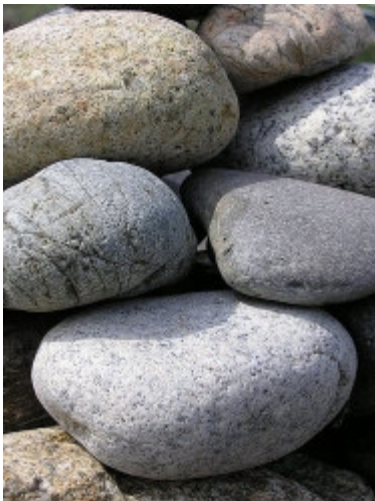


## **Shaking and Crushing**

### **Sorting and Weighing**

**By Michael Clark**

The other day I was thinking about what God has been putting me through, especially over the last 22 years since the Spirit led me into a time of wilderness. In my mind's eye, I got a picture of a geologist's aggregate sizing sieves. These are a series of round brass pans that snap together in a stack. The bottom of each pan is made of screen. The top pan has a screen with an inch square grid; the second one down has about  $7/8$  inch square, the next  $5/8$ , then  $1/2$ ,  $3/8$ ,  $1/4$ ,  $3/16$ ,  $1/8$ ,  $1/16$ ,  $1/32$ , one so fine that only flour could fit through it and finally a catch pan that collects even the dust.



As I thought on this, I saw that I was like the measure of gravel dumped in at the top of the stack and thoroughly shaken down through all the screens. The geologist then takes each pan apart from the others and weighs the rocks/sand that are caught in each one and figures out what percentage of the whole each size is. This way he can tell if the load of gravel is up to the standard set for the task.

God has one goal. He wants each of us to get all the way to the bottom into His catch pan. If the gravel is not right or too coarse, the geologist passes the gravel through the crusher so that it contains more of the smaller sizes and less of the larger. God does that same thing with us. He puts us in his sizing sieves and shakes us.. Shake - shake - shake... until nothing more settles down through the screens. The part that did not pass through the top screen goes back through the crusher and the process starts all over again. He checks the next screen down and sees if anything in us got caught there. You guessed it, more crushing and so on.

God uses many things in our lives to weigh, size, shake and crush us. Trials, rejections, betrayals, even our own sin can be used by our wonderful Shepherd to accomplish His purposes in our lives.

So what is sin? Isn't it falling short of the mark? We go through these series of tests in life. We might fail to show someone His love and forgiveness or we might fail by falling into one of the more obvious, visible forms of sin. We might fail the test by judging those who do, like the Pharisees did with the woman caught in the act of adultery. All is falling short of the fullness of Christ and His love. Each time we are tempted or sinned against, it is a divine set-up and a new sizing sieve is presented to us. Will we pass through that screen or will we get caught?

David passed the faith in God's power test and went up against Goliath as a young boy and slew the giant with nothing but a sling and a rock. But later he DID NOT pass the naked woman test, Bathsheba bathing on her roof next door. So what happened? Did God throw him away? No, God has never lost one out of His loving hand. God knew that through all his failings, David was a man after His own heart. He just put David back in the crusher so that he would go down through that particular screen to the next level of lowliness and brokenness in HIM, thus passing the test. You can bet that he was tested in that area again, but this time he went on through without getting caught!

Remember, "everything that can be shaken shall be shaken" and "everyone that falls on the Rock shall be broken and those upon whom the Rock falls shall utterly be ground to powder." His winnowing fan is in His hand, blowing away all that is not of Him. Don't beat yourself up too badly when you fail the test or get too depressed when your whole world seems to be shaking apart. IT IS GOD! He is bigger than your sin and failings. Jesus took ALL your sins and failings to the cross. He knows the future and is not shocked when we fall short. He is single minded in His working with us and knows that we are but dust and to dust we shall return. Gives all these verses new meaning in a positive light, doesn't it?

So pick up those hands that hang down! Strengthen those feeble knees, dear ones. God is in it all to both DO and to Will His good pleasure in our lives, even in all the pain and suffering of the crushing and failings we go through.

Romans chapter eight says all this so well. Let's read it again.

[There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.](#)

(That is us, without any condemnation. Even when we fail the test, He does not give up on us.)

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

(Now that we have made Jesus our Savior and practice walking after the Spirit, our sins are not unto death, but instead they are used to bring us into fullness of life!)

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.

(The sin nature in us no longer rules or even expects to keep the law by its own power [or rather lack of power], but is subservient to the workings of the Spirit.)

...that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

(He is giving a whole new mind that is set on the things of the Spirit.)

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

(The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit wars against the flesh so that you can no longer do those things that your carnal man once could.)

So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

(His dying continues to work in us, dealing with the sin in us, so that His life might abound in those we touch.)

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

(We no longer living by the dictates of sin and death, but by the law of His life giving Spirit.)

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

(The Spirit leads us down through the "screens" to the lowest and smallest places in the humility of Christ, always seeking to decrease, always seeking the lowest place.)

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

(Unless you humble yourself and become as a little child, a child of the Father, you shall no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

(Shaking and crushing, always decreasing so that He may increase in us.)

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

(God knew that we would fail and fall short. It is all part of the breaking process that brings forth Christ in us in all humility.)

...because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

(Aren't you glad that our sin and weakness do not get the final say in our lives? Aren't you glad that God is all powerful and has made us more than overcomers in His Son?)

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

(Being forced through that opening that is too small is part of the process. This is that camel going through the eye of the needle... being stripped of all that is not of God.)

Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

(Yes, precious hope... and faith that God is up to the task of conforming us into the full image of Christ Jesus. He has given us His Spirit as the earnest of our inheritance, like earnest money being paid by the buyer who makes an offer on a home.)

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

(How often have you found it almost impossible to pray? God even makes provision for that!)

Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

(Each trial is tailor made by Him, for He searches the hidden things in our hearts that we are often unaware of and works all things in us and in our lives for our final good.)

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified,

these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

(AMEN!!! We are more than overcomers in Christ Jesus! We were created in Christ, crucified in Christ, have our lives in Christ, and our eternities in Christ! We even have the faith of Christ! It is all about Jesus! "All things are ours, and we are Christ's and Christ is God's.")

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

(What a great salvation! What a great Savior!)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

(Jesus is our life, our death and our resurrection power. Neither sin nor death nor grave gets that final word in us.)

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:1-39, NKJV).

Don't you feel loved? I sure do! Don't you feel secure in His great love? Me, too!

Many of us are experiencing a wilderness and desert time in our lives. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for a time of deprivation and testing, but neither the wilderness nor the devil got the last word. When it was over He could say, "The prince of this world has come and found nothing in me." That is what the wilderness is all about, dear saints. We are coming forth in His resurrection power, stripped of our souliness of the flesh, yet still weak enough that we constantly throw ourselves on Him for mercy. It is in seeing the need of mercy in our lives that we are able to show

mercy to others. It is in being comforted by Him that we are able to comfort others. It is by seeing Him overcome in us that we are able to encourage others that they, too, will be more than overcomers in Him.

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