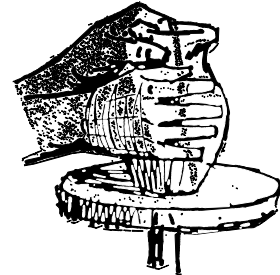


His Workmanship at Westside



“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,” part 2, *Billy Ashworth with Maria Lund*

In Jesus's day, harvesting wheat took much time and effort. First, harvesters gathered the wheat stalks from the field. Then, they beat the stalks against a hard surface or used farm animals to pull a threshing sledge over the stalks to break them into pieces. This process dislodged the grain from the stalks and the husks. Next, the farmers tossed the mixture into the air. The kernels, or whole seeds of grain, fell back onto the threshing floor, while the breeze blew the chaff away. Finally, the kernels were carefully sifted to remove from them any undesirable materials. **Sifting is a test of faith.** Will we remain faithful? *“See that you do not refuse Him Who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him Who speaks from heaven, Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’ Now this, ‘Yet once more,’ indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let*

us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire,” Hebrews 12:26-29. 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, or we lose our faith and the debris of the world is what remains with us. Peter was sifted and came out stronger for it. We will each be “sifted.”

Satan wanted to get his hands on the disciples and drive them to fear and utter despair over what was coming—the betrayal and crucifixion of their Lord. In the next verse Jesus said, “But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.” Jesus prayed specifically for Peter; because He knew Peter would betray Him; he was spared Judas's end, who fell into complete despair and committed suicide. Faith is always what brings us through.

Satan had asked for Peter, and Jesus did not deny Satan this process. Instead of refusing Satan, Christ instead prayed for Peter, that his strength should not fail and it would remain sufficient. Sifting involves taking a filter and shaking the grain through it. The dirt, sand, and small

articles passed through the screen, until only the larger pieces are left. These are then examined to determine if there is anything of value. What is not useful or worthy is then discarded. In our walk with Christ, we may sometimes also go through that sifting procedure. Things may accumulate that may not be of any real value or worth to us, and so we must be put through a process that slowly eliminates those items. Little things may be easier to shed and pass easily through the screening operation without causing a great deal of pain, but once those have been discarded, we are only left with the big pieces, and these are the items that must be carefully examined to see if there is any real worth in them. Once the sifting process begins, and the painstaking examination is underway, our lives may become difficult or painful. However, the only way to find out if there is good grain is to get rid of the debris that may be cluttering up that space.

Usually when we undergo sifting, it hurts. We may even feel that God has turned a deaf ear. We may question our own faith. “Was I the problem? Was my faith not enough? Where was
continued on p. 2

"A wise king sifts out the wicked, and brings the threshing wheel over them."

—Proverbs 20:26

God in any of this anyhow? I did not understand why it seemed as if when I needed Him the most, He seemed so far away." Yet these verses are here to comfort me: Jesus was praying for Peter, that his faith should not fail. Imagine that. Jesus prayed for Peter—and Jesus has been praying for me, see Jn 17. Out of all the people in the world, and all the needs, Jesus took time today to pray for me. He has allowed me to undergo the things I have undergone that my faith should not fail. And He prayed for Me.

Seen in that light, that Jesus allowed what I have been living through for a reason, to get rid of the clutter, to get rid of the junk, the accumulated dirt and debris, to uncover the precious grain that lies within, the sifting has been necessary. True to Christ's words, Satan relentlessly attacked His disciples, and he attacks us today, Eph 6:11. Although not every difficulty we face in life is directly caused by Satan, Eccl. 9:11, still, Satan is eager to use any means at his disposal to break our integrity. For example, he may tempt us to follow a materialistic lifestyle, to choose unwholesome entertainment, or to engage in immoral sexual behavior. Satan still tries to sift everyone as wheat.

