self-righteous. It usually happens when they've been in the Congregation for so many years. They start out humble and zealous. They learn the doctrines and the Commandments. They eat clean. They keep the feasts. They learn how to calculate the calendar. But knowledge puffs up and so self-righteousness creeps in.

But there are a lot of ways brethren can get overcome with self-righteousness. Maybe some brethren think that they're righteous because they have more physical blessings than other brethren. They think Yahweh is favoring them more. Maybe some brethren see that they have more spiritual gifts than other brethren. And so they think they're more righteous.

Or maybe some think because they're serving more that they're more righteous. Or maybe some brethren believe that they have more faith than other brethren and think they're more righteous. Or maybe some feel more righteous because they're in a big congregation or living in one of the communities. Or maybe some feel more righteous because they're able to stock up food for seven years.

The point is there isn't just one way brethren can get overcome with self-righteousness. There are many ways brethren get elevated in their mind with self-righteousness. But the **main reason brethren get a spirit of self-righteousness because they take their eyes off of Yahshua.**

So, if you could turn with me to Deuteronomy 9:4 ... we just read this today in the Torah reading ... Deuteronomy 9:4. All brethren have self-righteousness to some degree or another because self-righteousness **is a characteristic of ...** It is a part of our human nature and so we have to fighting it every day. But remember *unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, **Matthew 5:20**, you will not enter into the Kingdom of Yahweh.*

And remember it wasn't because of the righteousness of the Israelites before us that Yahweh brought them into the Promised Land. And it isn't ... it's not going to be because of our righteousness now that Yahweh allows us to enter into the Kingdom, but it's going to be for His great name, **Ezekiel 36:22-24**. So Deuteronomy 9:4:

Deuteronomy 9:4 *Do not say in your heart, when YAHWEH your Elohim casts them out from before you, saying, YAHWEH has brought me in to possess this land for **my righteousness**. But say, YAHWEH dispossesses **them from before you** because of the wickedness of those nations.*

Deuteronomy 9:5 *It is not for your righteousness or for the upright of your heart that you go to possess their land. But YAHWEH your Elohim is dispossessing them from before you because of the wickedness of these nations; and in order to establish the Word which YAHWEH has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

Deuteronomy 9:6-7 *And you shall know that YAHWEH your Elohim is **not giving you this good land, to possess it, for your righteousness; for you are a stiff-necked people**. Remember; do not forget how you made YAHWEH your Elohim angry in the wilderness; even from the day that you came out of the land of Egypt until you came into this place you have been rebellious against YAHWEH.*

And let's go to Ezekiel 36 ... that's an important Scripture talking about the end time and Yahweh bringing back His remnant from all the nations of the earth. And we're going to see what He says about bringing back the end-time remnant. Ezekiel 36:22-24:

Ezekiel 36:22-24 *Therefore, say to the house of Israel, So says Adonai YAHWEH: I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but only for My holy name which you profaned among the nations, there where you went. And I will sanctify My great name which was profaned among the nations, which **you profaned among them**. And the nations shall know that **I am YAHWEH**, declares Adonai YAHWEH, when I am sanctified **in you**, in their eyes. For I will take you from the nations and gather you out from all the lands and bring you into your land.*

So this message is not for those you are so self-righteous that after hearing this message they'll disregard it and not think twice about it. But this message for those who ... even if they don't think they're self-righteous ... they'll go into their prayer closet and ask Yahweh if they have a spirit of self-righteousness that they don't see.

Psalm 19:12-13 ... I love this prayer by David, he says:

Psalm 19:12-13 *Who can discern errors? Acquit me from secret faults. And withhold Your servant from **arrogant** sins; do not let them rule over me; then I will be complete, and innocent from great transgression.*

So some may be wondering, "Well, how do I know I have a spirit of self-righteousness since it's so difficult to discern?" Well, there are a lot of forms of self-righteousness like: have you ever said or heard someone say, "I would never do that!" Have you ever gotten angry and justified yourself when someone offered correction? Not being patient with those who messed up and are struggling; consistently pointing out the sins of others while overlooking your own and making excuses; having a pity-party; making your own traditions and rituals as law, like the Pharisees and Sadducees were doing with the oral law. Misinterpreting the Torah like the first century brethren were doing; condemning other brethren who were eating meat sacrificed to idols. All of this is self-righteousness.

