All Efforts of Worth and Excellence Are Difficult

“Enter by the narrow gate ....Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life ...” (Matthew 7:13-14).

If we are going to live as disciples of Jesus, we have to remember that all efforts of worth and excellence are difficult. The Christian life is gloriously difficult, but its difficulty does not make us faint and cave in – it stirs us up to overcome. Do we appreciate the miraculous salvation of Jesus Christ enough to be our utmost for His highest – our best for His glory?

God saves people by His sovereign grace through the atonement of Jesus, and “it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). But we have to “work out” that salvation in our everyday, practical living (Philippians 2:12). If we will only start on the basis of His redemption to do what He commands, then we will find that we can do it. If we fail, it is because we have not yet put into practice what God has placed within us. But a crisis will reveal whether or not we have been putting it into practice. If we will obey the Spirit of God and practice in our physical life what God has placed within us by His Spirit, then when a crisis does come we will find that our own nature, as well as the grace of God, will stand by us.

Thank God that He does give us difficult things to do! His salvation is a joyous thing, but it is also something that requires bravery, courage, and holiness. It tests us for all we are worth. Jesus is “bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10), and God will not shield us from the requirements of sonship. God’s grace produces men and women with a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ, not pampered, spoiled weaklings. It takes a tremendous amount of discipline to live the worthy and excellent life of a disciple of Jesus in the realities of life. And it is always necessary for us to make an effort to live a life of worth and excellence.

Oswald Chambers
My utmost for His highest

Spotted Owlets – (Athene Brama) grooming each other

Location: Hathikhira Tea Estate, Karimganj District, Assam (f 11, 1/500, 500mm, ISO-500)
Photo by Dr. Vijay Anand Ismavel. See more images at https://www.flickr.com/photos/ivijayanand/

Spotted owlets are medium sized birds, commonly seen in south and South east Asia. They usually are seen in small groups roosting in the hollows of trees or in cavities in rocks or buildings. It nests in a hole in a tree or building, laying 3–5 eggs. Their main prey includes beetles, moths and other insects and they often hunt at night. Earthworms, lizards, mice and small birds also form part of their diet. They usually hunt from a perch, pouncing on prey, but occasionally take insects in flight.

Dr. Vijay Anand, a pediatric surgeon, works in Makunda Christian Leprosy & General Hospital in Makunda, Assam, a 132 bedded hospital providing high quality care to residents in Assam and surrounding states. The hospital is situated in a lush forest abounding in wildlife and this photograph was taken in a tea estate close to the hospital. Learn more about the hospital at http://www.makunda.in/