

HE GATHERS, HE SIFTS



Sifted into Gold Coleen Briggs

When Jesus saves, he saves all the way. He doesn't save you for five minutes or a year-and-a-half. He saves you forever. Nor does he save you from Hell, and then let you go through the rest of your life having temper tantrums or going on weekend binges.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away and behold, all things have become new."

"Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

"He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

From the moment Jesus Christ takes up his abode in you, and forevermore, if you walk with Him...

Your life becomes a fountain of living water in this desert-dry world.

Your mouth becomes an oracle of the living God.

Your hands, as the hands of your Lord, lift up the fallen and feed the hungry and heal the broken-hearted.

Salvation is not just a feeling; it is a life.

When you went down to the altar in some church and fell on your knees, there was a feeling of God's presence, an inward peace. Or should you come down to the altar today and ask Christ to come into you and take over, you'll feel relieved and clean.

But the important thing is not that feeling.

The important thing is the life, the divine life, that burns in you when you get up from your knees and start living as a reborn son or daughter of God.

The life of the Son of God in you is a life that stays with you when the going gets rough, a life that increases in purity and power as you obey its leadings. Your body ages. Your circumstances keep changing. But the life of the Son of God in you burns on and on, brighter and brighter, stronger and stronger.

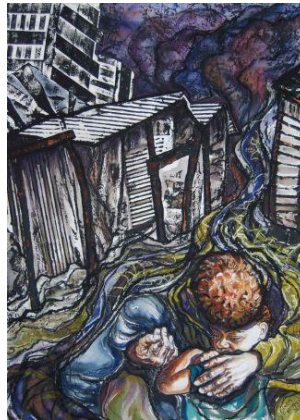
Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. As they go through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs. The early rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength.

Psalm 84

And in the strength of God they bear fruit.

They bring forth a harvest.

They turn men from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.



Rescue

These so-called "saved" Christians, who are sitting around in their spiritual plastic bags, with their hands folded and their eyes shut to reality, these so-called "saved" Christians who never lift a finger to help their fellow man, who never go half-a-block out of their way unless they smell some kind of reward for their ego or their pocket-book, who think they're saved because they had "that feeling" once-upon-a-time. Time will test them. Time will show what they are.

Give them a little time and you'll hear-them hollering, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

No, my friend, the proof that you are saved is not that feeling. The proof that you are born of God is that you are walking with His Son, even when His road takes you through fire. In fact, that's why we're put through fire; to sift out those who love Jesus Christ from those who are in love with their own emotions.

The people who stood along the road into Jerusalem that day just couldn't help themselves, as Jesus came riding along, the multitudes singing and the children waving their palms. They were overcome by a spirit of praise. Men who'd never cried since they were children begin to weep. Women who ruled their households without ever raising their voices start shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

Who can explain it? These dead, flat, colorless people are praising God and calling this man the Messiah! Heaven has broken out-upon-that street and there's glory all around. Their eyes are opened and they can see that this is God's Anointed. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" "That God should let me live to see this day with my own eyes! Praise His name!"

Now the same Spirit that poured out glory on that multitude has lately been stirring this church as He has never stirred this church before. I'm not saying that this is the only church where this is happening. I know that it is happening in many places in this city and across the earth. But it is

happening here. Many of you sitting in this room have already been caught up in this spirit. You've been awakened. You've begun to see the Son of God with new eyes.

There's power moving in you that you never knew before in all your days.



Called

And some of you will be touched by this thing for the first time today. Before this service ends, something inside you will break and there will be a flood of God's forgiveness pouring over your mind and rushing through your heart.

You will see Jesus by faith. And you will worship Him. You will fall on your knees before Him.

For some of you it will take a little longer. Perhaps you'll awaken from a dream some night soon and you will know that the Spirit of Christ is in the room. Before long, in some way, every soul who is connected with this flock will be awakened to a new vision of the Son of God. People who never came to a bible study in all these years will start turning up at bible studies with a Bible in their hand, a Bible they suddenly begin to read and love. People, who in all these years never talked about anything after church but the weather and the latest gossip, will now be talking about the things of God.

People in this church will begin to pray for each other as never before, and for their friends and for their enemies.... and gathering here to worship God and His beloved Son will become more important to you than food and drink. You'll want to come. You'll have to come. It will no longer be a duty or a habit or an occasional ritual you go through to prove you're respectable. It will be both necessary and a thing of joy.