But now I'm going to going over some other forms of self-righteousness. And I'm purposely going over these forms a little more in depth because the Israelites specifically had problems with them. And some of these can be extremely difficult to discern. And these are forms that I've actually witnessed in the Congregation. So Paul was right when he said these lessons are for our instruction.

So the first one: **You feel justified by self-righteous anger.** Many times brethren get hood-winked by Satan thinking that they have righteous anger when it's actually self-righteous anger. And they may feel justified thinking that it's righteous anger like when Yahshua overturned the money tables in the sanctuary. But it's really not because it's not according to the Torah and to Yahweh's Spirit of love.

And this one can be extremely difficult to discern. Numbers 20 verse 2 ... if you could go with me there. This is the one that cost Moses his ticket into the Promised Land. And although it wasn't a part of his character and he did it in a moment of weakness, just one slip was all it took because of the lesson that needed to be learned through this. He couldn't allow this to go unpunished. Deuteronomy ... I mean Numbers 20 verse 2:

Numbers 20:2-5 *And there was no water for the congregation, and they were gathered against Moses, and against Aaron. And the people contended with Moses, and spoke, saying, Oh that we had died when our brothers died before YAHWEH! And, why have you brought the assembly of YAHWEH to this wilderness to die there, we and our animals? And, why have you brought us up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place, not a place of seed, nor fig, nor vine, nor pomegranate; and there is no water to drink?*

Numbers 20:6-8 *And Moses and Aaron went in from the eyes of the assembly, to the door of the tent of meeting; and fell on their faces. And the glory of YAHWEH appeared to them. And YAHWEH spoke to Moses, saying, Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, you and your brother Aaron. And **speak to the rock** before their eyes. And it shall give forth its water; and you shall bring water out of the rock to them; so you will water the congregation and their animals.*

Numbers 20:9-11 *And Moses took the rod before YAHWEH, as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation before the rock. And he said to them, Hear now, you rebels, shall we bring forth water to you out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock with his rod twice; and much water came out; and the congregation and their animals drank.*

Numbers 20:12 *And YAHWEH said to Moses and Aaron, Because you did not believe in Me, to sanctify Me before the eyes of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring in this congregation to the land which I have given to them.*

So to discern this form of self-righteousness you have to stand back and analyze your thoughts and be honest with yourself. And you have to ask yourself, “Why am I angry? What provoked the anger? Why did I get offended?” You have to check your motive to see if it’s coming from your flesh or from the Spirit. Is it an offense toward yourself, or an offense toward Yahweh and His Word? Are you **reacting** to your flesh; or are you being pro-active to the **sin** because you don’t want that brother or sister who is causing the harm in the brethren around them?

Self-righteous anger is selfish in nature and seeks to get revenge out of hurt done to itself. It will act out of frustration, pride ... frustration, bitterness and grudges. But if it’s truly righteous anger, the Spirit will act from a spirit of love because it doesn’t want to see anyone hurt, including that brother or sister who’s causing the harm.

The next form of self-righteousness is: **Brethren trying to elevate themselves above other brethren; seeking a position in the Congregation.** These so-called brethren will do **anything** for a position in leadership; even putting down other brethren and leaders by falsely accusing them and twisting the facts trying to make themselves look good in front of the leadership while trying to make the other brethren and leaders look bad.

And they’ll feel justified in doing this because self-righteousness has warped and perverted their minds. They think: **they deserve it**; they have more knowledge; they have more spiritual gifts than everybody else; they serve more than others. But they don’t realize that they’re seeking the position because it feeds their pride within them which lusts with envy. This is what Korah did and those who followed him.

