

The Gospel Of Luke

LUKE 22:31-34

JESUS TELLS PETER HE IS TO BE SIFTED

The Setting

Jesus has enjoyed the Passover with the disciples

- Satan has entered Judas
- Judas has left to betray Jesus to the Sanhedrin
- Jesus has instituted communion

The disciples now depart for the night to the Mount of Olives

- Whilst walking to Mount of Olives
- Jesus turns to Peter
- Before they reached Gethsemane

The Sifting

Definition

- To shake in a sieve
- By inward agitation to try one's faith to the verge of overthrow

There will be an inner shaking of Peter

- To the verge of overflow
- Where his faith will be tested

Sifting Of Wheat

Threshing

To separate chaff from edible grain

- Spread wheat on ground
- Beat it with a flail
- Can be trodden out

Winnowing

Where loosened chaff is removed from the grain

- Throw the grain in the air, the wind carries the lighter chaff away
- The heavier grain falls to the ground

Modern harvesting combines a number of agricultural tasks using a combine harvester

- This machine, harvests, threshes, winnows
- Cutting down on manpower, time
- Thus, the agricultural revolution produced higher yields, employed less labour

Sifting By Satan

This is exactly what Satan wants to do with Peter

- To beat him
- To tread him out
- To send great winds of trial against him

If Satan can do it to Peter

- He can do it to anyone of you or I
- This is more than a trial
- This is more than a period of testing
- This is more than the hardships of life

Separating of Wheat

John 12:24

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

A farmer first separates the grains of wheat from the chaff

- That grain having fallen to the ground, then dies
- After death it grows and bears much fruit

The Lord uses sifting

- 1st To separate the chaff in our life from us
- 2nd To bring about a death our own abilities
- 3rd To prepare us to be fruitful

The Story

The Demand

Peter's Name

Simon, Simon...

Peter had two names

- Simon, his given name
- Peter, the name given him by Jesus

Matthew 16:16-19

Jesus had given Simon the name Peter

- After his declaration that Jesus was the Messiah

This was not an act of the flesh

- This was an act of the Spirit
- It was by faith that Simon Peter identified who Jesus was

It is upon the rock of faith, the rock of the spirits revelation that the church is built

- A church cannot be built by flesh and blood
- Only by faith and the spirit

Simon	-	Old Man	-	When he was in the flesh
Peter	-	New Man	-	When he was in the Spirit

It is the flesh that is going to be sifted

Peter's Faith

In Peter there was both:

- Saving faith
- Unregenerate flesh

The sifting will separate the two

- The saving faith will remain - Like grain
- The unregenerate flesh will be removed - Like chaff

This is not Satan's first attack on the Apostles

- He had previously come against Judas
- He had been completely removed
- He was all chaff and no grain
- All unregenerate flesh and no saving faith

Satan's Demand

Satan has desired

Desired = Demanded

It's the request for extradition

- One country demanding of another country
- The release of person protected within their borders into their power

- Good sense: To bring to safety or to grant a pardon
- Bad sense: For the purpose of torture and / or punishment

Satan is demanding that Peter

- Be released from the borders and protection of the Father
- Into his hands for torture and punishment

The Father's Protection

The person with saving faith

- Is under the guardianship and protection of the Almighty
- That doesn't make you immune from the hardships and trials of life
- That does mean that Satan cannot operate in your life without the Father's say

John 10:27-30

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give to them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one.

The Defence

The Son's Prayer

But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not

- Satan wanted to crush Peter
- The same way he crushed Judas

- Peter would be tortured
- Peter would not be crushed
- Not because of anything to do with Peter
- But due to the prayers of Jesus

You may ask...

Question: Why then did Jesus not pray for Judas?

Answer: He did. But there was no faith there to preserve

If there is no faith to anchor you to Christ

- You will be swept away by the devil's sifting
- You will be tortured and crushed

The Apostle's Faith

that your faith fail not

Peter's faith

- Will falter
- Will not fail

Faltering faith = Three denials

Unfailing faith = Three questions

Jesus knows our faith will falter

- He is not disappointed in us
- He keeps us
- He sustains us
- He will ensure our faith will not fail

The Father's Permission

Question: Why did the Father permit Satan to sift Peter. Why say, "Yes." Instead of, "No?"

Answer: To accomplish a work in Peter
To accomplish a work in Satan

Peter would be refined
Satan would be condemned

Satan is embittered against God

- Satan is embittered against all that belong to God
- He has nothing but seething hatred for the believer
- And seeks to destroy the believer at every possible turn

The only thing that stand between you and destruction

- Is Jesus, our Good Shepherd
- He is the David wielding a sling against the roaring lion

As Satan seeks to destroy the believer, through sifting, what he discovers is:

- The believer's faith endures
- The believer's faith is refined

This serves to condemn Satan further

- He has no faith
- He is all chaff and no grain
- He is unyielding to God (utter rebellion personified)

The believer character is the antithesis to Satan's character

- He is condemned by a believer's faith
- He is shamed by a believer's faith
- The weight of the sentenced is made heavier

Peter didn't reject Jesus under torture

Satan rejected Jesus under blessing

An End In Sight

And when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.

Converted

- Turning back
- Return

1 Peter 2:25

*For you were as sheep going astray; but are **now returned** to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

Jesus lets Peter know before the sifting has begun that

- Peter will falter
- Peter will go astray
- Peter will deny
- But, Peter will return

A time of sifting is

- A time of crisis of faith
- A time when you feel distant from the Lord
- A season
- Will end (even if all hope appears lost)

Hosea 6:1-2

Come, let us return to the Lord: for He has torn, and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will rise us up, and we shall live in His sight.

