



# STRENGTH IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# Strength in Times of Crisis

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Luke 22:31-34

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2162

Now more than ever, we need a contagious epidemic of holy boldness and courageous Christians, so that we may have strength in times of crisis.

Adrian Rogers says, “The most joyful people are those who stand for Jesus.”

During the Last Supper with His disciples, Jesus Christ warned them of His coming crucifixion and death. He told Simon Peter that he would deny Him three times. Peter thought this was impossible, for he loved Jesus so much. Yet, in Luke 22:31, Jesus explained, “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.”

We have a real, cunning, and very destructive enemy named Satan, who wants to surface our faults and failures to accuse and condemn us. However, he is only able to sift us, because the Holy Spirit also wants to reveal these impurities, not to condemn us, but to cleanse us.

Peter was so sure of his own ability, yet he was sabotaged by his own self-confidence. This self-confidence led to his prayerlessness in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he slept while he should have been up praying.

And before his fleshly courage ultimately failed him, he went after the wrong enemy, using the wrong weapon with the wrong energy and attitude.

Like Peter, our actions will surprise us when we face these kinds of threats. Peter did not expect to deny Jesus. In that moment, Peter learned that failure is not final. Peter remembered that he had an Advocate who secured Him.

Jesus had told him, “But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:32).

Jesus said that He Himself prayed for Peter, and He prays for us. When Satan sifts us and reveals our impurities before the throne of God, Jesus is our Advocate who intercedes for us.

Jesus knew the worst about Peter and the best about him, too. He saw past the weakness and failures, and looked into his heart, at his faith. Through this experience, Peter learned what he was made of; he renounced his self-confidence, and instead, put his confidence in Jesus Christ.

## Life Application

In times of crisis, we must remember that our adversary will sift us and our abilities will fail us. Our actions may surprise us, but nothing surprises Jesus Christ, our Advocate, who secures us.



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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) A crisis does not make martyrs; it only reveals them. You may be a martyr without ever dying for the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - i) If we were faced with martyrdom, where would we find our strength in a time of crisis?
- b) During the Last Supper with His disciples, Jesus Christ warned them of His coming crucifixion and death. He told Simon Peter that he would deny Him three times. Peter thought this was impossible, for he loved Jesus so much. (Luke 22:31-34)
- c) “One of the curses of the 20th century Christianity is cowardly Christians – those who will not stand up, those who are not bold believers.”
  - i) We must find strength in times of crisis, and learn how to be courageous Christians.
- d) This is a moral majority issue, which has become a silent majority. We need a contagious epidemic of holy boldness.
  - i) This courage is not a natural courage. Some have a natural boldness, and others have natural fears. Holy boldness is humble boldness.

## 2) YOUR ADVERSARY WILL SIFT YOU

- a) We have an adversary, an enemy, named Satan. He is not a figure of speech, nor is he a figment of our imagination. He is real, personal, intelligent, cunning and very destructive. He has many names:
  - i) The devil, which means slanderer
  - ii) The accuser, which means deceiver
  - iii) The dragon
  - iv) The father of lies
  - v) The god of this world
  - vi) The serpent
  - vii) The destroyer
  - viii) The tempter
  - ix) The evil one
- b) In Luke 22:31, he is called Satan, which means adversary. His personality is described, therefore his plan is disclosed: he sifts the saints.
  - i) Sifting refers to wheat; it is a screening process, in which wheat goes through a sieve and the straw, rocks and debris would remain on top. It reveals impurities, dirt and trash from the wheat.
  - ii) Jesus claims that Satan is going to reveal the impurities in Peter. Likewise, our adversary tries to find faults in us to accuse and condemn us. He wants to surface our faults, failures, foibles and flaws before Almighty God.
  - iii) There is someone else who wants these things revealed as well: the Holy Spirit. However,



the difference between satanic accusation and the Holy Spirit's conviction is that the Holy Spirit does it to cleanse us, not condemn.

