

THE WINNOWING WORK OF THE LORD

By
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I want to share with you out from some dealings of the Lord in my heart. These have been periodic, strong, inward dealings that I have identified as “The Winnowing Work of The Lord.” Now the word “winnow” means to separate and remove something unwanted or undesirable. And this is generally done by tossing about, exposing grain in the air so that waste matter is eliminated. So this Work of the Lord that I am experiencing is quite unsettling and disruptive, and not something I really enjoy. But I have come to realize as I go on with the Lord that this Work is absolutely necessary because what the Lord is doing is separating desirable and undesirable elements – IN ME! This is not an outward Work – in the world, in the circumstances in the earth: but this is His working in me for His Purpose. And as unsettling and difficult as it is for us as believers to undergo this sort of dealing, we must understand that The Lord has a right to do this. I am not talking about punishment or condemnation, but the Lord is simply purging and purifying those that are HIS.

So many times I think we fail to understand God’s dealings, and even strive against them because we see things from a

natural, carnal, selfish perspective: and fail to acknowledge our true Relationship to Him. But only as we truly come to understand that we are His and have no life but Him can we embrace this Work of the Lord and allow it to accomplish God's pleasure in us. This is why it is so important for us to come to God's View of Salvation, of New Life in Christ – of all things, and not try to understand Spiritual Truth according to our natural understanding and fleshly desires. The Apostle Paul recognized what we ARE by The Work of The Cross: **we are not our own! I Corinthians 6:19:** *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”* This is not simply a Biblical doctrine we are to quote, but God desires that this be an experiential knowledge that we also must come to, and that it be evident in our daily living. He desires that we know that our purpose of being joined to The Lord while we are here on the earth is to glorify God – even as we live in these flesh bodies. And contrary to a lot of “Christian teaching” today, this is all about HIM and not us: that HE would get the Glory and not us!

But in order to do that, the Lord works inwardly – in our hearts – renewing our minds and transforming our souls so that we take on the nature and character of His Son who always and only glorifies His Father. This is how the Spirit of God continues to Work: in those who are joined as One with Him in His Son, according to His Pleasure and for His Purpose. **Romans 8:28:** *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the*

image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” And the “Winnowing Work” that I am speaking of is for that Purpose: to conform us to the image of His Son. God is not after our vain, religious impersonations of what we think Jesus was like. He desires The Life of His Son be made manifest in us.

So it is important for us to understand that we are His and He has the right to put us through this “Winnowing” process. This is spoken of beautifully in Matthew 3 when John the Baptist was preparing the nation of Israel to accept The Greater One: The Messiah who they had been waiting for; The One who would baptize them not with a ceremonial washing of water for sins as John was doing. But this Greater One would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. (Verse 11) But then John speaks of a Work that HE would do by HIS hand that would purge HIS floor. **Matthew 3:12:** *“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”* And every time the Lord is taking me through a “Winnowing” process and I am reminded of this verse, I am overwhelmed by how personal this all is to the Lord, and that it is exclusively HIS work. This winnowing, threshing fan is **HIS**, in **HIS** hand, and **HE** will purge **HIS** floor. Then by this process of separating the wheat from the chaff, He gathers His wheat (this substance, the grain where the life of this seed is) into His barn. But then He burns the chaff (that which is dry, dead, useless) up with His unquenchable fire. I pray we can see the Spirit’s emphasis on HE and HIS, and that He has the right to execute this procedure in those who are His. “We” don’t own a “floor” and have a “barn” to put our “wheat” in! And our “fan” and threshing procedure would certainly not be

as effective as His!

This whole process of “Winnowing” is not a passive or docile activity: and it is disturbing to everything about you! And when you undergo a “Winnowing Work of The Lord” you do not remain the same! The threshing fan refers to a wooden shovel used for tossing grain in the air. But first the wheat was thrashed - usually by beating it – to separate the wheat from the chaff. The wind then would carry off the lighter chaff which cannot reproduce and serves no further purpose. At one point it protected the grain until it came to maturity, but now it can be eliminated. And as the chaff is removed, the wheat would fall to the floor to be gathered by the owner. But the Lord continues His Work: not only separating the wheat from the chaff, but then totally burning up the chaff with His unquenchable fire.

