

Sifted; Luke 22:31-34

I. Sift

- A. Luke 22:31 (ESV); “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,
- B. “Sifting was a process of (1) shaking grain through a strainer to remove dirt and small stones and other impurities before preparing it to eat or (2) separating the grain from the chaff by winnowing. Here it is metaphorical of a time of testing.”<sup>1</sup>
  - 1. “demanded to have you” - plural
  - 2. Satan is about to test all of the apostles
  - 3. Matthew 26:31–34 (ESV);<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’<sup>32</sup> But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”<sup>33</sup> Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”
  - 4. “Then all the disciples left him and fled.” Matthew 26:56b
- C. Just like Jesus’ apostles, sometimes we don’t hold up too well when sifted
  - 1. We all know someone who has let a tragedy in their life turn them from the only one who can give them peace
  - 2. Maybe you are in the midst of a tragedy or trial — you are being sifted
  - 3. Know that whatever your response to this trial, Jesus is waiting for you to return

II. Failure of Faith

- A. Luke 22:32 (ESV); but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”
- B. One mistake does not cause a failure of faith
- C. A Christian is not defined by their mistake, but by how they overcome their mistake
- D. Jesus’ prayer for Peter (and I suspect for all of us) is that his faith not fail
  - 1. Even though he denied Jesus
  - 2. Luke 12:8–9 (ESV);<sup>8</sup> “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God,<sup>9</sup> but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.
  - 3. Matthew 10:32–33 (ESV);<sup>32</sup> So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,<sup>33</sup> but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.
- E. Peter’s Denial
  - 1. Luke 22:33–34 (ESV);<sup>33</sup> Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.”<sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”
  - 2. Peter tells Jesus (before this) that he would never deny Him and that he was willing to die for Jesus
  - 3. Peter’s actions in the garden prove that it was not false bravado
  - 4. Matthew 26:69-75
  - 5. Jesus’ prophecy to Peter makes the type of denial very clear
    - a) Peter denied he knew Jesus
    - b) Peter denied that he was part of the Kingdom that Jesus was preaching

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<sup>1</sup> Robert James Utley, *The Gospel according to Luke*, vol. Volume 3A, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2004), Lk 22:31.

- c) Peter denied that he was part of the salvation that Jesus was bringing
    - d) Peter denied Jesus with an oath and a curse
    - e) Make no mistake — Satan was sifting Peter!
  - 6. But Peter recognized his mistake and wept bitterly
  - F. Even though Peter succumbed to the pressure to deny Jesus he recognized his failure and sought to overcome it
  - G. Peter's denial was not a failure of faith
- III. Strengthen Your Brothers
- A. Mark 16:6–7 (ESV); <sup>6</sup> And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”
  - B. Peter's response to his denial
    - 1. At the news of the empty tomb it is John and Peter who race to the tomb
    - 2. Jesus' first interaction (after His resurrection) is a welcome and a mission
    - 3. John 20:19–21 (ESV); <sup>19</sup> On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” <sup>20</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”
    - 4. Mark even tells us that Jesus rebuked them because they did not believe the ones who said they saw Him
    - 5. Yet, Jesus still gives his apostles a mission
    - 6. Even though all of the 12 apostles are speaking on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) we only have Peter's speech recorded for us
    - 7. It is Peter (and John) who heal the beggar
    - 8. It is Peter who is preaching in Solomon's Portico
    - 9. It is Peter who is given the task to take the Gospel to Cornelius (what very well may have been the first Gentile convert)
    - 10. There are more examples of how Peter overcame his denial but these are sufficient
  - C. We will have tests of our faith
  - D. Satan will sift us
  - E. The question is, how will you respond
    - 1. 1 Timothy 1:18–20 (ESV); <sup>18</sup> This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, <sup>19</sup> holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, <sup>20</sup> among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.
    - 2. 2 Timothy 4:9–10 (ESV); <sup>9</sup> Do your best to come to me soon. <sup>10</sup> For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.
- IV. Do Not Be Overcome
- A. 1 John 5:1–5 (ESV); <sup>1</sup> Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup> For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup>

Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

B. "The opposite of joy is not sorrow. It is unbelief." — Leslie Weatherhead