

I. A STARTLING REVELATION

- This, according to Luke, is on the night of the Last Supper, and follows the jockeying for position.

A. The Request of Satan – v.31

- Jesus calls out to Simon, who was usually the spokesman and most outspoken of the apostles. He is often referred to as Peter, and that name is especially used in Mt16:17-18.
- Jesus calls to him with the repetition of his name **Simon, Simon** indicating seriousness. (Jesus uses two other times - Lk10:41 Act9:4). He also gives special emphasis by saying **Behold** (Gk. idou = "behold, listen, pay attention")
- The Lord reveals that in the midst of all the things that are taking place, there are also things happening in the spiritual realm. Specifically, that Satan is active and busy for the purpose of destroying the disciples. He tells them (and especially Peter that **Satan has asked for you**. The "you" in this case is plural, meaning that Satan has asked something in regards to all of the disciples.
- He has asked that he could **sift you as wheat**. The sifting of wheat was for the purpose of separating the edible grain from the chaff by vigorous and repeated shaking. Satan's purpose was to destroy them and show them as frauds. The thing he has asked is similar to what he requested regarding Job. His accusation was that if God made things bad enough for him, he would curse God and deny Him.
- We are reminded of several things here:
 - 1.) **Satan is real enemy**. He is not a pretend and mythical personification of evil, but a personal being who is active in God's world. Though there is in some of our background an over-emphasis on this, we must not pendulum swing.
 - 2.) **Satan is a cruel enemy**. He is a liar, murderer (Jn8:44), an adversary (Zech3:1) and accuser (Rev12:10) of the brethren. His activity is not only in regards to the disciples, but to all the brethren (1Peter 5:8). He has only evil purposes in his work. "Our cold and ruthless enemy, his pleasure is our harm" (Fernando Ortega)
 - 3.) **Satan is a subjected enemy**. Jesus says that, like what we are told in Job 1 and 2, he must approach God and ask permission to lay his filthy hands on God's children. We see that he is in communication with Christ. From what we see in the passage, Jesus' basic answer was "yes." He answered Satan's request (like Job) with an affirmative. Had it not been so, the devil would not have so shaken them and Peter.

Satan is not free to assail us at will and with what power he pleases. Satan may try us out only by God's permission and to the extent of that permission—a mighty comfort for us all. - Lenski

B. The Prayer of Jesus – v.32a

- There was surely prayer for them all (Jn17:15), but here Jesus' particular prayer for Peter. Peter is addressed personally likely because of his greater confidence. It was Peter who was especially vocal and confident throughout the ministry of Christ. But Peter will also have a greater fall. John will continued with the women at the cross. The other disciples merely scatter and hide. But Peter, in a very short time, will not stand and will not merely hide. He is brought into a situation (at least partially by his courage) in which he will deny the Lord Jesus and even call curses from heaven. Jesus is here preparing Peter for that, which is a very gracious act.
- Notice that Jesus does pray for Peter's protection from the temptation, but that his **faith should not fail**. We must say in one sense his faith did fail. It fails in a big way in the courtyard of the high priest. So what does Jesus mean? That Peter's faith will not ultimately and utterly fail.

For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. (Amos 9:9)

C. The Calling of Peter – v.32b

- What is the result of Jesus' prayer in Peter's life? He will return to Christ. He will see his folly. He will be humbled. He will learn from his sin, not despair, but come back to the One about whom he said "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life? (Jn6:68). Because Jesus had prayed, it was assured that Peter would return. A true disciple of Christ, one in whom is the Spirit of God and for whom Jesus prays, may fail in big ways, but will persevere and continue.
- Jesus calls Peter, even after such a horrible fall, to play a special role among the church. He would be especially used to encourage and strengthen the others. His failure would not disqualify him from being useful to the body of Christ, and especially to the other apostles. It is Peter who would write:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

- Peter would be able to speak from experience of the danger of self-confidence, the temptations of the devil, as well as the Lord's forgiving grace. We should marvel at God's ability bring beauty out of ashes, and work all things for good for those who love Him.
- This encourages us, that even if we have failed to acknowledge Christ in the past as we should (to family, friend, neighbors, co-workers), if we have sinned greatly, that by God's grace we can still be useful to His church.

II. A CONFIDENT DECLARATION – v.33

- Despite Jesus' warning, Peter declares his loyalty. He says **Lord, I am ready to go with You**. He proclaims in strongest terms his confidence that he was ready. There is an implicit declaration that Jesus is wrong, that he would not fail.
- He commits that he is ready to follow Jesus **both to prison and to death**. If necessary, Peter says that he is willing to face imprisonment and death. We tend to give Peter a hard time because of what appears to be sinful self-confidence. A question I would ask is "Would he have been wrong to say otherwise?" Would it have been more "genuine" to say, "yes Lord, I will fail you"?
- If we look to the Garden, and the arrest of Jesus, I believe that we can see the reality of Peter's declaration. In Jn18:10 we read of Peter drawing a sword against one of the men in the group who came to take Jesus. They were not only outnumbered, but also out-armed. It is only because of Jesus' healing of the man's ear, as well as his command of the men to let the others go ([John 18:8!](#)) that Peter escapes their arrest.
- So what happens between this and the court of the high priest when he will deny knowing Jesus before them all, even a servant girl? One thing I have tried to highlight is that the Jews, and even the disciples, were expecting a socio-political king. Peter was still thinking in terms of seeing Jesus face His enemies in battle, and with His miraculous power exercising authority and power over them. Peter really has faith in Christ. But he is mistaken as to Jesus mission, despite the frequent teaching of Jesus.
- What we see in the court during his denial is a disappointed Peter, still reeling from the confusing event of Jesus voluntary surrender to his enemies. Also, in the courtyard he doesn't have the assurance of the physical presence of Christ with him, and loses his courage.

III. A SAD PROPHECY – v.34

- Notice this change of the name here. He before called him Simon, and he essentially declares his own steadfastness. This is probably a rebuke. "You, great steady rock...you think you will stand but you won't."
- Despite Peter's sure confidence, Jesus prophesies that in less than 24 hours, not only will Peter not go with Him, but he will deny that he even knows him.
- This is a challenge to us, as we may be confident in suffering for Christ on our own terms or scenario, but what if it is different? What about the small matters and in less than monumental circumstances? We concoct imaginary scenarios, but what about in the little things?

Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and knows the evil that is in us, and will be done by us, which we ourselves do not suspect. – Henry

- All of this highlights our complete dependence on Him. Our great hope in the face of temptation is that Christ prays for us – [Heb7:25](#). This passage includes that we are coming to God through Him. This doesn't speak of a once for all "salvation experience", but an ongoing relationship with Him. This relationship is going to Him through the Word, prayer, and a life of loving obedience. Are we putting on the whole armor of God.
- Are we living as if there really is a Satan who wants to destroy us? Are we walking in vain self-confidence? How is that demonstrated in the means of grace?
- If you are not a Christian, who do you have to help you as you face the destructive and deceptive forces of the Satan? He greatest threat to you is not coming in the attire of utter wickedness, but in deceptive clothes. He would just as soon see you go to Hell as a "good" person as living profligate life.