I have been greatly challenged as I considered this Work of the Lord in separating the wheat from the chaff. And I am speaking now not of separating believers from unbelievers as we usually consider the “wheat and the chaff”. But I am speaking of an inward Work that God is doing in our hearts so that His Purpose can be realized in His Own. And we must understand that the Lord is not gathering the chaff into His storehouse. The “chaff” in God’s Word is always seen to be light and useless, and something to be gotten rid of. Consider these Scriptures.

- **Psalms 1:4:** *“The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.”*
- **Psalms 35:5:** *“Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them.”*
- **Isaiah 5:24:** *“Therefore as the fire devoureth the*

stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.”

This is God’s View but we in ourselves cannot correctly discern the chaff from the wheat, and are incapable of cleanly separating them. And this is something I think we really need to be aware of, and appreciate why it takes a Work of The Lord to do this in us. The chaff covers the seed and takes on its appearance (it mimics the wheat?). But the chaff is separate from it and does not have the characteristics of life as the Seed does. And I believe we often mistake the “chaff” from the “wheat” in our religious doctrines and traditions. What I am talking about here are “truths about Spiritual things” and Spiritual Truth: what sounds like Substance and Reality, but is a poor substitute for THE TRUTH.

And seen in The Light of The Truth of Christ, the whole Old Covenant System of the Law (and worshipping God by a fleshly adherence to rules) can be viewed as “chaff”. With His (The True Seed) coming it was no longer needed, and must be eliminated in order for The Truth to be seen and bring forth the Fruit of Life and the Righteousness that God desired. Now it is only The Lord that can make this separation, and this is why we have to understand this is HIS Work. But then we have to accept God’s “Winnowing Work” and agree that the chaff is useless and must be eliminated. I believe this was something The Lord brought the Apostle Paul through. Certainly his place in his whole religious world was disturbed and he was tossed around violently when The

Lord appeared and made Himself known to Paul. He certainly was NOT the same! But He allowed The Lord HIS RIGHT to deal with Paul this way. It cost “Saul” his religion, but “Paul” gained Truth. This is what the natural Nation of Israel had trouble with. Even after Jesus’ Resurrection as that Seed (that fell in the ground and died), they clung to the old and refused to let that which was done away (The Old Covenant) by The Cross, pass away from them. And we do that also. So often I feel the Lord is trying to give us greater vision, a greater understanding of Truth: desiring to get rid of “the chaff” of our in-part knowledge that we have made firm doctrines of, and we refuse to budge from! So The Lord begins a process of unsettling us, pressuring us, casting us about – making Truth known so that we will allow this separation to take place in our hearts. But we are clinging to the chaff: clinging to our “religious transparent coverings” that “look like Jesus” but are not: they are not the substance that Christ is. This is not a work of the Devil: it is God’s Work in us! This is a real burden to my heart because by doing this we are denying The Lord as He works in us with His Winnowing Fan.

And even sadder, I have seen by The Spirit that even when we allow the Lord to separate wheat from chaff in us – in our doctrines, in our views, in our religious activities; we often still go through an utterly useless activity of trying to gather the chaff! We attempt to gather the vanity! We pursue and try to claim – for God (because as “good Christians” we will offer it up to Him!) – that which He has already separated in order to eliminate from Himself because He has no use for it. The “Reality”, THE TRUTH has come: and He will no longer receive the types and shadows, as “well intentioned” as they may be from us! This to me is very serious and has been a

real challenge to me. And I think if we will be honest before The Lord we will see that we do this because it is “OUR” chaff that we love and identify with. But it is still NOT His Wheat, and He will NOT gather anything but HIS Wheat into His Barn! The Lord says the only thing that chaff is good for is to be burned up – by His fire. And that consuming Work of The Lord never stops because The Lord wants it to be totally eliminated. So I am imploring us: when God has made this separation in our hearts, don’t attempt to stick your hand into God’s fire of judgment (separating what is alive to Him and what is dead) and retrieve the chaff! As He has separated it, let Him totally consume it for you: knowing that He is the only One who really can.