### 3) YOUR ABILITIES WILL SABOTAGE YOU

- a) Sabotage is an inside job; it comes from inside the fortress.
- b) Peter was so sure of his own ability, yet he was sabotaged by four things:
  - i) Self-confidence
    - (1) Peter was naturally aggressive and bold. He was a burly fisherman, the natural leader, filled with self-confidence. There are many like Peter who are trying to develop self-confidence today, yet it is the one thing we need to lose. It is the way down.
  - ii) Prayerlessness
    - (1) In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter was sleeping when he should've been praying. (Luke 22:45)
    - (2) Self-confidence is pride, and the sister-sin of pride is prayerlessness.
    - (3) Why don't we pray? Our confidence has tricked us into thinking we can make it without prayer.
    - (4) We should be in the habit of beginning our days with prayer to keep our priorities and perspectives in check.
  - iii) Fleshly courage
    - (1) Peter boasted in his natural courage. But if we were to study the great saints of God in the Bible, we'll find that when they fell, they did not fall at their weakest point, but at their strongest point.
      - (a) King David fell in his integrity.
      - (b) Abraham fell in his faith.
      - (c) Therefore, Peter fell in his courage.
    - (2) Oswald Chambers: "An unguarded strength is a double weakness."
    - (3) Before his fleshly courage failed him, Peter jumped into action to defend Jesus in Gethsemane. (Luke 22:50)
      - (a) He went after the wrong enemy.
      - (b) He used the wrong weapon.
        - (i) We are in a battle and we will not win with a carnal sword; economic, political or military weaponry will not win it for us.
      - (c) He had the wrong energy.
      - (d) He had the wrong attitude.
        - (i) He was filled with vengeance and bitterness and wrath. Fanaticism is often times the greatest difficulty we deal with as Christians, because fanatics have lost their sense of direction, yet they've doubled their speed.
    - (4) When we decide to go out and live the Christian life in our own flesh, we will go down. We will fail.
    - (5) "Sin is an unexpected opportunity, compounded by an undetected weakness and an unprotected life."



#### 4) YOUR ACTIONS WILL SURPRISE YOU

- a) Peter did not expect to deny Jesus Christ.
  - i) 1 Corinthians 10:12
  - ii) Proverbs 28:26
  - iii) Jeremiah 17:9
- b) Many of us think we'll respond with boldness when threatened for our faith, but our actions might surprise us; we may not be as strong as we think we are.
- c) Peter learned when he failed that failure is not final.

#### 5) YOUR ADVOCATE WILL SECURE YOU

- a) We have an adversary, but we also have an Advocate, who is Jesus Christ.
- b) In Luke 22:31, Jesus claims that He Himself prayed for Peter, that his faith wouldn't fail him.
- c) When Satan sifts us and finds all of our impurities, dirty and trash, revealing them before the throne of God, our Advocate who intercedes for us. (1 John 2:1)
- d) Jesus knows all about us and He still loves us. He knows far more than we think He does, and far more than we even know about ourselves. Our actions may surprise us, but Jesus is not surprised.
- e) By His sheer grace, Jesus was not finished with Peter.
- f) "God doesn't love us because we're valuable; we're valuable because He loves us."
  - i) Nothing we can do will make Him love us any more or any less.
- g) Romans 8:33
- h) Even when Peter failed miserably, by his own choice and mistakes, he had an Advocate who secured him.
- i) Jesus prays for us, just as He prayed for Simon Peter.
  - i) John 17:9, 15, 20
  - ii) Hebrews 7:25
- j) Jesus knew the worst about Peter and the best about him, too. He saw past the weakness and failures, and looked into his heart, at his faith.
- k) The same cursing, stumbling and failing Simon Peter became the flaming apostle of Pentecost because Jesus Christ prayed for him.
- l) Jesus didn't have to allow Satan to sift Peter – Satan isn't allowed to do anything without Jesus's authority. But He allowed Satan to sift Peter to reveal what was in his heart.
  - i) God permits Satan to put us through his sieve, many times to reveal what is in our hearts. This doesn't mean we should carelessly live, knowing we're protected by Jesus.
    - (1) "The most miserable man on earth is not an unsaved man or woman. The most miserable person on earth is a saved man or woman out of fellowship with Jesus Christ. The most joyful people are those who stand for Jesus."
  - ii) Through this experience, Peter learned what he was made of and was no longer boastful. He renounced his self-confidence, and instead, put his confidence in Jesus Christ.
- m) Even when the rooster crowed, and Peter realized that he had denied Jesus, just as he swore he wouldn't, Peter had to have recognized that Jesus was still in perfect control, as He was being crucified.



