

October 15, 2023

Commitment: The Foundation of Love

In prayer, I heard a warning: **"Your faith will be tested."** Our faith is being tested in order to **expose our weaknesses** to prepare us for a darkness that is coming. Jesus warned Peter that Satan wanted to *"sift him as wheat."* This was right before the darkness, the night they would enter the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was betrayed and taken prisoner to be crucified.

Luke 22:31-34 *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may **sift you as wheat.** 32 But I have prayed for you, **that your faith should not fail**; and when you have returned to Me, **strengthen your brethren.**" 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."*

"You" is plural signifying Jesus was praying for all of His disciples who were next to Peter, warning them, their faith was about to be tested (**Jn 17:6-17**). Jesus did not pray against Satan to stop him. He prayed for the faith of the disciples not to fail. Sifting the wheat from the wheat: breaking relationships.

James 2:14-17 *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.***

1 Cor 13:1-3 *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing.** 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, **but have not love, it profits me nothing.***

1 Cor 13:13 *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is **love.***

Gal 5:5-6 *For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but **faith working through love.***

Faith without works is dead.

Faith without love is nothing.

Faith that works through love, is everything! The best word that describes agape love is **commitment**.

Love Strong's # 26, *agape* (ag-ah-pay); an unconditional love that gives of itself without asking anything in return. This is a love of choice and will, not by feelings, chance and emotions. It is a commitment. It is the greatest of all love.

Satan sifts us as wheat by manipulating and deceiving us into breaking our commitment to love one another, the second greatest commandment. Peter's love for Jesus faltered as he denied knowing him 3 times. In order for Jesus to restore Peter back to Himself, Peter had to realize love is a commitment, not a feeling.

John 21:14-22 *This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. 15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love (agape-committed) Me more than these?"*

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love (phileo-like) You."

He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love (agape-committed) Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love (phileo-like) You."

He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love (phileo-like) Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love (phileo-like) Me?"

This is a rhetorical question which implies; Peter, do you even like Me?

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (phileo-like) You."

Peter appeals to the grace and mercy of Jesus.

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

18 Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "**Follow Me.**"

In order for Peter to lay his life down for Jesus, he had to receive agape-commitment love.

20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, **what about this man?**" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, **what is that to you? You follow Me.**"

How we show our love/commitment for one another is how we show our love/commitment for Jesus. Peter is told by Jesus to "Feed My lambs" and "Tend My sheep." This is a very clear directive to be committed in the **local church**. We are to feed and tend to the sheep of our fold, our church family.

Love Strong's #5386, *phileo* (fill-eh-oh); to be fond of, care for affectionately, cherish, and take pleasure in. *Phileo* is a feeling tied to our emotions. Most people think *phileo* is true love and therefore fall in and out of love.

Gal 6:6-10 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the **household of faith**.

1 John 4:20-21 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that **he who loves God must love his brother also**.

The Church, the local body, the ecclesia, the household of faith, is slowly being subverted and simulated into the world.

Subverted: to undermine the power and authority of an established system. Christians are being swayed by a culture of complacency, criticalness, pride, selfishness, offenses, busyness and other factors which help justify their non-committal attitude to the local church. This is a **Satan-inspired subversion** of the flow of **God's delegated authority** in an attempt to destroy the local church. Many supposed "good causes" has taken Christians out of the local church.

Each local church has a specific call to bring forth the Kingdom of God. They are given a territorial authority specific to their call. Once a local church closes, the forces that kept back the demonic-darkness in that area, are diminished. Derrik Gilbert from Sky Watch TV just commented that the old church that he used to go to is now a Mosque.

Satan "sifting us as wheat" is separating us from one another, especially the local church. There are people who are loosely tied with no or little commitment to a local church. All it will take is a little wind to blow, and they will be separated as wheat.

Jesus will separate the **wheat from the tares**, but Satan is separating the **wheat from the wheat!** Satan had permission from God to "test" Job. I believe Satan has permission from Jesus to "test the faith" of Christians. I don't believe this will cause a loss of salvation, but it could cause a **lacking** of their peace, blessings and many rewards.

James 1:2-5 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the **testing of your faith produces patience**. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, **lacking nothing**. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.