Lamentations 3:27-32 (AMP)

It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke [of divine disciplinary dealings] in his youth. Let him sit alone uncomplaining and keeping silent [in hope], because [God] has laid [the yoke] upon him [for his benefit]. Let

him put his mouth in the dust [in abject recognition of his unworthiness]—there may yet be hope. Let him give his cheek to the One Who smites him [even through His human agents]; let him be filled [full] with [men's] reproach [in meekness]. For the Lord will not cast off forever! But though He causes grief, yet will He be moved to compassion according to the multitude of His loving-kindness and tender mercy.

A Purpose Beyond

strengthen your brethren.

When Jesus came out of the wilderness

- He was weakened
- He needed to be attended to by angels

When Peter will come out of the sifting

- He will be weakened
- He will need a period of recovery

Yet Jesus says, “*strengthen your brethren.*”

There is an equipping that occurs during the process of sifting

- Like grain is in a better place to be used by the farmer after sifting
- So, a believer is in a better place to be used by the Father after sifting

- Your faith in the Lord is stronger, because you have stopped trusting in yourself
- The hold of the world on you has loosened, because it has proven a counterfeit refuge in the sifting
- You come to the Lord more willingly, because you have become weakened

There was a purpose and a calling for Peter

- That could only be carried out after he had been sifted
- After God's purpose had been achieved by the sifting

We see this realized in the book of Acts

Peter opened the door for the Spirit to fall on:

- Jews - **Acts 2:29-47** The day of Pentecost
- Samaritans - **Acts 8:14-17** Philip & Samaria
- Gentiles - **Acts 10:44-48** Cornelius & The Vision

Elisabeth Elliot

The will of God is never exactly what you expect it to be. It may seem to be much worse, but in the end it's going to be a lot better and a lot bigger.

The Determination

Peter's Self-Belief

I am ready to go with You

Peter was tough, northern fisherman

- He was strong
- He was loyal

He was so persuaded of whom Jesus was, he was willing to

- Be imprisoned for Him
- Die for Him

- He was full of self-belief
- He was full of human strength
- He said to Him, “*Lord, I am ready..*”

You are never ready for sifting

- It always comes at you from the side
- It always knocks you for six
- Peter had no idea what was coming

Peter's Breaking

Peter could serve or honour God with

- His self-belief
- His own strength
- His unregenerate intellect

God needs to break a man, before he can use a man

- He needs to remove Peter's self-belief
- He needs to expose Peter's weakness
- He needs to humble his intellect

Only then when Peter sees his utter inability to serve God in his own strength

- Will he rely on the strength The Lord supplies
- Will he rely on the wisdom the Lord provides
- Will he trust in the Lord, and the Lord alone

Charles Spurgeon

Whenever God means to make a man great, He always breaks him in pieces first.

If we are to be of service to God

- He must first break us
- He needs to remove the "I am" from us

The Denial

Jesus Foreknowledge of Peter

I tell you Peter

Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself

- Peter was ready to stand, to fight, to die
- Jesus knew he would run, hide and deny

We don't know who we truly are

- Until we have been sifted by the devil
- Sifting strips away all that we are - our façade
- Sifting exposes our weak and frail shell

The Sifting Of The Twelve

Matthew 26:31-35

- All the disciples would be sifted
- Peter is the case study that Scripture highlights

Jesus said: *"all of you shall be offended because of Me this night"*

Peter said: *"Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You."*

Disciples: *"Likewise also said all the disciples"*

The Sifting Of Job

In this passage, Jesus informs Peter that he will be sifted by Satan

- Sifting by Satan is not unique to Peter
- Jesus was sifted by Satan after forty days in the wilderness
- Job was sifted by Satan (in the book that bears his name)

Job was not privileged to the heavenly perspective we are

- He didn't even get the heads-up Peter did
- Yet Job's faith remained
- And Job's faith was refined

Consider all that was sifted from him

- Servants
- Livestock
- Wealth

- Family

The Lord will permit Satan to strip you of everything

- If it will result in you leaning on the Lord
- Sifting Definition: By inward agitation to try one's faith to the verge of overthrow

Satan is well able to cause you:

- To lose your job
- To break up relationships
- Cause a split from Christian fellowship
- All in the name of sifting

But it's permitted because the Lord knows you trust in, rely upon

- That job
- That relationship
- That Church

God's wants your trust and reliance on him

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart...

The Study

Sifting is a once in a lifetime experience

- It is not the same as a test or trial
- It is a refiner's fire where prayer sticks, and "get thee behind me Satan's" won't work

Sifting is a tool that God uses

- | | |
|--|---|
| • To strip us of our self-belief | Create a stronger belief in Jesus |
| • To remove our flesh | Create a greater dependence on the Spirit |
| • To shake us from our false confidences | Create a deeper reliance upon the Lord and His word |
| • To bring us to our knees | Create a more sincere humility before the throne of God |

You will think it will never end

- It will send you through a maelstrom of emotions
- You will try to hold on, but all your past securities will be like treacle
- You will feel isolated, utterly alone in your experience
- Your faith will falter
- But your faith will not fail

Throughout, God is in control

- There will be an end
- There will be a restoration
- Beyond the sifting there is a higher calling
- A greater fruit to bear

If such a situation should arise in your life

Remember the words of God to Satan:

Job 1:8

Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and eschews evil?

It is only those who are highly prized of God, that Satan wants to sift.