**6) CONCLUSION**

- a) In times of crisis, we must remember that our adversary will sift us and our abilities will fail us. Our actions may surprise us, but nothing surprises Jesus Christ, our Advocate, who secures us.
- b) May we never forget that we are on the winning side. Jesus is in perfect control. There is not a blade of grass that moves without His permission.
- c) In times of crisis, we can stand true to Him, knowing that He is helping us. This is not done in our own strength, but by God's strength.
- d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16



# Strength in Times of Crisis

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Would you take God's Word and be finding, please, the Gospel of Luke chapter 22. The passage that we're going to look at today takes place right after the last supper that our Lord had with His disciples. It was Passover. He had talked to them about His coming crucifixion, His passion, and His glory. They didn't really understand. They didn't comprehend. He had reminded them, one more time, of His enduring love for them. And then He warned Simon Peter: "Simon, before the rooster crows, you're going to deny Me three times." Simon Peter said, "Oh no, Lord, not me. Why, Lord. I would go with You to prison and to death."

Look at the Scripture. Luke 22, verse 31 through verse 34, "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' And he said unto Him," that is, Peter said to Jesus, "'Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.' And He said," that is, Jesus said, "'I tell thee, Peter, the cock,'" the rooster, "'shall not crow this day, before thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me.'"

I want to talk to you today about courage in a time of crisis. I want to talk to you today about having strength in time of crisis, how to be a courageous Christian. For I am convinced that one of the curses of Christianity is cowardly Christians, those who will not stand up, those who are not bold believers.

We all talk about the moral majority. No, friend, it is the silent majority that is the problem, or even the silent minority. A wise man has said, "It is the strategy of Satan to keep good people silent in times of crisis in an evil time." What we need is a contagious epidemic of holy boldness. And I'm afraid that many of us lack that. Now, I'm not talking about human courage. Human courage, some people have that. I'm not talking about just a courageous attitude. Some have that. Some have natural boldness. Some of us have natural fears.

I read about two men who were out bear hunting. They were in the snow and they saw some bear tracks. One man said, "You follow the tracks and see where he's going, I'll follow these and see where he's been." Some of us have natural boldness, and some of us have natural fears. But I want to talk to you today about holy boldness. And again, when I'm talking about holy boldness I'm not talking about arrogance. Holy boldness is humble boldness.

I want to give you four principles today from this passage of Scripture. Three of them will challenge you and one of them will encourage you. But I want you to see these four principles today that are going to come right out of this story, so keep your Bibles open.

Number one, **your adversary will sift you.** You have an adversary. Now, notice what it says here in Luke 22 verse 31, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired you." Do you know what the name Satan means? It means adversary! It means enemy! You have an enemy! You do! Not Christians in general. You have an adversary. And his name is Satan. He is not some figure of speech. He's not some figment of your imagination. He is real. He's personal, intelligent, cunning, and destructive. Satan is only one of his



names. He's also called the devil, which means slanderer. He's called the accuser of the brethren, he's called the deceiver, he's called the dragon, he's called the father of lies, he's called the god of this world, he's called the serpent, he is called the destroyer, he is called the tempter, he is called the evil one. Here he is called Satan, and it means adversary.

Now, his personality is described. His plan is disclosed. He sifts the saints. You know what that means, to sift? Well, he's talking about wheat. The name Simon means: something that's unstable. Peter had two names; one, Peter, which meant: rock. The other means something like wheat that can be sifted. They would put wheat in a sieve, a screening process, and they would shake it, and the wheat would go through the sieve, and the straw and the rocks and the debris would remain on top. So why would you sift wheat? To discover and to reveal the impurities, the dirt, the trash that's in the wheat.

