

HUE AND CRY: It's An Abundant Life!

by Mark Huey posted 24 December, 2006 www.outreachisrael.net

“I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly” (John 10:10b)

It seems that during every Winter holiday period, despite no longer celebrating Christmas, there is always one seasonal movie I seek out to watch just one more time. For unknown reasons, the Frank Capra classic **“It's a Wonderful Life”** has always had a magnetic appeal, even though knowing before touching the play button on the DVD, that at the final scene I am going to erupt into a puddle of tears, empathizing with the hero George Bailey. There is just something about identifying with someone who has begrudgingly given up his hopes, dreams, and aspirations that strikes the emotional strings of the heart with a resounding chord of understanding. After all, we are all human!

The concluding celebratory retribution for a life well spent in unselfish service to others is a just reward. However for years of viewing this film, I had a tendency to be reminded of a statement written by Henry David Thoreau in his book *Walden*, which declares, **“The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them.”** For whatever reasons, my mind connected George Bailey's life with the mass of people who lead lives of quiet desperation, without ever realizing their dreams. Of course, the huge difference is that George does not have to go to the grave without singing his song, but instead understands that his life has had a positive impact on his family and the community that he served. Perhaps it is this facet of the story that generates tears of joy for the difficult decisions that were forced upon George due to his actual life circumstances.

In many regards, the life of George Bailey (albeit without the spiritual component) is one that exemplifies a life of someone totally devoted to serving the Holy One of Israel. As you consider the admonition from Yeshua, when He was asked what the greatest commandment was, there is not much room for self-promotion. Loving the Lord God with all of one's heart, mind, soul and strength, and one's neighbor (Matthew 22:36-40), is a full time occupation. Additionally, one must lose his or her life in this world in order to gain eternal life—requiring and individual to deny personal dreams, ambitions, and desires:

“Then Yeshua said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’” (Matthew 16:24-26).

Perhaps you can better understand why Yeshua warns His Disciples to count the cost before becoming one of His followers (Luke 14:26-35), for in the end, it may very well cost you your life. **The question we must constantly ask ourselves is whether we are willing to pay the price, expecting nothing in return other than eternal life?**

This year before my annual viewing of the movie, I was led to gain a different perspective on how to relate to the screenplay. As I identified with the closing scene, in my mind I hypothesized to my wife Margaret that what our family has chosen to do with our lives in ministry is possibly having an impact on those around the world who are reading and listening to our teachings. While we should never expect a Christmas tree glowing scene with a bell ringing in the awarding of some angel's wings—as in the movie—we just might have the privilege of meeting some people in Heaven one day who will greet us with sincere thanks for something we have said or written. Many of these people will be total strangers whose lives we never knew we affected. **Quite frankly, to me just the thought of this possibility was inspiring.**

In sharing these thoughts to those we have the privilege of reaching via the Internet and OIM News is a blessing beyond words. After all, each person who reads this article is in exactly the same position as we are in terms of the eternal blessings they will receive, from the sacrificial choices they have each made. Just thinking about my own personal spiritual journey, I am reminded of some of the people who God used in my own search and walk, that I want to personally thank when I see them again in Heaven.

Even more importantly, we know that by daily choosing to lose what our minds might consider “a wonderful life” of fulfilling our personal ambitions and dreams—instead, we are promised an abundant life in the Messiah, now, and forever more. **We know that beyond the grave, there is a song we will sing.** It will be the song of the Lamb:

“Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED” (Revelation 15:3-4).

Bless you O Lord for the way you use the things of this world to remind us of what is really meaningful! For beyond human reason, our life in You is never desperate. Every tear will be wiped from our eyes when we are in Your presence:

“For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:15-17).

Choosing Him until He returns, or we are returned to Him...

Mark Huey (B.A., Vanderbilt University in History and Graduate Studies at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) is the Director of Outreach Israel Ministries (www.outreachisrael.net). He is the author of several books, including: *TorahScope, Volumes I & II*, and *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot*. He is also co-author of *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard, Updated Edition* (NASU), © 1995, published by The Lockman Foundation.