

Tikkun and the Twelve Pillars

Excerpts from Writings of Daniel C. Juster

Compiled and Edited by Michael Rudolph

Read to Ohev Yisrael August 10, 2013

From *Shaliach* Dan Juster's letter of August 4, 2013 to Tikkun America Leaders

"I want to remind you of the importance of educating your congregants on why it is important to be part of a "five-fold" restoration network. A "five-fold" network provides both equipping and connection to higher level of government, so that congregations and leaders are kept accountable for maintaining basic vision, biblical doctrine, and a judicial process with a court of appeal. I have come to realize that, although our leaders get this, most of our people do not; it is part of the situation of our age. When I was a youngster in the church world, most everyone was concerned to know how congregations, denominations, synagogues, etc. were governed. Were they democratic, board-run, a combination? How could a leader be removed? What was the appeal process when there were concerns about serious wrongs committed, and how could they be judged? I learned the government of the Reformed Church in America as part of what was called "communicants class" when I was fifteen (it is called "confirmation" in other denominations). Every Saturday morning, all the young people planning to become members would take this class offered every year. For us, of course, it is covered in our membership classes, and is laid out in the most basic way in "Growing to Maturity." But alas, it is often forgotten. "

"I am thinking of writing an article on this for the International Letter that can be copied, read and distributed to your members, and kept by them for reference. It would explain what an equipping network like Tikkun is. Why it is not safe for a congregation to be independent. How every one of our congregations is governed by an accountable eldership – accountable both to the Network and also to its members, by having to seek member confirmation for major decisions, and by publishing annual finance reports and budgets. It would also explain that there is a court of appeal for serious matters when a member believes he or she is being unjustly handled. Being connected to a Network like Tikkun is a great safeguard for members, and a guard against cultic styles of leadership growing up within a community. In the last two decades, ten of our congregations were greatly aided when Tikkun was called in to help with deep divisions among leaders and members that had arisen. All are doing fine today, but were in very difficult straits. I know that the UMJC does some of this, but Tikkun's kind of government makes us better at it."

"In my view, there is a progression of good government that goes something like this. Less than acceptable is a "royal pastor" model, where the pastor is "Dictator" of the congregation and cannot be removed. Elders are only advisors and not decision makers. Having no accountability to the membership is also unacceptable. Stage one of acceptability is an independent congregation whose leader is accountable to a plurality of elders, and they all are accountable to the members. Stage two, a higher level, is where a congregation belongs to an association of congregations that is governed by delegates sent by its member congregations. (This is the government of the UMJC). Stage three is stage two plus leadership given to a recognized apostolic team. The reason this is better than stage two is that there is more similarity of vision, a closer covenant relationship among network member congregations, a stronger recognition of

gifts and callings, a greater level of accountability for congregational leaders, and team members who are released into their gifts to minister inter-congregationally."

Comment:

In considering *Shaliach* Dan's words, I tried to recall when, in my memory, Ohev Yisrael's primary oversight organization, Tikkun, was explained to Ohev members, and I could not think of when. Well, it's about time that it was, so I asked myself: "Michael" (I sometimes ask myself things that way), "what is the best way to introduce Tikkun to Ohev's members?" I thought for a moment and then answered myself" (I sometimes answer myself that way also): "The best way, is to teach them about Tikkun's "Twelve Pillars" because the Pillars are the theological foundation for both Tikkun and Tikkun congregations, including Ohev. So, having asked myself, answered myself, and having agreed with myself, here is what Dan has to say about the First Pillar, "The Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom."

PILLAR ONE OF TWELVE PILLARS

A Foundation for Tikkun Congregations & Ministries

by Daniel C. Juster

"Since the formation of Tikkun as a restoration-oriented Messianic Jewish network in 1984, greater understanding of our walk together has graciously been granted by our Lord. This compilation of "Twelve Pillars" provides an understanding of those things that bind us together in a common vision and commitment. My desire is that these twelve pillars become twelve convictions in our leaders and our people – convictions which will be established and maintained by continued vigilance. May we not stray from these pillars until we see our Lord face to face."

"Much confusion exists in the Church and Messianic Jewish worlds because there is not a clear understanding of the Good News. Many have been taught that the Good News is a message about how to get to heaven. It is summarized this way: "Because we have sinned, we are not qualified for heaven. Jesus died for our sins, and if we believe in his death and resurrection, we will go to heaven." At its worst, it has been taught that no change of life is necessary for going to heaven. It is said that to require any life change is works-salvation. This is contrary to classic presentations of the Gospel which taught that one is saved by receiving the grace that transforms. In conversion of the spirit (the process of being "born again"), one receives Yeshua (Jesus) as Savior and Lord because God enables us, through grace, to make the decision. Grace is not merely unmerited favor, but the power that transforms. To receive Yeshua as Savior and reject him as Lord is not saving faith. It is, in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words, "cheap grace." Indeed, "believing" in the New Covenant Scriptures is a relational act of entrusting one's life to Yeshua."