Now Jesus said, "Look Peter. You have an adversary, and he is going to sift you. He's going to reveal the trash that is in your life." I want to say this. That you have an adversary that's doing exactly the same thing to you. Don't get the idea that when you get saved, your battle with Satan is over. Peter was a saved man. Jesus talked about his faith, but He also talked about his adversary. You say, "Well, I never have any difficulty with the devil." Then I wonder if you're saved. If you've never met the devil, you and the devil have been going in the same direction. You're in collusion with him. Turn around, you'll be in collision with him.

Peter was a man of God. He loved God. Now, why does Satan sift the saints? Why is your adversary trying to find faults in you? And, friend, there are plenty of them he could find in this preacher. Why is he doing that? So he can take those faults and accuse us and condemn us and point out our faults, our failures, our foibles, our flaws before Almighty God. He is called the accuser of the brethren. So he wants to surface these things.

But there's someone else who points out your flaws and your faults, and that's the Holy Spirit. What's the difference between satanic accusation and Holy Spirit conviction? Well, the devil does it to condemn us; the Holy Spirit does it to cleanse us. And you better learn the difference between accusation and conviction. I wish I had more time to talk about that. But I want you to see this: number one, your adversary will sift you. And if he doesn't, it doesn't mean that you are saved. It may mean that you're not saved. You have an adversary. And as the adversary sifted Simon Peter, he will sift you.

Principle number two: **your abilities will sabotage you.** Now, sabotage is an inside job. It doesn't talk, primarily, about what some army does from on the outside, but what you do, or some enemy, within the fortress does. Notice if you will here in Luke 22 verses 33 and 34. Peter is talking now about his abilities. "He said unto Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.'" Peter was so sure of his own ability.

Number one: **self confidence.** Peter was naturally aggressive, self-confident, and bold. You know, there are a lot of people who are trying to develop self-confidence today. That's the one thing that we need to lose. That is the only thing we need to lose. Over and over again there're courses and courses and courses on self-confidence. Self-confidence is the way down. The Bible says in Proverbs 28 verse 26, "He that trusteth his heart is a fool."

But, you know who the modern day Simon Peter would have been: Mohammad Ali. Remember that old story, it's a good one. Ali got on an airplane, sitting there drinking his Coke and eating his



peanuts. And the stewardess said, "Sir, buckle your seatbelt." Ali said, "Superman don't need no seatbelt." She said, "Yes, and Superman don't need no airplane either." That's the kind of a guy old Simon Peter was. I mean, Simon Peter, he was the big, burly fisherman. He was the leader. He was filled with self-confidence. Friend, listen to me. If you don't deny yourself, you're going to deny Jesus. Put it down big, plain, and straight. If you don't deny yourself, you're going to deny Jesus. What was his pit, what was his problem? Self-confidence. He was bragging when he should have been trusting.

Second problem was **prayerlessness**. He was sleeping when he should have been praying. Go back and look if you will in verses 44 to 46 of this same chapter of Luke. Jesus is in Gethsemane, praying, "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow. And He said unto them, 'Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.'" Peter, who cursed, swore, and denied the Lord Jesus Christ, was sleeping when he should have been praying.

Now, I've talked about self-confidence, which is pride. Do you know what the twin sister of pride is? Prayerlessness, prayerlessness. Do you know why we don't pray? Let me tell you why we don't pray. Because we're quite confident we can make it without prayer. That's why we don't pray. I mean, when we're in a crisis we pray, don't we? Sometimes we come to the end of the day and we say, "Oh God, I really blew it today. Dear God, oh, God, forgive me. Oh God, what a mess," at the end of the day. But what did Jesus teach us to pray in the model prayer? Matthew chapter 6 verses 9 through 13, "Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread." Now when do you pray for daily bread? When you're about to go to sleep? No, in the morning, in the morning. "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." When is that prayer to be prayed? After we've messed up at the end of the day? No! In the morning, to keep us out of difficulty.

Jesus said, "Look, Peter, get up and pray. If you don't, you're going to get into difficulty." Peter was bragging when he should have been trusting. He was sleeping when he should have been praying. And if you are a prayer-less Christian, you are a prideful Christian, you are a careless Christian. And when the crisis comes, I'm afraid that you're not going to make it. I think the worst thing about our prayerlessness is not our prayerlessness, it's our arrogance. It's our pride that keeps us from praying.