If you could turn with me to Numbers 16 ... a few pages before this one ... we see another situation in the wilderness ... Numbers 16:1:

Numbers 16:1-2 *And Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, took also Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben; and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty **rulers** of the congregation, **elect men** of the assembly, men of name.*

Numbers 16:-3-4 *And they were assembled against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, You take too much! For all the congregation, all of them are holy, ... self-righteousness ... and YAHWEH is among them. Why then do you lift up yourselves above the assembly of YAHWEH? ... false accusations ... And Moses heard and fell on his face.*

Numbers 16:5-7 *And he spoke to Korah, and to all his company, saying, In the morning **YAHWEH will know** who are His, and him who is holy, and shall cause **him to come near Him**; even him whom He may choose, **He will cause to come near to Him**. Do this: take fire-pans for yourselves, Korah, and all your company, and put fire in them, and put incense on them before YAHWEH tomorrow; and it shall be, the man whom YAHWEH chooses, he shall be the holy one. You take too much, sons of Levi!*

Numbers 16:8-11 *And Moses said to Korah, Hear now, you sons of Levi, is it too little a thing to you that Elohim of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of YAHWEH, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them? Yea, He has brought you near, and all your brothers, the sons of Levi, with you. And will you seek the priesthood also? Therefore, you and all your company that have gathered **against YAHWEH**, What is Aaron that you murmur against him?*

There have been brethren and leaders before me who have fallen into this form of self-righteousness. They wanted the positions for the wrong reasons. Rather than seeking the opportunity to love the brethren more by serving them in a greater capacity. But self-righteousness is never satisfied. It always keeps wanting more and more. And it makes you ... self-righteousness makes you feel like you’re so special like it’s just you and Yahweh. But that’s not reality. The reality is we’re all equally special in Yahweh’s eyes, just in different ways.

Another form of self-righteousness is: **Brethren thinking they know better than the elders.** Some brethren after being in the Congregation for so many years get elevated in their mind by their self-righteousness and think they know better

than the elders. Because maybe a judgment didn't go their way; or maybe an elder didn't handle a situation the way they think the Torah says to handle it; or maybe an elder is not as strong in a fruit of the Spirit as they think they are; or maybe an elder didn't show as much faith in a certain situation as they think they did. And then a root of bitterness grows up inside of them and then their minds get clouded with self-righteousness.

And they don't realize that ... and then what they'll do is they'll go behind the elder's back murmuring against them about it and falsely accusing them and causing other brethren to fall away. This is what Aaron and Miriam did to their own brother. If you go to Numbers 12 ... turn with me there ... Numbers 12 verse 1:

Numbers 12:1-3 *And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, because of the Cushite woman whom he had taken. For he had taken a Cushite woman. And they said, Has YAHWEH spoken only by Moses? Has He not also spoken by us? And YAHWEH heard. And the man Moses was very depressed, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.*

Numbers 12:4-7 *And YAHWEH said suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, You three come out to the tent of the meeting. And the three of them came out. And YAHWEH came down in the pillar of the cloud and stood at the tabernacle door, and called Aaron and Miriam. And both of them came out. And He said, Now hear My words, If your prophet is of YAHWEH, I will make Myself seen by him in an appearance; I will speak to him in a dream. It is not so with My servant Moses! He is **faithful** in all My house.*

Comment: I love to hear this part where Yahweh is defending Moses.

Numbers 12:8-10 *I speak to him mouth to mouth, and by an appearance, and not in riddles; he looks upon the form of YAHWEH. So why have you not been afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses? And the anger of YAHWEH glowed against them, and He left. And the cloud turned away from the tent. And, behold Miriam was leprous as snow! And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous!*

Self-righteousness has no loyalty, not even to Yahweh, but only to itself. And what will happen with these brethren is that they'll get so elevated in their mind with their self-righteousness ... thinking they're so spiritual ... that they'll stop listening to the leadership and then they'll just go off on their own.

