

The Price of Love

Is there anything really free in this world? As an example, there is massive funding involved behind everything that our federal, state and local governments provide through taxation: our transportation systems, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, unemployment compensation, parks, museums, libraries, including garbage collection. Do we appreciate these many benefits provided to us or do we take them for granted feeling justified in saying that we are owed these services as tax payers? True appreciation is a quality learned, not earned! Unfortunately, appreciation becomes truly learned when something taken for granted disappears, giving credence to the old adage, "You don't know what you've got till it's gone!"

Rev 2: 1-5 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.

Praise YAH for giving us the opportunity to become one of His "called out ones." He is looking for "vessels" to execute His grand plan. If we don't measure up to His standard, He will choose another person more suitable to the task. Thus we must diligently appreciate what has been offered to each one of us through His mercy and not dismiss or diminish the value of what has already been given to us.

Freedom has never been free; its cost paid for dearly by those who have gone before us securing the many liberties passed onto all of us. Our nation was founded upon religious freedom but will it last? Whether political or religious, freedom must be actively protected and defended or else it could disappear like a rug pulled out from under us or even as a lampstand removed from its place! This earth is Satan's playground; he seeks to deceive those who have been sealed by God, His very elect. By Your grace may our light as believers shine for others seeking His truth in this perverse world that has turned its back on You.

John 8:31-32 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 15:10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

The word "abide" is an action word which means: to comply with, obey, observe, hold to, endure, bear, follow, suffer, keep to, or stand. The truth which Christ talks about

doesn't magically set us free. God's truth does deliver spiritual freedom, but only "if" we "do" what He explicitly instructs. We are to consistently apply the whole package of His truth, from the time of our baptism, through to our last breath. As such, our worship must be prioritized, becoming our commitment, our discipline of prayer and study in servicing those whom God brings before us to help. By applying these initiatives, we will have become a part of the "One True King's Way." We will remain in awesome, loving obedience to our Savior, never demoting or relegating our worship to suit scheduling conveniences between social events mass-prevalent in our secular world.

Heb 10:35-39 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.
36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Remember, freedom is never free. We must have "skin in the game" if we are to complete the work He is giving to us to do. Yahshua warns us to count the cost of our calling.

Luke 14:26-30 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it -- 29 "lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 "saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

Yahshua is clear when He states again that being a disciple costs dearly in

Luke 9:57-62 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to him, "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." 59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." 61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

We have all experienced diminished respect and affection from some of our family members and friends after answering the call, "Follow Me." We are sometimes judged or challenged for keeping His biblical instructions such as eating clean food, keeping His holydays and weekly Sabbaths and the following of His lunar calendar that begins in the spring instead of winter. His ways are often contrary to the world's way, thus we stand out, just as He wants us to, set apart for His pleasure.

Rom12:1-3 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

YAH wants our wholehearted obedience and loyalty. Our choice, to obey and please the Father with no desire to turn back to our previous life, dictates the way we live. Paul implores the brethren to forfeit "oneself" for something of greater value; this forfeiture is not an ultimatum but set as a goal of our "reasonable service."

Heb3:7-16 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Once freed from slavery in Egypt, it took the Israelites only seven days to cross the Red Sea, obtaining their release from bondage. Yet the last remaining miles became a forty year odyssey! With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, all the men of war were purposely perished by God during this futile trek. Why? Because the tribes were unwilling to count the cost of submitting their lives to God even though they witnessed powerful, historically echoing miracles time after time. They failed to discipline themselves and God reacted exactly as Moses had said He would.

Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

YAH offers each of us spiritual freedom when we acknowledge and accept His tremendous sacrifice which cost His firstborn's life. Such love came at the highest price because it has given the greatest reward to those who are His. Christ's shed blood paid the price of mankind's sin. Life is in the blood but eternal life is in Messiah's blood. Passover depicts what makes salvation a reality. Yahshua became our justification on that special day so that we may have the freedom to be in a relationship with His Father.

His love is with us every step of the way if we continue in obedience, especially when faced with setbacks or hardships which expand and deepen our relationship with the Father through His Son.

Heb 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Heb 8:13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Yahshua's greatest sacrifice of laying down His life for His church becomes the conduit linking all true believers to the Father. During the upcoming commemoration of the spring holydays, let us begin another year rehearsing His awesome Plan of Salvation! The Israelites lost their opportunity to be His vessel due to their rebellious and disobedient nature. This tragedy is one of historic infamy, a grievous example that no one should ever want to repeat. Let us therefore continue to direct our lives in "the way" He commands; for it is our highest sustained hope that we persevere to enter into His millennial rest.

Proverb to Ponder:

Proverbs 16:6 In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil.

Scriptures NKJV unless otherwise noted*

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