Here's a third thing that caused him to deny the Lord, and it was **fleshly courage**. Now, I'm talking about holy boldness, not fleshly courage. Fleshly courage may be the thing that is our problem. Look in Luke 22 verse 33, "And he said unto Him," Peter said to Jesus, "I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death." Now, what was Peter's strongest point? Peter's strongest point was his self-confidence and his courage.

If you'll study the great saints of God in the Bible you're going to find out that when they fell, they did not fall at their weakest point; they fell at their strongest point. Have you ever thought about that? They fell at their strongest point. What was David's strongest point? His integrity. That's where he fell. What was Abraham's strongest point? His faith. That's where he failed when he told that half lie, or half-truth, which was a whole lie. What was Peter's strongest point? Hey friend, it was his courage. And that's where he failed. Oswald Chambers said, "An unguarded strength is a double weakness." Now, folks, that's not mine, that's Chambers. But if you don't hear anything else, you hear that.



Notice what Peter did. First of all, he jumped into the battle now, just before he denies Christ, with his human courage. Look if you will in Luke 22 verse 50 and see what happens, “And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.” The scene is the Garden of Gethsemane. They’re coming to take Jesus. One of them jumps up, pulls out a sword, and you know who it was, it was Peter. The other Gospels tell us that. And here’s a man name Malchus, and Peter cuts off Malchus’ right ear. Now, Peter didn’t mean to do that. He meant to cut off his head, but what do fisherman know about sword fighting? And, and so he cuts off his right ear.

Now you think about that. What was wrong with that? Well, first of all, it was **the wrong enemy**. Malchus was not the enemy that day. You know what the devil loves to do? He loves to get us going around cutting ears off people when he’s the enemy. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.” Ephesians 6:12. After all, Malchus was only a servant doing what he was told to do. Sure, he was a lost man, but he was not the enemy there that day.

Not only was there a wrong enemy, there was **a wrong weapon**. Look if you will in Luke 22 verse 49. Somebody there took a sword. It was Simon Peter. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” Friend, we’re in a battle and we’re not going to win that battle with a sword, whether it be an economic sword, a political sword, or a military sword. We’re not going to win the battle that way, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.”

He had **the wrong energy**. He wakes up in the strength of the flesh to fight a battle in the strength of the flesh, and no wonder he fails because the, “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 28 verse 41.

He had **the wrong attitude**. He’s filled with vengeance and bitterness and the wrath. The Bible says in James 1 verse 20, “The wrath of man doesn’t work the righteousness of God.” You know it, do you know the worst thing that we have to deal with as Christians is fanatics? Fanatics. You know what a fanatic is? Somebody gave this definition of a fanatic. “He’s somebody who, having lost sense of his direction, doubles his speed.” That’s a fanatic.

Can you hear Malchus? I mean, had Jesus not put that ear back on Malchus and He said, “Hey bud, what happened to your ear?” “Oh,” he said, “some hot-headed Christian cut it off.” Do you think that’s going to be a good testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ, if we go around whacking on people? No. What I’m trying to say is, folks, listen to me. Your adversary will sift you; your abilities will sabotage you.

When you learn or decide that you’re going to go out and live this Christian life in your own flesh, you’re going to go down. You’re going to find that you’re going to fail. Do you know what sin is? I’ve often said this. Sin is an unexpected opportunity, compounded by an undetected weakness and an unprotected life. Put those together: an unexpected opportunity. You don’t know this is going to happen until it happens. But if we have that unexpected opportunity, that undetected weakness, and that unprotected life, we’re going down. Here was Simon Peter. Peter did not realize what’s going to happen. Listen. You are going to have unexpected opportunities to confess or deny Christ: perhaps tomorrow, perhaps on the ball field, perhaps in the business office, perhaps at the water cooler, somewhere, over dinner, in the neighborhood. You’re going to have to make up your mind, “Am I going to confess Jesus Christ, or am I going to deny Jesus Christ?”

