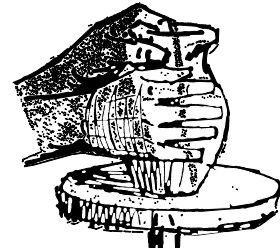


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

“Satan Has Desired to Have You So He May Sift You” *Billy Ashworth with Maria Lund*

Just before the cross, Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples, sorrowfully teaching and warning them of the impending death which He must face and the trials they would suffer because they were His own chosen ones. He said: *"You are those who have continued with Me in My trials ...,"* Lk 22:28. He continued in vs. 31-34, *"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."* But Peter said to Him, *"Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."* Then Jesus said, *"I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."* In this interesting account, three characters are involved: Simon, Satan, and the Savior. Of course, the Savior and Satan are the antithesis of each other, and Simon is the battleground between them. Jesus was seeking to forewarn and save Peter, while Satan, His adversary, was seeking to destroy the man. The Savior was praying for Simon; Satan, the devil, was desiring to have him so he might "sift him as wheat."

Sifting wheat. One of the most interesting, as well as effective, methods of teaching is the use of figurative language—Jesus used it often. The expression, "that he may sift you as wheat" indicates separating the wheat from the chaff. It was the last stage in separating wheat from chaff. It is not a gentle process. The first step in the process is to loosen the chaff from the edible grain, which is called threshing. The farmer would



spread the wheat onto a floor made from stone or tamped earth and *beat it with a flail*. The next step is winnowing, where the loosened chaff is removed

from the grain. The farmer would *forcefully throw the grain in the air*, where the lighter chaff would be blown off. The heavier grains would fall back to the ground below. In ancient Israel the process of sifting the wheat was the last stage in preparing the harvest, once the wheat had been gathered in, threshed, and winnowed. The wheat was gathered up off the floor or ground and shaken in a sieve to remove the rocks, dirt, and other debris that may have been gathered in with the kernels of wheat. **Temptation.** The entire sifting proc-

ess is about strong trial or temptation. Satan had to ask first; he couldn't touch Peter without the Lord's permission. And while His purpose was to shake Peter up, God allowed it. Why? Because wheat without chaff is much more useful. The devil, Satan, is the prince of evil, a liar and the father of all lies, Jn 8:44. He is a spiritual ruler, having his own kingdom of darkness, Mt 12:26; cf. Col 1:13. It was Satan who chided God into giving him Job that he might test him (sift him as wheat), hoping to cause Job to *"curse [God] to His face,"* Job 1:9-11. Now Satan desired to have one of the Lord's own apostles whom He had chosen, to try and test him (sift as wheat) in the very shadow of the cross.

Jesus showed His divine knowledge of the future and his divine insight into man (cf. Jn 2:25) when He foretold that Simon had an impending severe trial and that He had prayed that his faith would not fail (as Judas's would). Jesus knew Simon would fail in the hour of trial, even the specifics of that awful denial; His divine knowledge of the future is another proof of His Deity. Notice: *"and when you art converted, strengthen*
continued on p. 2

" 'For surely I will command and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.' "

—Amos 9:9

your brethren," Lk 22:32, shows that Jesus knew Simon would not fail totally as Judas would. Satan doubted Simon's true commitment to His Lord and was determined to prove his diabolical analysis of Peter. Take note that the devil can operate only within limits set by the Lord, as shown in the case of Job's severe trials.

Simon was over-confident, as indicated by his affirming, "*Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death,*" Lk 22:33. In Matthew's account, Simon said, "*Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!*" Mt 26:35. Peter did not intend to make an idle boast, nor to try to build himself up in the eyes of Jesus. But he underestimated the power of Satan to "sift him," relied on his own strength rather than God's, and was guilty of doing the very thing that he had so strongly affirmed he would never do. Much later in life he understood and affirmed Satan's power: "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world,*" 1 Pet 5:8-9. We sometimes forget that Peter did try to defend his Lord. He was the only disciple who drew a sword in the Lord's defense, even though that was ill advised, and Jesus told him to put the sword away. He was not only willing to die with Him, but to die fighting for Him. But despite the warning by Jesus and the subsequent defense of the Lord with a drawn sword, Peter did exactly what Jesus had foretold that he would do. In the hour of trial, while he was being sifted by Satan, Peter not only said three times that he did not even know the Lord, but he

"began to curse and to swear, saying, 'I do not know not the man,' " Mt 26:74. Luke recorded that "*the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows, you shall deny me thrice.'*" And Peter went out and wept bitterly," Lk 22:61-62. How the eyes of the Lord must have burned into the very soul of Peter!

