

## Can Straw Become Gold?

Joe Slater

Paul lived long before the Brothers Grim published their fairy tale about Rumpelstiltskin spinning straw into gold. The apostle did, however, hold out hope that straw could be transformed into gold (not materially but spiritually).

Likening the Corinthian church to a building, Paul compared himself to “*a wise master builder*” who laid the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10). That is, he had come to Corinth and preached Christ’s gospel, leading many to faith and obedience. The foundation was firm and secure.

Others (Apollos, for example) had built on that solid foundation. A knowledgeable, eloquent teacher, Apollos had skillfully continued the superb work Paul had begun.

But builders can use only those materials which are available to them. Paul wrote of using “*gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw*” (3:12). Individual Christians in Corinth and elsewhere would fit these categories. The first three types would stand the test of fire while the latter three would burn. In other words, on Judgment Day some would be saved but others lost.

In Corinth, many had fallen victim to petty disputes and divisions, fornication (and tolerance of it), corrupt worship, and blatant false doctrine. What a mess! No doubt some were like straw. Yet God hadn’t given up on them, and neither would Paul.

Could straw become gold? Yes, it could happen then in Corinth, and it can happen today right here! Jesus, not Rumpelstiltskin, can and will transform you when you repent and submit to His will.

(Note: I am indebted to my friend and brother, Guy Orbison, Jr., for the seed thoughts for this article from his excellent publication, Working in the Word.)

## Faith In 3-D

FAITH DESCRIBED *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"* (Hebrews 11:1)

FAITH DEMONSTRATED *"By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..."* (Hebrews 11:4) *"By faith Noah...prepared an ark for the saving of his household..."* (Hebrews 11:7) *"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called...went out..."* (Hebrews 11:8) *"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."* (Hebrews 11:24)

FAITH DEMANDED *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"* (Hebrews 11:6)

- Jerry W. Joseph (via Campbellsville, KY)

### *It's Too Late! I've Gone Too Far!*

“I’ve done too many bad things in my life. How could I ever be right with God?”

Well, have you ever committed adultery with a married woman and then had her husband killed in an attempt to cover it up? A fellow named David did that, yet he is remembered as a man after God’s own heart (2 Samuel 11:1; 1 Sam. 13:14).

Have you ever had Christians imprisoned and killed? Saul of Tarsus did that, but later became the great apostle Paul (Acts 22:3, 4).

This is some of the best news we’ll ever hear! It’s not what we’ve done; it’s not what we do last! No matter how badly we messed up, that doesn’t have to be the end!

John Mark messed up when he turned back from helping Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). But later Mark repented. Paul would write, “*Mark is profitable to me for ministry*” (2 Timothy 4:11).

On any list of evil people King Manasseh would be near the top. For decades he engaged in the most sordid behavior including burning babies in sacrifice to idols. But near the end of his life, he humbled himself and repented. God had mercy on him and delayed judgment (2 Chronicles 33:1-13).

The prodigal son left home and engaged in riotous living (Luke 15:11-13). As he left, he was haughty. He had money, youth, and health. While he was away, he did things his father wouldn’t have allowed at home (in today’s environment it would be wild parties, fornication, and drugs). But when the money was gone, so were his party friends. They left him to starve in the hog pen!

The Bible says he “*came to himself*” (15:17). He repented and went back home. His father didn’t say, “I knew he’d come dragging himself back; he sure is a sorry excuse for a son!” No! The father welcomed him back! (15:18-24).

It’s not what you’ve done. It’s “will you repent?” When you come back, God is always good, and His mercy endures forever! (Psalm 100:5; Psalm 103:17; Ephesians 2:4-5).

--Danny Tunnell (Miami, OK) via *Old Paths* (adapted)