

God Is Separating the Wheat and Chaff Now More Than Ever Before—Here's Why

Speaking of Jesus, John the Baptist, Matthew 3:12 (NIV) says, "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor, gathering His wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

In this verse, Jesus is portrayed as someone who will separate the wheat from the chaff, gathering the wheat into His barn and burning up the chaff in a conflagration. This is the first instance that the idea of separation is brought up within the New Testament. Though the full meaning of this verse has eschatological significance, it could be argued that this verse is applicable at all times and places. God is always, in varying degrees, separating the wheat from the chaff in His church and separating the wheat from the chaff in the individual lives of His people as well.

Whenever I browse throughout Christian news sources, there seems to be an underlying theme at work within the American church—separation and sanctification. Christians are being faced with many choices. For example, will they serve Christ or seek the "riches" of this world? Will they faithfully hold on to the truth of God's Word, or will they compromise with the culture? Will they live in holiness or give way to the decadence around them? Will they look to the world for their hope, or will they look to Christ?

These questions are tremendously descriptive of the dilemma many American Christians are being faced with having to answer. As they are answered, what is occurring is a great separation within the body of Christ within America. One could even state that it is as though Christ is separating the wheat

from the chaff within the church in America.

For many decades the “wheat” and the “chaff” have been able to remain together, the differences between the two being there, but not pronounced enough to create any major divisions. Now, the divide between the “wheat” and the “chaff” is becoming ever more distinct and obvious. Those who are committed to Christ, committed to living “righteously” and committed to seeing an actual, pure and undefiled move of the Holy Spirit are being gathered by Christ and set apart unto His current-day work. Those who are okay with compromise, willing to follow the “latest and greatest” trend, who seek what the world is offering and those within the American church who use the tools and strategies of the world in an attempt to advance the kingdom of God are likewise being gathered, but gathered unto judgment.

Now, more than ever before, the lines of separation are being drawn. God is purifying His church here in this country. He is revealing people’s hearts. As he does this, a separating similar to what is seen in Matthew 3:12 is occurring right before our eyes. God is not finished working in our nation, but He will not use a compromised church. God does not use the compromised, sinful or egotistical to display His power or conduct a move of His Spirit. There are those in the church who are compromising and yet experience “success.” However, this “success” can only be called success if it is judged by the world’s standards. True success occurs when the Spirit of God is at work, not merely when a church’s numbers grow or its buildings become bigger.

Because the Holy Spirit seeks to move through His church here in this country, a separating of the wheat and the chaff must first take place.

The interesting thing about separation is that it is another word for sanctification. What better analogy is there to describe sanctification in the life of the believer than the

image of Christ removing the chaff, the garbage, the useless, the worthless that is in the life of the believer?

As God is bringing separation into the American church as a whole, He also seeks to separate the wheat from the chaff in individuals' lives. Many of us have lived with things inside us that God would deem as "chaff." As individual believers, we must submit to God's process of sanctification. As God sanctifies the believer individually, He removes the "chaff." This is a necessary process to be prepared for the work of God in our individual lives which will then in turn enable us to be prepared to play the role He calls us to in His body.

So, though Matthew 3:12 can be argued to have eschatological meaning, it is clear that it has applications to the current state of the church in America and God's desire to sanctify His people not only corporately but also individually. {eoa}

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