

THE SIFTING OF A CHRISTIAN AND CHURCH – Part 1

Luke 22:31-34

Introduction:

1. The setting of this passage was some of the most critical moments of Jesus's last night with His disciples just before the last supper, then the Lord's supper, followed by a journey to the Garden of Gethsemane, and His arrest.
2. It was this night that the unrepentant Judas would sell Judas for 30 pieces of silver and would commit suicide, and the boastful Peter would deny His Lord 3 times but repent in bitter tears.
3. Knowing the seriousness and lateness of redemption's hour, Jesus addressed His disciples except Judas who had left prior to the Lord's supper celebration.
4. Jesus warned them of troubled times, but en route to the Garden quoted John 14-16 and comforted them with John 16:33.

I. (v. 31) THE SIFTING OF THE SAINTS.

1. This term comes from the high energy threshing of wheat, which separated the wheat from the tares and trash.
2. My mother introduced me to a sifter when I was a kid.
3. Satan wants to sift all of us.
 - A. Satan wants all of our souls.
 - B. If we're saved, then Satan wants our testimony.
 - C. Do you realize that Satan has a target on committed Christian's backs?
 - 1) Influence
 - 2) Children
 - 3) Marriage
 - D. In verse 31 it says, "Satan has desired to have you" (plural), then Jesus addressed Peter in front of the disciples because He was the spokesman.
 - E. Satan desires to sift harder those who cause him the most grief.
 - F. It was Peter who later preached the Pentecostal sermon, served as a pillar of the church, and was crucified upside down for his unwavering commitment to Christ.

4. What are some ways Satan sifts us?

- A. By false prophets as stated in II John 7, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ."
- B. By false people as stated in Romans 16:17-18, "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine you have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own body, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the innocent."
- C. By false doctrine as stated in I Timothy 4:16, "Take heed unto yourself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this you shall both save yourself and them that hear you."

{We see the sifting of the saints, but praise God we find comfort in . . . }

II. (v. 32) THE SAVIOR'S PRAYERS FOR THE SAINTS.

1. He prayed that our faith would endure the time of testing.
 - A. Praise God that Jesus is praying for us in the time of testing.
 - B. Remember when the tidal waves of trouble are over our heads, they are still under the feet of Jesus.
 - C. John 17:20 – ***Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word.***
 - D. If Jesus prays for us, how do we fail?
 - 1) We love ourself, someone else, or something else more than we love Jesus.
 - 2) What about fear? This is answered in I John 4:18 – ***There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.***
 - a. I Corinthians 10:13 – ***There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not permit you to be tempted above that you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.***
 - b. Romans 8:28 – ***And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.***

THE SIFTING OF A CHRISTIAN AND CHURCH - Part 2

Luke 22:31-34

{We've seen the sifting of the saints, the Savior's prayers for the saints, now}

III. (v. 33) THE APOSTLE PETER'S FALSE SECURITY.

1. Peter trusted in his own strength.
 - A. Peter was sincere but sincerely wrong.
 - B. Sincerity does not equal spirituality.
 - C. I Corinthians 3:3 – ***For you are still carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?***
 - D. Proverbs 16:19 – ***It is better to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoils with the proud.***
2. Peter failed to depend upon God's strength.
 - A. Psalm 118:8 – ***It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.***
 - B. Psalm 20:7 – ***Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.***
 - C. Phil 4:13 – ***I can do all things through Christ, Who strengthens me.***

{The sifting, the Savior's prayers for the saints, Peter's false security, and lastly}

IV. (v. 34) THE SAVIOR'S STERN WORDS OF SOBRIETY.

1. The Savior's strong rebuke comes to Peter.
 - A. Jesus knew Peter's speech had outrun his spirituality.
 - B. Talk is cheap, but the proof is in our actions.
 - C. Proverbs 23:7 – ***For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink he says to you; but his heart is not with you.***
2. The Savior's sad reality is now told to Peter.
 - A. Jesus then dropped a bombshell on Peter's argumentative pride.
 - B. Peter, like us all, didn't know his own heart.
 - C. Jeremiah 17:9 – ***The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?***
 - D. The cock crowing, I believe, has a unique meaning.
 - 1) I believe it refers to the 4 watches of the night in Jerusalem.

- c. II Cor. 12:9 – ***And Jesus said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***
- d. Jude 24-25 – ***Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.***

- 3) We must have perfect (mature) love for the Living Word Jesus and for the Written Word (the Bible).
 - 4) Did Peter's love fail? In his denial (yes), in his future walk (no).
 - 5) I'm like Peter I don't want to fail but repent and follow Jesus.
 - 6) Jesus made sure that Peter knew he was forgiven as stated in Mark 16:7 – ***But go your way, tell His disciples, and Peter, that Jesus goes before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him as He said unto you.***
2. Jesus prayed that we would give a strengthening testimony.
 - A. Jesus's prayer was answered in that the old Peter was sifted out.
 - 1) Luke 22:62 – ***And Peter went out and wept bitterly.***
 - 2) I Corinthians 10:12 – ***Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.***
 - B. Later we see that Peter lost his vain thoughts, self-trust, and his temper after the sifting resulted in repentance.
 - C. In verse 32, now that Peter's old self was converted, he became the strength for the other disciples even to the point of being crucified upside down.
 - D. The purpose of sifting is to get rid of the chaff and trash to preserve the pure wheat.
 - E. After Peter's change of heart, he not only strengthened others but led the way.

Conclusion:

1. Are you going through sifting?

- 2) Mark 14:30 – ***And Jesus said unto Peter, verily I say unto you, this day, even in this night, before the cock crows twice, you shall deny me 3 times.***

Conclusion:

2. Through Jesus's strength you can come out victorious.