Now, here’s the third thing. Listen. Your adversary will sift you. Your abilities will sabotage you. Number three, **your actions will surprise you**. Look in Luke 22 verse 33. He said, “Lord, I am ready to go



with Thee, both into prison, and to death." It is obvious he did not expect to deny Jesus Christ. Well, what does the Bible say in First Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 12? "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Proverbs 28 verse 26. I've already mentioned this, "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool." Jeremiah 17 verse 9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And so, many times, we have an idea, "Oh, when it happens to me, I'll stand true, I'll stand tall." Well, friend, if you are trusting in your own abilities, I'm going to tell you, your actions are going to surprise you, and you will not be as strong as you think that you are. Now, what about this man, Simon Peter? Well, he failed, but he learned that failure was not final. I don't think there's a one of us, as we look back on our lives, but what we would say, "Dear Lord, I've not been the courageous Christian that I should have been or could have been."

Well, I told you I would give you three truths that would challenge you, and one that will comfort you. Here's the comforting truth. Are you ready for this? **Your advocate will secure you.** You have an adversary, but you also have an advocate. Look at this! What a blessing this is! Look again in Luke 22 verses 31 and 32, "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat;'" that's the adversary, "'but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'" Don't you like that? That's the advocate. Do you know what the word advocate means? It's just simply a fancy name for lawyer.

Well, Satan wants to sift us. Why does he want to sift us? Satan wants to sift us to find those impurities, that dirt, that trash that's in our lives, and point the finger of accusation at us before the throne of God. But when he does that, thank God, we have an advocate. Put down in your margin First John chapter 2 and verse 1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not." John is not encouraging us to sin because we can get forgiveness. No, no, no, no, no. No, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." But now, notice this, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Now, folks, let me give you some encouragement today. Jesus knows all about you, and He still loves you. He knows far more about you than you know about you. Now, I said that your actions will surprise you. They did not surprise Jesus. Jesus says, "Oh, I never would have thought that about old Simon. I'm so disappointed in Simon." No, Jesus knew. He said, "Simon, you're going to deny Me, but when your faith fails not, strengthen your brethren." Jesus was not finished with him.

I've often told you, God doesn't love us because we're valuable; we're valuable because He loves us. He loves us by His sheer grace. And those of you who are parents, don't you ever tell a child, "Sweetheart, if you do that God won't love you anymore." Nothing you can do to stop Him from loving you. Nothing you can do to make Him love you any more or any less. He loves you by sheer grace.

Let me read something to you now. We're talking about your advocate who secures you. Romans 8; put it in the margin. Begin in verse 33 and read through verse 39, "Who shall lay any charge to God's elect?" The old devil is trying to find all this stuff to sift us about and find these impurities. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Nay, in all these things we are more than



conquerors through Him that loved us. For I'm persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." Say, Amen. Amen! Glory to God! Peter failed. He failed miserably! Ignominiously! And he failed of his own choice! He made his own mistakes. He set the stage by his self-confidence to fall, but he had an Advocate who secured him. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous."

Now, folks, He prays for us, just as He prayed for Simon Peter. You say, "Now, wait a minute. He's talking about Simon Peter there. He's not talking about me." Friend, He is praying for you, just as He prayed for Simon Peter. What did John tell us, the beloved apostle? "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ." And if you're any man, any woman, that includes you.

Let me just digress here a little bit. Just keep your Bible open to this passage in Luke 22. But if you really want to get a blessing sometime, just read John chapter 17, which is the high priestly prayer of our advocate, Jesus Christ. And this is what Jesus prayed in John chapter 17 verse 9, for His disciples. He said, "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." And then he prays in John 17 verse 15, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." That's a masculine, singular ending: "from the evil one." Keep them from Satan. And you say, "Well, that's wonderful. He prayed for Peter, James, and John, but He didn't pray for me." Well, go on down to verse 20 now and get ready to shout. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." You might as well put your name there, folks. Just take that passage, open your Bibles to John 17 and verse 20, and write your name there. Jesus is praying for you. Not only did He pray for you; He is praying for you. The Bible teaches in Hebrews, chapter 7 and verse 25, "That He ever lives to make intercession for us."