It seems that at this time the Lord's prayer "that your faith does not fail" had not yet been answered. We must wait for God's perfect timing. But though Peter's faith wavered, he did not fall away completely as Judas did. Judas went out and hanged himself. Peter went out and wept bitterly. Jesus knew beforehand that Peter would repent, saying, "*and when you are converted (have returned to me), strengthen your brethren,*" Lk 22:32. Peter's sorrow was godly sorrow that worked repentance, but Judas's sorrow was the sorrow of the world (mere regret) that worked death, 2 Cor 7:10.

Are you true wheat or chaff? The expression "sift you as wheat" is the whole process (thresh, winnow, sift) where grain was shaken or agitated to separate it and purify it. The grain remained but the chaff was separated and thrown off. In Biblical figures, "wheat" represents the pure, the true, while "chaff" represents the worthless, cf. Lk 3:17; Mic 4:12; Mt 13:30. When the Lord told Peter that Satan desired to sift him, he had already been identified as *wheat*. He was threshed—cast down to the ground and beaten with a flail—when he realized his denial. He was winnowed, tossed about in his mind, but finally wept bitterly over his denial. Thus, he was not the chaff that has been blown away in the wind,

a term used by the Lord to describe the condition of those who are disobedient and do not listen to the prophets calling for repentance. But Peter's regret needed to become repentance, turning back to his Lord—he needed further sifting—to come shortly.

Purification. Peter was broken by his sin, and he needed to be gathered up off the ground and shaken to remove the debris of guilt from his life. The shaken wheat falls to the ground and what is left in the sieve is rubble, dirt, and trash. The sifting process, according to how we respond to it, can either purify us so we may be gathered into the garner cleansed from the rubble of sin, denial, and guilt, or it can cause us to lose our faith so that the debris of the world is what remains with us. When Jesus met Peter and



the apostles fishing in Jn 21, Peter was finally sifted and

came out stronger and purer for it. His Master helped him understand that by repentance he triumphed over Satan. We will each be "sifted." We will each decide the end result of that sifting.

Jesus's exhortation, "*when you are converted, strengthen your brethren,*" was fulfilled by Peter who, just a few weeks later in the same city in which he had cursed and sworn that he did not even know the man Jesus, stood up boldly and declared to the Jews: "*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, Whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ,*" Acts 2:36. That took courage and showed total repentance and commitment!

APPLICATIONS next week



Psalm 133:1



Fill your can-teen in 2013

"May you be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,"

Col 1:9

Discrimination, by Gary Henry
"Life is a constant series of discriminations between what it is well to attempt and what it is not well to attempt," Joseph Addison's *The Spectator*, 1891.

Like it or not, the world is full of differences, and some of these differences are vitally important. Distinguishing one thing from another is an unavoidable part of daily living. Suppose that I have been called for jury duty. I must ask, "Is the defendant guilty or innocent?" As a juror, I am asked to help discern the difference between justice and injustice in this case, and if the evidence is not clear, doing so may require a great deal of wisdom. To *discriminate* means to distinguish or to exercise discernment. When we discriminate, we observe the differences between things. If we say, for example, that a person's musical taste is "discriminating," we mean that he or she knows good music from bad and is able to detect subtle differences in the quality of compositions or performances. In a complex world of vast information, it's important that when we discriminate between things, we discriminate wisely. It is required of us to make a clear distinction between the holy and the profane; see Ex 33:16; Lev 10:9-11; 15:31; 20:25; 22:2; 2 Chr 12:8; Ez 10:11; Ezek 42:20; Mt 6:24; 13:49; 2 Cor 6:17.

Unfortunately, the word *discrimina-*

tion has acquired a negative connotation. These days, it usually means to discriminate against someone—that is, to distinguish him unfavorably from others in a wrongful way. Racial discrimination, for example, means noting a different race and treating him unfairly as a result.

But there is more to discrimination than this narrow usage, and the popular notion that all differences whatsoever should be disregarded is simply foolish. We begin our lives distinguishing between things—mother's face, how food tastes, shapes, etc. Differences must be dealt with, and it is a virtue to deal with them in ways that are humble, careful, and truthful.

To a certain extent, all of us have to make careful distinctions. Like the art critic who judges the quality of artworks, we have to separate the superior from the inferior in nearly everything that confronts us. The challenge is to be accurate in our appraisals. We need to recognize not only the difference between good and bad, but also the difference between good, better, and best. So the question is not whether we will make judgments—it is only whether we will make them wisely, Jn 7:24.