Sometimes brethren in their minds put leaders on a pedestal equal with Yahweh, even if they don't think they are, and judge them like if they're Yahweh. But it's a scary place to be, without leadership; especially now, in the times we're living in.

And the last form of self-righteous ... and this one is not an example I'm going to give from the Israelites but one I think is really important to go over is: **Seeking to be seen to look better than others and to be praised.** This form of self-righteousness can be **really hard** to recognize because it can disguise itself as false fruits of the Spirit. **1 Corinthians 13:3**, this is why Paul said, *"But if I give all my possessions to the poor and even surrender my body so that I may boast, but I do not have love in my heart, I am nothing."* They could be doing all the right things outwardly and serving and maybe even serving more than everybody else but their heart is not right before Yahweh. Their self-righteousness has clouded their mind so much they don't realize that they're doing all these acts of kindness, not for Yahweh, but for themselves.

Self-righteousness loves itself. It seeks to ... it's all for self to be recognized and praised and it's all to feed their pride. So then what happens is all this becomes is empty actions without fruit. They don't have the right motive. **Matthew 7:22-23**, *many will say to Me in that day, Master, Master did we not prophesy in Your Name? And in Your Name cast out demons? And in Your name perform mighty miracles? Then I will say to them, Depart from Me all you who work lawlessness.*

So is there even a way to overcome self-righteousness? Yes, **all things are possible with Yahweh.** First you have to sincerely ... well, the opposite of self-righteousness is humility. So you have to sincerely ask Yahweh, pray to Him for a

spirit of humility. But don't get angry or reject the trials that Yahweh will bring to break your pride. Embrace them and allow yourself to be humiliated. And surrender to Yahweh and allow Yahweh to grow His Spirit within you.

Also, **don't compare yourself to others**, even leaders. Everyone will let you down. But if you compare yourself ... one I would recommend the One to compare yourself though is to Yahshua. Because His standard is so high you will always see yourself falling short every day. And that's what some brethren do. They get caught up with comparing themselves with other brethren and think they're doing better than the brethren around them and they think they're ... they get a spirit of self-righteousness.

2nd Corinthians 10:12:

2nd Corinthians 10:12 *For we dare not rank or compare ourselves with those who are proud of themselves; for it is because they measure themselves by themselves, they do not understand.*

So, if you're **always comparing yourself to Yahshua** you will never fall into the trap of self-righteousness. What I do, I like to read the "Good News" messages every day. Because one, I want to be just like Yahshua and I want my focus to be on Him; and two, I don't want to fall into the trap of self-righteousness.

You also have to realize that **you're not righteous. No one is, only Yahweh.** And there's nothing great about us. Yahweh actually calls our righteousness as filthy rags before Him, **Isaiah 64:6**. And when we're on our hands and knees praying to Yahweh and repenting of the sins we committed against Him, we should not only do it repenting of that, but also **repenting of who we are**; of our human nature. **You have to be internalizing Yahshua's sacrifice every day. Your focus has to be on Him every day.**

Many have lost their way because they're not embracing the supremacy of Yahshua. His gift is not cheap ... His gift of grace is not cheap and it can never be earned even if we were to live a thousand life times. And we can't forget that is by His grace that we're even here. He chose us. We didn't choose Him.

So if we want to make it into the Kingdom we have to be learning the lessons of the Israelites now before it's too late. Self-righteousness was a major problem of the Israelites and Scripture foretells that it will be a major problem with the Congregation today.

If we want to have even a chance of making it, we have to be honest with ourselves and be praying every day for Yahweh to be showing the **hidden sins** that we're not seeing; like self-righteousness. And we have to be embracing the challenges that He's putting us through now to humble us, to break our pride so we can be purified without spot, into the bride of Yahshua. Yahweh bless, Chag Semeach!