I have spoken of this “Winnowing Work” as a Work of The Lord, and we must understand that it takes place by His Appearing. It is spoken of by John when Jesus first began to make Himself known to Israel, and this Work will take place in us as He continually and progressively appears (makes Himself known in us as He is). So this “Winnowing Work” is not just a one-time experience, but a continual Working of The Lord in our hearts as He continues to be revealed in us. But this Work was also spoken of by the prophet Malachi who spoke to Israel 400 years before Jesus came to this earth. And I want us to see that when it was prophesied that He would come to His Temple, to His House, something would happen!

- **Malachi 3:1:** *“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. 2: But who may*

abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4: Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. 5: And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts."

The question is: who may abide the day (the light) of His coming? Who (and What) will remain when He appears and makes Himself known as The Promised One? Man in the flesh, man in his religious zeal will not stand and continue in God's House when HE appears! He comes to cleanse, refine and purify those in the House – His Own, but this Work of The Lord is for His purpose. **Verse 3:** That (the word "that" denotes purpose) they may offer The Lord what He desires. And as He performs this cleansing, this Winnowing Work in His own – separating the desirable from the undesirable – then, (**Verse 4**) the offering will be sweet unto The Lord! The "chaff" has been removed and now the substance of the "wheat" remains and will be pleasing to The Father.

I hope we can see how necessary His Work is in this regard to please the Lord. And as we see in **Verse 5**, but also by understanding God's view of "judgment", this brings about God's decision and the separation of things that God will

NOT tolerate in His House. And this all takes place in the Light of His Appearing. He makes Himself known: He judges, He separates, He gathers what pleases Him and eliminates all that does not – in His Household, for His Glory.

I believe it was with this same desire to satisfy The Father's Will that Jesus physically entered into the Temple of His day in Jerusalem at the beginning of His earthly ministry. He knew it was (even in a type) His Father's House, but the Jews had made it "their Temple", where they observed "their feasts", how it pleased "them". He came at that time with an actual scourge of cords, but His work there was a violent, deliberate "Winnowing" – and the removing of religious man and his actions because they were desecrating The Father's House". **John 2:13:** *"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14: And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16: And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."* And consider how important this Work is to God. Jesus even had to do this purifying of the Temple a second time near the end of His Life! This was His working in His House, but this time after He drove man out, the Scripture says He gathered others to Himself. **Matthew 21:14:** *"And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them."* This is the "separating" and "gathering" Work that I am talking about.

My heart in sharing this with The Body of Christ is that we would recognize The Lord's Work in our midst: embrace it,

and allow The Lord to do what He needs to do in His House. We really need to understand fully that it is HIS House and not ours: where HE lives, and HE has a right to this Work in us. And although this Work is unsettling and disturbing to us, God does it with a loving heart – desiring to remove anything and everything that will hinder us from experiencing the fulness of our wonderful Relationship of Salvation with Him as His Own. May we not see this as “punishment” but as the “training and correction” that the Hebrews writer speaks of in **Hebrews 12:5**: *“...My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7: If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ... 9: Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10: For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11: Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”*

The Father’s desire is that the fulness of The Life He has given us (the fruit of righteousness that Christ is) be experienced by us and be made manifest in the earth through us. This is not accomplished by our religious self-improvement efforts but by His Winnowing Work in us! So may we let Him “toss us about” and unsettle us so that He can remove and burn up everything that is not Christ: so that all that HE is may be seen in His House – in us. So may we

not despise and disallow this Working of The Lord in us – all
for His honor and glory!

Amen and amen.