"Neither praise nor blame is the object of true discernment. Justly to discriminate, firmly to establish, wisely to prescribe, and honestly to award—these are the true aims and duties of judgment," William Gilmore Simms.

Directory update: Gregg Geis has chosen to join with the Westside church in worship and spiritual work 4228 Wyandot St Denver 80211 303-902-9997 greggwgeis@gmail.com

Expecting Liz Kosik, early April—blood platelets low; Christina Adams's daughter Kayla, May

Traveling Pat Campbell in VT for a wedding; Randy Thompson in Salt Lake City for job training through Wed.

Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Pat Wilkes—knee replacement surgery Tues at Longmont Hospital

Nell Free—recovering from cataract surgery last week; chronic heart; back pain

Jordan and Tracy Corray, Michael Bennett, and three friends—recovering from auto injuries

Delmar Hice, Pat Campbell's father—at home, bleeding ulcer

Mark Campbell—improving at Rocky Mtn Brain Injury Service in CO Springs

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr;

Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Rod Green—thyroid trouble

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Jonathan Hadders—RA

Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak; **Virginia**, worsening rapid macular degeneration; high BP

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis

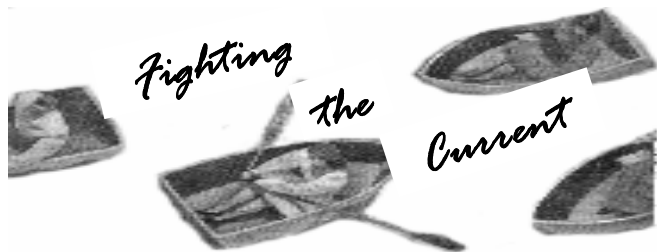
Judy Sartin's grandson Tristen—autism

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Pat Wilkes—hyper parathyroidism; A-Fib

Job concerns Linda Szymanski and Andrew Tope are seeking jobs. Rod Green has worked 3 weeks without a day off, but expects to be here this afternoon. Pray for him and Jeremy.

Bereaved Margie Ikerd, Dale Szymanski's mother, passed away last Mon. Dale and Linda had driven to OH to be with her; the funeral was Thursday. May God comfort all the grieving hearts: Vicki, Jim, and Mark Reingrover, and Marci Bennett on the loss of Vicki's mother Janet Whitener; Andrea Arvola on the loss of her brother Steve recently.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Veterans' Day: Chaplains Silenced, by *Tony Perkins*

The growing religious hostility in the military has become a problem for military chaplains who are tasked with providing spiritual leadership for the troops. In the last three years, chaplains have reported the censorship of their public prayers, an essay, and even sermons. During the recent government shutdown, some chaplains were threatened with arrest. Both Fox News and CNS News reported that at least one chaplain was told "that if he engaged in any ministry activity, he would be subjected to disciplinary action," which could include arrest.

The San Diego Department of Veterans Affairs has reportedly spent the last several months persecuting two of its chaplains for their faith. Last week both men filed suit against the San Diego VA for religious harassment—ridicule that became so intense it led one chaplain to drop out of the program altogether and the other to be put on probation by the boss berating them. Military-Veterans Advocacy filed the suit on behalf of a church group that acted as the men's endorsing agent. "No American choosing to serve in the armed forces should be openly ridiculed for his faith," said attorney and Commander J.B. Wells (USN-Ret.).

According to court documents, the head of the VA's Clinical Pastoral Education Program ordered the men not to pray in Jesus's name or recite Scripture, mocked and yelled at them, and even threatened to fail them. There is a war going on for the soul of our nation's military.

Fortunately, Congress is waking up to this climate of hostility in the ranks and is putting itself in a position to do something about it. Just last week, two members cosponsored a bill to protect something as simple as the word "God" in the service academies' oaths. Sam Johnson (R-TX), a veteran who spent seven years as a POW in Vietnam, said he would stand in the way of any attempts to destroy the hundreds of years of religious tradition in the military. "Our Founding Fathers declared we are, 'One nation under God....We are the land of the free because of the brave. When you survive a near-death experience you realize that the only thing you had to hold onto was your faith in God.'" Doug Collins (R-GA) prompted Congress to approve a resolution (400-1) that the Department of Defense (DoD) should respect the constitutional right to the free exercise of religion and allow military chaplains to perform their duties.

What does it say about the Obama-Hagel Pentagon when it bars chaplains from voluntarily ministering to the troops and their families? The Pentagon has repeatedly demonstrated a bias against religious expression. It's time to shut down this culture of religious intimidation.



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Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning: "Baptism: Its Benefits and Limitations"

This afternoon: "Hagar and 'the God Who Sees' "