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Heaven Awaits

(by Bob Pulliam)

I have been given to understand that things worthwhile, and of great value, require some amount of effort to attain. Surely there is nothing more worthwhile than heaven. And it is no exception to the rule (Phil 2:12). Within salvation, there is a "working out" process that involves zeal and diligence. In other words, there is work to do (as much as our Calvinist friends would deny it).

So here we affirm that there is work involved in heaven. If you will pardon the terribly barbaric word play, one must *heave* to get to heaven.

While the play on words might make one say, "Oh brother!", there is still a matter of interest here for your attention. Webster's New World Dictionary defines heave, "1. to raise or lift, esp. with effort." As we lift our souls to heaven by the grace of God, and obedience to his will, how do we esteem the work given us. Is it dreaded labor, like heaving a loaded palette onto a ship?... or, is it joyful labor, with continual consideration of the prize that awaits us (Phil 3:12 - 14).

The effort we present to God in obedience will betray our true feelings about the labor in which we are engaged. And let us never forget the contents of the load at which we heave. We are heaving at our own weight. For some, this is dead-weight that will never get off of the ground. Others will work with a joyful labor, trusting the Christ who gives strength to endure all weights of life,... *and who provided the rope to begin with?*

The Easy Yoke

by Roger Hillis

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30)

Do you consider the yoke of Christ to be an easy one? Do you feel that serving the Lord is a joy or a burden? Do you find being a Christian to be a pleasant, desirable, easy lifestyle? Or is it a real effort?

The difference is attitude. Some look on serving God as the greatest joy imaginable. Others think it a heavy burden that weighs them down. It is all in the attitude.

- Is attending Wednesday evening Bible study a blessing to your life? It is designed to instruct and uplift, to help us make it through a busy week. Some love to attend; for others it is a burden. Which is it for you?
- Do you give joyfully, cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7)? Or do you give grudgingly, only because you know that you "have to?" Do you think about all of the other things you could have done with that money? Or are you glad to give the first fruits of your blessings back to God?
- Do you look for opportunities to help others? Does it make you feel good when you know that you have eased someone else's burden? Or do you look around and see no needs, except maybe your own?
- What about evangelizing the lost? Is that a job for someone else? Or do you, through your appreciation of what God has done for you, share the message of hope with a lost and wandering soul?

- Overall, is your experience in serving God a joy or a burden? Do you look forward to opportunities to be with other Christians in social settings? Do you sing praises to God with an overflowing heart of appreciation? Is being a Christian an easy yoke or one that is so heavy that you almost fall beneath the load?

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4).

Time Are Changing

By Lance Bowman

“The Times They Are A-Changin’” is a song written by Bob Dylan and released as the title track of his 1964 album of the same name. reportedly, Dylan intended for the song to be an anthem of change for the moment. These are the final words of the song:

Come mothers and fathers throughout the land, and don't criticize what you can't understand. Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command. Your old road is rapidly agin'. Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand, for the times they are a-changin'.

Depending on your point of view, the changes alluded to in the song represented either a period of human decline or one of social “maturity.”

Unfortunately, this song could be the anthem for many who are attempting to bring the Lord's church into “maturity”. The body of Christ is being influenced by denominational and humanistic approaches to worship, inclusion and even techniques for church growth. The Israelites embraced a similar attitude at the end of Samuel's tenure as their judge (1 Samuel 8). As Samuel became old, he named his sons judges. However, they did not walk in his ways, took bribes and perverted justice. So, the people asked Samuel to appoint a king to judge them like all the nations around them. After all, they were progressing toward “maturity”. This request displeased Samuel and he prayed to the LORD. God told him to obey the people. God said, “They have rejected me from being King over them” (1 Sam. 8:7). The Israelites' push for change was viewed as rejection by Jehovah. It led to their demise.

Yes, even today “the times they are a-changin'.” Those who call for changes in the Lord's church which are contrary to His will are quite likely those spoken of in 1 Tim. 4:1ff and 2 Pet. 2:1ff. We must strive to adhere to the teachings of the Scriptures and steer clear of vain speculations and philosophies of men. We must not be so anxious to hear something new and pleasing that we are willing to change what God wants to remain unchanged! Kings Ridge Reminder March 19, 2017