
Words of Truth

Without Delay

By: Brian A. Yeager

It is by the grace of God that we, faithful Christians, are able to be saved (Ephesians 2:1-10). Our salvation is not by the works that we have done (Titus 3:3-5). That does not mean that we are not required to do works (James 2:14-26), but simply that without God's grace our works amount to nothing (II Timothy 1:9). It is important for us to remind ourselves of this on a regular basis lest we at any time start patting ourselves on the back for our "good deeds" (i.e. Luke 18:9-14). We must always remind ourselves that, no matter how many "good things" we do, we are merely unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10). Grace teaches us to do good works (Titus 2:11-14). It is good and profitable unto men for us to maintain good works (Titus 3:8 and Titus 3:14). Therefore, we are to always abound in the work of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58).

What does it say of a supposed Christian if they know God expects them to be busy doing His will, but they are in no hurry to do so? When the children of Israel were instructed to rebuild God's temple, after Babylonian captivity, they reached a point wherein they just were in no hurry to do so. Notice what God said: *"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands"* (Haggai 1:2-11).

Since Israel was in no hurry to rebuild God's house, the Lord caused a drought upon the land. In the New Testament, which we live under, God does not shepherd us as He did the children of Israel. Then, they were rewarded or punished physically (Deuteronomy 30:1-20 and Jeremiah 5:25). Now, the giving of our reward or punishment from the hand of God awaits us on the Day of Judgment (John 5:28-29 and II Corinthians 5:10). So ask yourself, if God withheld the reward of blessings upon Israel for delaying to do His will, what will He withhold from you if you delay in being busy about His work?

Your Delay Will Keep You From...

Notice what Jesus said as He journeyed and three people wanted to delay their following Him: *"And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:57-62). From this, we can see that if we delay serving the Lord properly He will withhold a relationship with us from that moment forward.

So, let's say you've made haste in beginning your journey to follow our Lord, but after a good start you have started to slack some. What then? Once you're in Christ is the need of urgency over? Once Israel came out of captivity, started on the Lord's house, and worked on the walls of Jerusalem; they got complacent. How did that turn out? We cannot reach a point wherein we think it not necessary to keep on urgently laboring in the kingdom (Hebrews 6:12).

What if a Christian has labored for many years and has gotten to a point wherein he or she thinks enough has been done? Doesn't God warn us not to get tired in well doing (Galatians 6:9)? What about those who go backward instead of forward (Hebrews 10:35-39 and II Peter 2:20-22)? You cannot get to Heaven by stopping forward progress. We must press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).

What of the person in Christ who has begun thinking that his or her place in Heaven is unconditionally reserved? He or she has ignored the fact that we haven't already attained the resurrection (Philippians 3:8-13). Take some time and consider what happened to the five foolish virgins in the "Parable of the Ten Virgins" (Matthew 25:1-13). If you or I get to the point wherein we think we have arrived, we will lose all sense of urgency and ultimately lose our reward.

Don't Lose The Sense Of Urgency

If you think on your ways and find they are not pleasing to God you must make haste to get it right (Psalms 119:59-60). You and I should not act as though we have tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1). All such boasting is evil (James 4:13-16). Our Lord expects us to act upon His request with urgency. Quoting Isaiah (Isaiah 49:8), Paul said: "now is the accepted time" (II Corinthians 6:2). Now is not tomorrow. Now resides in today!

Conclusion

If you know you should be doing something to please God, don't wait until tomorrow to start doing it! Today is a point of emphasis in the Scriptures (Hebrews 3:7-4:7). If you are waiting to do something right, what message are you sending God? When you know to do good, and choose not to do it, what is that called (James 4:17)? Do right today. Do right without delay!