

Lent 2023, Week 2: Threshed and Winnowed

Description

12 His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear out His thr
Matthew 3:12 AMP

Throughout Jesus' ministry, and the bible as a whole, the process of harvesting grain is a common symbol. We must understand that this is most likely due to the people during biblical times being familiar with this process due to their agricultural lifestyles. It's also important to note that there is a process required to obtain a usable form of grain/wheat from the original seed that is planted. The text for this post is taken from the Book of Matthew, but these are the words of John the Baptist, not Jesus. It is important to note John was sent to prepare the world, specifically Israel for the coming of Christ, who was to redeem his people. This scene where John is baptizing people at the Jordan River while some pharisees and saducees questioned him on his purpose and authority. John said several things during the exchange, but I want highlight the verse above, because I think the steps of threshing and winnowing in the process of producing grain is very relevant to the process of sanctification that God takes us through.

Threshing

I know that the scripture mentions winnowing before threshing, but threshing actually occurs before winnowing in the process of producing grain. Threshing is the process through which reapers would take husks, or stalks, and beat them against the ground to loosen and separate the edible grains from stalks. It is a mechanical, or physical process that can seem harsh, but is meant to extract or free the grain or useable part from the stalk that it is attached to. Reapers would pick/pluck an entire stalk and slap it against the ground until the grains were loosened and ultimately separated from the stalk. For us believers, Jesus often talks about a harvest, that is being produced from good seed. Though the entire stalk is a by-product of the seed, not all parts are required or useable to God. In our life, we will be threshed/beaten by life, but it is all for our purification, and brings about the plan that God has for us. Threshing is a painful process, and it sometimes exposes us to the same conditions that unbelievers experience, which can cause us to question why we're going through it. At the end of that phase of the process, we are left at the threshing floor to await the winnowing phase.

Winnowing

Most may think that they are complete or done after being threshed, but there is still chaff remaining. Chaff is the light, inedible parts that remain after grain has been threshed. If we understand God, then we know he is not satisfied with impurities, and will go the extra mile to ensure that we may be, "perfect and completely developed, lacking nothing (James 1:4)." Winnowing is done using using a winnowing fork or fan that tosses the threshed grain into the air which causes the lighter chaff to blow away as the heavier grain falls back to the ground. This is a continuation of the earlier process where life or

circumstances may seem to be overpowering us, leave us helplessly falling with no way to save ourselves. What winnowing shows is that in the midst of that falling or difficult time, impurities and “dead weight” is falling from us. When you’ve been exposed to pressure, and humbled by life, you realize that there are some parts of your life, character, personality, and “identity” need to be removed in order for you to progress/mature. Winnowing represents the conditions needed to produce “whole” version of you that God desires to use.

I believe that John the Baptist was trying to inform the crowd at this moment is that the kingdom and messiah they were waiting on would require them to undergo an uncomfortable process to be made right with God. Not only would they have to deconstruct their previous religious traditions, and some personal beliefs, but they would have to have to go through a refining process that is necessary to separate them from those who don’t accept the kingdom, and also separate the things that are not like Christ within them.

Reflection Time

Have you been threshed and winnowed? When you read what the process for producing grain looks like, how does it make you feel, or think about your own spiritual journey? Do you feel like you’re in a particular stage at the moment? Can you think of a season in life where you may have been going through these processes? Pray and seek the holy spirit to reveal what things about or in you that need to be threshed and winnowed so that you may be fit to be gathered into his barn.

Category

1. Faith

Tags

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