
Words of Truth

Hebrews 6:9-10

By: Brian A. Yeager

The saints addressed in this letter were taught that they needed to grow and become fruitful rather than err and fall from the faith (Hebrews 5:11-6:8). From that, the Holy Spirit guided the penmen of this letter to write these words: *“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister”* (Hebrews 6:9-10).

The first thing we are going to consider in this study is the term of endearment used to address these brethren. The inspired penmen of this letter addressed these saints as “beloved” (cf. Acts 15:25, Romans 1:7, Romans 12:19, Romans 16:8-12, I Corinthians 10:14, I Corinthians 15:58, II Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 6:21, Philippians 2:12, Colossians 3:12, Colossians 4:9, Philemon 1:1-2, James 2:5, I Peter 2:11, I Peter 4:12, II Peter 3:14-17, I John 3:21, I John 4:7-11, III John 1:2-11, Jude 1:3, etc.). There is not much to figure out in that word. It shows the writers of this letter loved and understood God’s love for these saints. The corrective measures taken in this letter are evidence of that love (Proverbs 27:5-6, Hebrews 12:5-11, and Revelation 3:19).

Those writing and sending this letter had some confidence that these saints could do better. So, their lack of growth and lack of fruit was not a question of ability. If these saints were just a bunch of one talented brethren (cf. Matthew 25:14-30), less would have been expected of them (Luke 12:41-48). Statements such as this were made to other brethren that needed to make corrections as well. For example, the troubled congregation in Rome was told this: *“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another”* (Romans 15:14). When Philemon was expected to take back his escaped slave and new brother in Christ Onesimus (Philemon 1:1-20), Paul wrote this to him: *“Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say”* (Philemon 1:21). Statements like these can be taken both as encouragement and statements of expectation.

Rather than being rejected (Hebrews 6:8), they needed to do the things expected of them that would lead to their salvation. They have already read that salvation is conditioned on obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9). So, the point is being made clear that their salvation is in their hands. The overall point is similar to what Paul and Timothy wrote to the saints in Philippi:

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). It was better for them to learn from what was being said to them than to find out what disobedience would ultimately result in (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Then this letter addresses the fact that if they put the work in, the reward will be theirs. God is righteous (Deuteronomy 32:4, Ezra 9:15, Psalms 7:9, Psalms 11:7, Psalms 116:5, Psalms 119:137, Daniel 9:14, Romans 1:16-17, and II Timothy 4:8). The Lord is righteous in judgment (Acts 17:30-31). His recollection of the deeds of man is not flawed. His memory extends to the point wherein every idle word spoken can be brought into judgment (Matthew 12:33-37). Even under the Law of Moses, God’s judgment will be rendered for every work that they did (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). So, the Day of Judgment will be a day of accounting for all the good and bad each person has done (II Corinthians 5:10). That is, with one exception.

We will later address, in this letter, the area of God’s memory wherein He does not recollect things (Hebrews 8:1-13). Thankfully, sins can be washed away by the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5). That means, man can be justified in ways that was not possible in times past (Acts 13:38-39). Sins can be remitted; forgiven (Acts 2:38-41, Acts 3:19, Acts 22:1-21, Romans 6:1-23, I Corinthians 6:9-11, and Ephesians 1:7).

God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). He saw the labor of love that these saints had put forth in their work for Him (Acts 10:1-4; 10:31). The labor of love being done by them was the ministering to the saints. We know, from what Jesus said regarding the Day of Judgment, that serving the saints will be brought up on that day (Matthew 25:31-46). If you read that context you see that what brethren do for one another is like you have done or have not done those same acts to the Lord Himself.

Serving one another is called a labor of love because we serve one another through love (Galatians 5:13 and I John 3:14-18). Such efforts can be accomplished in various ways, In the first century, there were opportunities to render financial aid to brethren in need (Acts 11:27-30, Romans 15:25-27, I Corinthians 16:1-4, and II Corinthians 8:1-9:13). We can serve one another by refreshing each other (II Timothy 1:16-18). We can serve one another through acts of hospitality (I Peter 4:8-9). We can serve one another by helping each other with spiritual burdens (Galatians 6:1-2). The list could go on and on. Regardless of how saints serve each other, if done right the reward will be in the life to come.

For God to reward the service saints have toward one another, we have to come back to that phrase “labor of love.” Ministering to the saints had to be done through love lest it would be an unprofitable work (I Corinthians 13:3). Such love is what identifies us as the Lord’s disciples (John 13:34-35). Not only can we learn from these saints what not to do, but herein we can learn to minister to each other as a labor of love to be rewarded in the end!