"However, even this classical correction is not a sufficient correction, for the Gospel is much more than a message about going to heaven. Now far be it from me to disparage, in any way, the hope of heaven, or our life after this one. Without such a hope of future life, we are, in the words of Paul, "to be most pitied." Indeed, the hope of heaven is based on the atoning death and resurrection of Yeshua, but the Good News is much more than the hope of heaven."

"We can understand the fuller message of the Good News if we understand that a concern for going to heaven was not the issue in the first century Jewish context of the Gospels. Most Jews

were quite convinced they were headed for heaven after death, for they were assured of life with God after death as long as they sought to be faithful to the covenant God made with Abraham. The Mosaic Covenant was the administration of the Abrahamic covenant at the time of the life of Yeshua. There was, however, a great Jewish concern that can be phrased in a question: "Where is the Kingdom of God promised by the prophets?" Indeed, the great hope of the prophets was that Israel and the nations would be one under the rule of the Messiah, the Son of David. Israel would be delivered from all her enemies in such a mighty intervention by God, that the nations would stream into the God's Kingdom. As we read in Isaiah 2:3-4, swords would be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, nations would no longer go to war, and the Word of the Lord would go forth from Zion. Even nature itself would be transformed for, as we read in Isaiah 11:7, the lion would eat straw like an ox. The wolf would live alongside the lamb (Isaiah 11:6), and the earth would be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:9). The Lord would be one, and his Name one(Zechariah 14:9)."

"The first century questions had to do with the when and how of the Kingdom, much more than the form of the Kingdom. The religious parties other than the Sadducees sought to discover a way to move history to the climax of the coming of the Kingdom. "Pharisee-ism" was largely a program of applying the purity laws that were given to the priests, to the people as a whole. The thought was that if they could get enough people to be as pure as the priests, and the land to be pure like the Temple, the Messiah would come and bring deliverance. It was a "last days" kind of program to bring about world redemption."

"The Essenes thought in a similar fashion. However, they saw the Pharisees as compromisers with a corrupt Temple and priesthood. Indeed, the High Priest was a political appointee and no longer a legitimate descendant of Zadok to whom the priestly succession was given. They therefore sought a purity more strict than the Pharisees. Some joined monastic-like communities that practiced daily bathings and strict ritual purity. Their hope was not the salvation of the whole nation of Israel, but only of a faithful remnant that would fight in the wars of the sons of light against the sons of darkness as reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls authored by the Essenes."

"The Zealots looked upon such ritual extensions as foolish diversions. Faith was understood as raising a revolt against the Romans. When a sufficient number were in revolt, the Messiah would arise and lead the Jews to victory. The Zealots led our ancestors to the disastrous rebellion against Rome that resulted in the Temple's destruction in 70 A.D."

"When Yeshua began his ministry, it was with an announcement that astonished, and fit the context of our people. He announced, "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Good News." (Mark 1:14). "At hand" is a Hebrew euphemism which means "available to you." In Yeshua, the Kingdom of God had come in a way that it could be embraced, and entered into. The life, ministry, and teachings of Yeshua are an exposition of the meaning of this Kingdom that was now available. It was an answer to the first century Jewish question: "Where is the Kingdom?" Yeshua needed to show that the Kingdom really had appeared and was available, even though its fullness, established over all the Earth, would await a future intervention."

"Where is the Kingdom of God? It is wherever the rule of God is established. To the extent that His rule is established in any sphere of human life, we can say: "There is the Kingdom!"

However, the Kingdom can only be established by His power; we in our human weakness and sin do not have the ability to establish it. Therefore, Yeshua comes with the power to establish His rule, beginning with His rule in our hearts. All the dimensions of Yeshua's ministry show the reality of the Kingdom he offers. The power of the Kingdom delivers from disease and demonic oppression. Such is Satan's disorder – not God's order. Yeshua and his disciples heal. The power of the Kingdom in Yeshua can even overcome the dangers of natural disaster. God's Kingdom power enables us to live according to the teaching of Yeshua. This teaching brings *Torah* to its highest application. Hatred is removed from our hearts. Murder becomes impossible. We love our enemies. We do not only avoid literal adultery, but have freedom from lust in our hearts. We are honest in our words and true to our promises. We are free from religious pride and pray with sincerity. We are free from material greed and material worry, for if we seek first the Kingdom of God, we shall have all things added to us (Matthew 6:33)."

