

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Psalm 1:4 *“Not so the wicked!*

*They are like chaff*

*that the wind blows away.”*

Matthew 3:12 *“His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*

Chaff is the outside layer of wheat grains which is considered worthless for making flour and bread. In days of yore winnowing with a fork meant laboriously throwing the wheat in the air to allow the chaff to blow away. Later farmers used chaff blowers to do the same job with less effort. Now the chaff blower is built into a combine harvester making the winnowing process virtually effortless.

In Jesus's day and indeed in many poor rural areas today winnowing was a common activity. It is easy to understand why biblical authors used it as an analogy for the separation of the faithful and the faithless. The words in Matthew 3:12 are spoken by John the Baptist and were a warning to those around, and particularly to the sceptical Pharisees to be prepared for judgement by God.

Is our faith like chaff? Are we close to the good grain but are easily blown away? We need to be with God not to be distracted by the worthlessness of ungodly pursuits.