We might have expected Jesus to say, "Satan demanded permission to sift you like wheat, but I didn't let him." Jesus allowed testing in Peter's life. He believed that Peter would eventually be stronger from having gone through this. He said, "When you turned back." Jesus saw what Peter could become, not just what Peter was. Jesus sees what you can become also. He sees what will be valuable after all the chaff is destroyed. Are you able to see the possibilities in people, to see what they can become

by God's sifting? Jesus called Peter rock, even though he often resembled a slippery pebble on the bottom of a river bed more than a foundation stone. Peter was the impulsive one. But Jesus saw what Peter could become, not just what he was. He saw his potential. Over the years Jesus worked with him. Just as He allows us to experience difficulties and trials, He allowed Peter to experience testing. Mt 16:13-23 shows both the high point and low point of Peter's life. He was encouraged and called a rock by the Lord, but he was also chastised and called Satan. Jesus had his strongest praise and greatest rebuke for Peter. Jesus wanted Peter (and us) to learn certain principles about faith:

Application 1, we will be sifted. We often seem to regard Peter's as an isolated incident from which we are totally removed. But does it occur to us that the same Satan has desired us that he might sift us? Peter failed in the hour of trial—he was in the wrong company, and he feared men. He did not resist the devil, although he was forewarned by the Lord Himself. Is it not quite possible, or probable, that we are prone to do the same thing? When worldly people mock the Lord, His saving gospel, His church which He purchased with His own blood, do we try to melt into the crowd and keep our mouths shut, trying not to be identified with the Lord Jesus? Are we ashamed to own the Lord? Are we soldiers of the cross or deserters from the Lord's army?

As Christians, we all undergo a sifting process. Unexpectedly, our world is shaken up and we find ourselves up in the air. It is only the weight of our faith that brings us back down. As unpleasant and frightening as it may feel, we can remind ourselves that it is

only chaff we are losing in the process—an attachment to the world or anything in it, wrong concepts of Who God is and what He will and will not allow in our lives, a reliance on anything or anyone other than the Lord. Peter's sifting required that he learn two difficult lessons:

A. Humility. Peter said he wouldn't deny Jesus even if it meant death. He had to learn that he wasn't as strong as he thought. He had to learn he wasn't always right. He had to learn to submit to the Lord with humility. He had to learn his ways weren't always God's ways, Mt 26:33-35. He had to learn not to compare himself with others, cf. 2 Cor 10:12. This is part of the experience Peter used to encourage others in 1 Pet 1:7: "*These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*" He needed to learn that his will and God's will are not always the same. Jesus told him that he would one day die for the faith. He told him that the road would be difficult ahead.

B. Love. Peter needed to understand how much God loves all people, 1 Pet 4:8; 1:22. Even in Acts 10 God was showing Peter that He is concerned about all men, not just Jews. Our sifting may require us to learn these lessons, or it may teach us hard things about ourselves.

Application 2, Jesus will plead for us and pray for us. Do we follow Paul's instruction to the saints at Corinth: "*Watch, stand fast in the faith, acquit yourselves like men [be brave], be strong,*" 1 Cor 16:13? John wrote in a similar fashion: "*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you*

continued on p. 3



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

Satan Desires to Sift You, from p.2 may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world," 1 Jn 2:1-2. The word Advocate means one who pleads another's cause. We who are the children of God have our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, at the right hand of God pleading our cause! The hymn "In the Hour of Trial," by James Montgomery, puts us with Peter that dreadful night:

"In the hour of trial, Jesus plead for me. Lest by base denial, I depart from Thee. When Thou see'st me waver With a look recall, Nor for fear or favor, Suffer me to fall."

The hymn recounts our many temptations. Yes, the same One Who warned Simon that he would be sifted as wheat and exhorted him by saying, "I have prayed for you," has warned us that the same temptations come our way. Now, today, He is in heaven pleading for us at the throne of God. When Jesus warned Peter that he was about to be sifted, He didn't say, "This is a trial, Peter. Let's see how you hold up." No. Remember what He said? "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail." He prayed for him! This tells me that before we even know we'll be sifted, our Lord has already drawn near and prayed for us that our faith may not

Discipleship Here At Home

fail. And when He prays, can we fail to receive what He has asked for us? And it gets better...

Application 3, when we have come through temptation, we must strengthen our brothers. The reminder of Lk 22:32 says, "And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Jesus knew Peter would fall flat on his face. Yet there is a promise in His words. He did not say, "If you turn back," but "When you turn back." When you have been made strong enough, strengthen your brothers.