"The parables of Yeshua show the nature of the Kingdom He offers. It spreads by the "seed" of the Word of God, and finds reception in willing "soils" (hearts). It grows from a small beginning, a mustard seed, into a large tree. It is the treasure that supersedes all else. (Matthew 13:31-32)."

"The disciples did not realize that the Kingdom that was offered in Yeshua would not immediately lead to its ultimate final stage. They did not understand that His death and resurrection were necessary to more fully establish the Kingdom. Indeed, the arrival of the Spirit at the feast of *Shavuot* was the key to the availability of the Kingdom to all peoples. Before *Shavuot*, the Kingdom was limited to those connected to the earthly life of Yeshua. It was therefore expedient that He go away, and that the Spirit come."

"Therefore, the message of the Good News is that the Kingdom of God is available. If we come to the Father on the basis of the death and resurrection of Yeshua, our sins are forgiven and we enter the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom message is the promise that God will put all things in our lives into his right order – Kingdom order – *Torah* in the New Covenant. The Kingdom message is the promise for our personal lives, families, communities, businesses, artistry, and so much more. It is best pictured in the great parable of the prodigal son. The son returns to his father's house and submits to his rule. In so doing, everything in his life is put into right order."

"The Good News of the Kingdom includes everlasting life. This becomes a greater concern in the preaching to the Gentiles in the first century. The invitation to the Kingdom is only possible because Yeshua died for our sins. Because our sins can be forgiven in Him, we are invited to receive Him. The invitation is, however, limited by the necessity of our remaining in this physical world for the time being, while being given access to the Kingdom of God by the Spirit's power within us – power that affects every dimension of our lives. Once we understand the Gospel of the Kingdom in this way, it immediately leads us to embrace the quest for establishing God's Kingdom order in every sphere. We seek first his Kingdom, a relationship with the King, the establishing of His right order, and the extension of the Kingdom through evangelism. It leads to a quest for his power to obey all of his commandments beginning with loving Him and our neighbor. When we understand that the Gospel is His invitation to enter, live in, and embrace His Kingdom, any debate concerning whether we can reject Yeshua's Lordship and be saved is seen for the foolishness it truly is."

"This presentation of the Good News is most relevant to Jewish people who ask: "If Yeshua is the Messiah, then why is the world in such a mess?" The answer is that it is not a mess everywhere; it is in right order where God's Kingdom has been embraced. Like Nathaniel, we are given an invitation to come and see. (John 1:46). Our families, congregations, work places, modes of education, power demonstrations, and more, show that the Kingdom has come and is available."

"The other eleven pillars simply flow from this one – from understanding the Good News of God's Kingdom, and the importance of fully coming into Kingdom order through the Holy Spirit's power at work in us."

Comment:

We don't have time today to go on to the other pillars, but let me at least tell you what all twelve are:

1. The Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom.
2. The Kingdom is Expressed in Worship.
3. The Kingdom is Expressed in Community.
4. The Kingdom is Expressed in a Life of Power.
5. The Kingdom is Expressed in a Life of Character.
6. The Kingdom is Expressed in Apostolic Order.
7. The Kingdom is Expressed in a Quest for Unity.
8. The Kingdom is Expressed in Jewish Calling.
9. The Kingdom is Expressed in Discipling the Nations.
10. The Kingdom is Expressed in Hope for the Coming Fullness.
11. The Kingdom is Expressed in Every Life Sphere.
12. The Kingdom is Expressed and Extended through Prayer.

This compilation of the Twelve Pillars, are *Shaliach* Dan's teaching on the centrality of God's Kingdom in the Gospel message. They are not the only way to describe the Gospel, but they are significant, and embrace principles of common belief among the various Tikkun congregations. Today, I was only able to present Dan's description of the First Pillar, and there was no time for interactive discussion among us. As members of a Tikkun congregation, it is both appropriate and important that we study and discuss these pillars in depth, so I have asked the elders to consider how and when we may do that. Meanwhile, I will post Dan's entire article describing the Twelve Pillars on Ohev's web site.

What you heard today was not my message; it was Dan's, written for our benefit. So, let us ask the Lord's blessing of health, long life, and productivity for our *Shaliach* Dan, and his beloved wife Patty.

And I will be the first to applaud *Shaliach* Dan's message, read to us today in his absence.