People in the neighborhood, people among your friends will catch wind of this thing and come, and be caught up in the Spirit of God with the rest of us. Again and again you will look up and wonder if you're "seeing things" as someone you never ever expected to see here walks in.... perhaps kneels at this rail.

How fast this thing will develop or how long it will go on I do not know. It has only barely begun and it is already glorious.

But you might as well know now that this glorious time of revival and God-consciousness and worship and praise that we have begun to enjoy will be followed by a **sifting**.

Jesus gathers the multitudes to Himself, gives them vision, blesses them.

**Then He sifts.
He shakes that multitude.
He causes the winds of God to blow upon that multitude.**

He builds a fire under that multitude and soon the dross is consumed and only the gold is left. The chaff is driven away in the wind and only the wheat is left. The half-baked souls who want a cheap salvation are offended by His words and only disciples, true disciples, are left.

If you read Matthew 21, from which today's gospel comes, you find that as soon as He reached the Temple this King of Zion, meek and sitting upon an ass, gets off that ass, climbs the Temple steps and starts turning the place inside-out. He drives out the merchants, upsets the tables of the money-changers.

***"it is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,
but you make it a den of thieves.'"***

This was the beginning of the sifting.

Read through to the end of Matthew and you'll see how that sifting goes on---how Jesus offends more and more people by calling them to turn that Palm Sunday joy into concrete living, obedience, true worship of the living God day-by-day and hour-by-hour.

And this is precisely what Jesus is going to do with the multitude He is gathering and is going to be gathering here in the coming days. He is going to gather. Then He is going to sift it down to the disciples who are serious. Then He is going to send those disciples forth to gather others and sift them down. This is, and will be, going on in many places. Until He has literally gathered and sifted this whole city and this whole earth. Then comes the End.

And there's one thing which determines whether you will remain true or fall away when the sifting comes: your obedience.

Not your grasp of the doctrines.

Not your good intentions.

Not your strong religious feelings.

Your obedience to Jesus Christ.

You have to do more than say, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" You have to do what the Son of David tells you to do or your "Hosannas" will turn to "Crucify! Crucify!"

Obedience: In today's gospel the disciples "went and did as Jesus commanded them." And Jesus, riding that donkey, was doing what His Father commanded Him. He was riding that donkey toward His cross.

***And being found in human form He humbled Himself
and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.***

The Kingdom of God is made up of those people who obey the Son of God--- Just as the Son obeyed His Father, so we obey the Son.

We don't just do good deeds according to our own whims.

We obey Him.

That obedience to Him is our life, our strength, our power.

As we obey Him, He lives His life in us.

As we obey Him, He manifests the Kingdom of God through us.



Carried

Please, for your own good, understand what Jesus Christ is really after as He breathes His Spirit- of glory and holiness upon us today.

- He's glad to see our tears of repentance.
- He's glad to see you kneeling at this rail and surrendering yourself to Him.
- He's glad to hear you calling on His name and He will answer you and bless you.

But what He really looks for in you, as you weep and kneel and pray, is a heart that is set to obey his commandments.

It is the only thing that will hold you when He begins to sift.

Is your heart set to obey His commandments?

if you love me you will keep my commandments.

This is my commandment:

- that you love one another as I have loved you.
- love your neighbor in deed and in truth. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, welcome the stranger.
- confess me before men without shame.
- abide in me and let my words abide in you.

The blessing of Christ is for everyone. But in that blessing is a call to obey Him---all the way...with your whole life ... even unto death. God help us to answer that call now, while the door is still open.



Holding Hope

O Jesus, I confess that I have been far from what you have called me to be. I fall on my face before your Cross, name my sins, and ask to be made clean by your blood. Then give me power by your mighty Spirit to begin anew to follow you all the way, whatever the cost, to serve you wherever you put me, however you choose to use me, until the hour of your glorious appearing. Amen.

Prayer- Lord keep us holding to you, obeying you as a new sifting is happening. Oh that we would never stop loving you, never turn and be of those who cry "crucify him" because the circumstances have changed and our love has grown cold. Keep us faithful and prepared for the final gathering.

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THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