Jesus returned to Peter by the Sea of Galilee after he and other apostles had gone back to fishing. When Peter heard and realized that it was the Lord Who was talking to them, he put on his outer clothes and plunged into the sea, Jn 21:1-7. Was he too ashamed to face his Lord? But his Lord graciously fed them, perhaps allaying some of Peter's uneasiness. Then He graciously gave Peter the opportunity to affirm his love for Jesus three times, Jn 21:15-21. Perhaps Peter was expecting to be upbraided for his treachery and disloyalty. Two or three times he had seen the Lord since His resurrection, yet had not said a word. Possibly Peter was full of doubts about where he stood with his Master, sometimes hoping the best, because he had received favor from Him along with the others, yet not without fears, lest he be removed from the company of the apostles. But here his Master confirmed him as an apostle, neither greater or lesser than the others.

"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" 21:15. The question, stated three times, was designed not only to give Peter the opportunity to confess his love three times—in opposition to his denial—but also to make him think about his awful sin (and cut him to the heart) and his current relationship with the Lord. It was fitting to confess Jesus three times, so that Peter would not doubt the forgiveness of his grievous sin nor restoration to

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

Pat Wilkes—recovering from knee surgery at home

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

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

Larry Campbell's mother—recovering from a fall; **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.

Bereaved **Margie Ikerd, Dale Szymanski's** mother, passed away recently.

Please remember all our grieving brothers

and sisters, including the **Scott Smelser**

family whose son **Adam** drowned last wk.

Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April—blood

platelets low; **Christina Adams's** daughter

Kayla, May

Traveling The **Corrays** are in CA; the

Hadderses are in FL.

When You Return, Strengthen Your Brethren, from p. 3 apostleship. His love and attachment to Jesus must be formally declared, for himself and for the other apostles there. Jesus had used the same "Simon, son of Jonah" address when Peter confessed Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," Mt 16:16-17. Did Peter remember his great confession? Or did he remember who he was (Simon) before Jesus changed him and his name? Or did he remember his vainglorious boast, "Though all men should deny You, yet I will not," Mk 14:29? Or if the Lord was referring to the equipment of fishing (rather than the other men) by "these," did Peter recognize the gentle rebuke that he had returned to fishing and was no longer a "fisher of men"? Did he love Jesus enough now to give up fishing and return to the work He had given him, cf. Mt 19:27; Mk 10:28; Lk 18:28? You see, repentance and forgiveness involve remembrance and recognition of sin—it is never "forgive and forget." The second and third time that Christ put this question, He left out the comparison "more than these," because Peter, in his answer, left it out, not willing to compare himself with his brethren, much less to prefer himself before them. Peter no longer pretended to love Christ more than the rest of the disciples did. He was now ashamed of his rash words. Peter made no claim here to superior love, omitting "more than these" in his answer, and did not even use Christ's word *agapaō* for high and devoted love, but the humbler word *phileō* for love as a friend. He insisted that Christ knew his love in spite of his conduct. Jesus asked this direct and pointed question to reveal to him the present state of his feelings. After the denial to humble him, the Savior asked what had been the effect on his mind and whether it had prepared him for the arduous task which he was about to undertake. This is a question we should put to ourselves. We should humbly inquire with earnest, preserving prayer to the heart-searching God to examine and prove us. It is important for us know how God has affected our hearts and what our present feelings are toward Him. Peter had professed himself a penitent with his tears and his return to the company of the apostles, but what of his repentance? What Christ wants in our repentance is for us to look to Him in **love**. *"Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little,"* Lk 7:47. She was forgiven much, not because she wept much but because she loved much. Love for Christ must precede service to Him; He has such a tender regard to his flock that He will not trust it with anyone except those who love Him. Peter's confession of his love for his Lord amounted to a statement of repentance and a promise of faithfulness for the future. Christ's prayer that his faith would not fail is answered here; because his faith did not fail, his love did not; for faith will work by love. Peter had forfeited his claim of relation to Christ. He was now to be re-admitted, upon his repentance. Christ puts his test upon the issue of love: "Do you love me?" And Peter took the test: "Lord, I love You," and appealed to Christ, called Him to witness. Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves. "Follow Me," He said at the end, 21:19, signaling that Peter was restored as a disciple and a 'fisher of men."



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Pastors

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 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: "An Empty Chair at a Thanksgiving Feast"

This afternoon: "Samson: 'He Shall Begin to Deliver Israel' "