

NEWSLETTER

June - 2024

Sunday Service: 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study:
7:00 p.m.

Sunday Bible Study: *Will resume in September*

SPEAKERS

June 2

11 a.m. - Charles Korhonen,
Holy Communion

Dinner will be served between services

2 p.m. - Bruce Estola,
Installation of Ivan Niemela as Pastor

June 9 - Mark Sunnarborg

June 16 - Ivan Niemela

June 23 - Ken Storm

June 30 - Charles Korhonen

CONTACT

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TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gold Tried in Fire

“And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.” - Zechariah 13:9

Gold and silver in their raw states are of little value until they are separated from their impurities. The prophet Malachi equates the physical refining process of gold to the spiritual one where God separates a penitent soul from sin: *“And he shall sit as a refiner...and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold”* (Malachi 3:3). In this process, God uses *“great tribulation”* (Rev 7:14), as if it were intense heat in his *“furnace of affliction”* (Isaiah 48:10), to purify a sinner. And once a person’s sins are forgiven the Lord then hears his every prayer and becomes his God and he becomes His child.

Like gold ore mined from the earth, all humans are impure: *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one”* (Romans 3:10-12). Hence, we are sinners by nature prone to rebel against God and it is not until God separates us from our sin that we become valuable to Him. Not that He ever stops loving us; it’s just that we are not saved if we are impure. And not that we should search our heart to find sin, which we will, but that we should fully trust God to search us, and He will (Ps 139: 23-24).

Our subject text also reveals that not everyone goes through the refining process. That is, not all people want to be saved according to God’s way and, thus, many will forsake God: *“As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee, But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth”* (Jer 44:16-17). Such have developed their own faith through various means and have come to idolize their new found faith. God’s call to repent of their sins had become a call of iniquity to them so *“... that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain”* (Jer 2:5). This false faith produced so much confusion in the people’s minds that they sought Jeremiah’s life, primarily because he spoke the word of God which bothered them. They attacked him in an effort to justify their own misunderstanding while Jeremiah, on the other hand, did little to defend himself as the truth needs no defense.

Truly, it is our natural tendency to rebel against God. The book of Judges comments on this where the Israelites were content to serve the Lord as long as they had a God-fearing leader and things went smoothly: *“And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel”* (Judges 2:7). But when their spiritual leader died, *“... they forsook the Lord God of their fathers... and followed other gods”* (Judges 2:12). How could this happen, considering that Joshua and many others taught them in the true worship of God and instructed them how to believe. As long as there was someone around to direct their lives and worship practices, they flourished.

However, when this strong guidance died away, the people, particularly the youth, had no foundation of their own to stand on: “...*there arose another generation... which knew not the Lord*” (Judges 2:10). They had blindly followed faithful Joshua without coming into faith themselves. This disinterest in the Word exposed them to the wiles of Satan where “... *every man did that which was right in his own eyes*” (Judges 21:25).

The purification of gold-bearing ore is an apt description of God’s purification of man’s soul. It’s through a series of processes, including intense heat, that waste is removed from mined ore to expose pure gold. Mankind in his unsaved state is much like raw gold. God begins the purification process by using His spoken Word to awaken a person to his sin. Such a person then has a choice: either reach out to God for the grace to confess his sin or reject God’s call to repentance all together; unfortunately, many there are that choose the latter. So, rather than rely on someone else to teach you about faith, ask God to give you faith and to reveal any sin to you so that through the intense fire of the Holy Ghost you may receive the forgiveness of sins preached to you in the name and shed blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38).

God’s Peace,
Charles Korhonen