

PK's Perspectives ... The Silversmith

Back in the days before internet, I would save hard copies of really good articles, quotes, or anecdotes I happened upon in my reading. I kept these clippings in a file and would use them to elucidate sermon points, add pith to personal correspondence, or help clarify an issue when teaching my boys or counseling someone. The clippings file was fairly hefty until the internet got up to speed and I could search out articles, quotes, and anecdotes on the world wide web. Today I'm sharing one of the clippings from that old file...exactly when and where I came across this article I do not know but I'm sharing it with you just as I found it. There was no attribution when I came across it, just the simple admission that it was copied. Though I have found the story (now titled The Silversmith) quoted in internet musings, it is always attributed to "Author Unknown." If you know the author, please let me know!

A group of women were studying the book of Malachi. They eventually came across this: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." (Malachi 3:3) This verse puzzled some of the women in the Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at the next Bible study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver ore over the fire where it is hottest and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest so as to burn away all the impurities.

She suddenly understood this was how God holds His followers in "hot" spots, exactly as described by the verse in Malachi 3:3: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The silversmith answered emphatically, "Yes!" He told her there was more to his job than waiting; not only did he have to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. "If the silver is left a moment too long in the flames, it would be impaired; if it was not in the flame long enough, impurities would remain in it."

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy — when I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of life's fire, remember that God has His eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you. Siphon strength from James 1:2-4: "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." Grace & peace, love you. PK