The adversary will sift you; your abilities will sabotage you; your actions will surprise you, but your advocate will secure you. Jesus will secure you. "Peter, Satan wants you. He wants to sift you as wheat. But Peter, I have prayed for you."

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will never, no never desert to its foes. That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake!" That's the promise of our Lord. And this same cursing, stumbling, failing Simon Peter became the flaming apostle of Pentecost because Jesus Christ prayed for him.

Do you know what I love about this? Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew Peter, and He knew two things about Peter. He knew the worst about him, and He knew the best about him. He knew that he would deny the Savior, but He also knew he had faith. In Luke 22:32 He said, "I prayed for you that your faith fail not, I prayed for you that your faith fail not." Jesus could see past the crust! Jesus could see past the weakness! Jesus could see past the foibles and the failures! And Jesus saw down in his heart: faith! And friend, that's what secures you, your faith in an Advocate who will never leave you nor forsake you. And that, to me, is an encouraging thing.

Why did Jesus allow him to be sifted? I mean, could Jesus have stopped it? Of course He could have. He has complete authority over Satan. Now some people don't believe in eternal security. You know what they believe? They say, "Well, no man can take you out of the hand of Jesus, but the devil could." Do you really believe the devil could? Well, friend, if he could, why hasn't he? You think about it. Think about it. If he could, why hasn't he? Well, maybe he's just been nice to you. Well, that's a strange



doctrine, isn't it? You're going to Heaven by the goodness of the devil. Think about it. No! The only reason he hasn't, because he can't. "Satan has desired you that he may sift you as wheat; but I've prayed for you that your faith fail not."

Do you think Jesus' prayers would fail? No. He said, when He prayed, concerning Lazarus in John 11 verse 42, "Father, I thank You that You always hear Me." He never had a prayer that fell to the ground. And He has prayed for us, and, "He ever lives to make intercession for us."

Well, then, if Satan is limited in his power, why did the Lord allow it? Well, Satan heard Peter, boastful Peter. Satan said, "I know some things about him. I'd like to get him in my sieve." And Jesus said, "Yep, that's a good idea. Go ahead." Jesus allowed it. When the Bible says, "Satan hath desired you." it means he's had to ask permission, he's had to ask permission. And the Lord allowed it. And you see, God allows the devil to come against us to reveal to us many times what was in our heart. And He'll do that to you, and He'll do that to me.

Now, does that mean, therefore, that if Jesus is protecting us, it doesn't make any difference how we live or what we do? Oh, folks, listen. Look in Luke 22 verse 62, "Peter went out, and wept bitterly." Don't you think for one second that if you can't lose your salvation, you have nothing to lose when you deny Christ. Do you know who the happiest man on Earth is? The man who takes shame for Jesus Christ. I read about those early apostles and the Bible says in Acts 5:41, "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing, rejoicing they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Worthy.

I could tell you, in my own personal life, those times when I have taken slings and arrows for Jesus Christ have been the highest moments of joy I've ever known. I want to tell you something else. The most miserable man on Earth is not an unsaved man or woman. The most miserable person on Earth is a saved man or woman out of fellowship with Jesus Christ. Is that not true? The most joyful people are those who stand for Jesus.

Simon Peter learned this lesson and he then no longer was boastful, but he wrote in his epistle, in First Peter 5 verse 8, "Be sober! Be vigilant! Your adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Peter learned to renounce his self-confidence, put his confidence in Jesus Christ, became the flaming apostle of Pentecost. And the Bible says that when those people saw them, they marveled! Acts 4:13, "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marveled and took knowledge of them that they'd been with Jesus." That's the difference.

You know, when that rooster crowed, you know what Peter knew when that rooster crowed? You know, Jesus said, "Now, Peter, before the rooster crows, you're going to deny Me three times." How many of you were ever raised where you had roosters that crowed in the morning? Some of you kids never seen a rooster. Two things about a rooster, friend, in the morning. Number one, you can't make him crow; and number two, you can't keep him from crowing, isn't that right? An alarm clock with feathers, that's all they are. Now you think, all the roosters in Jerusalem, and our God kept every one of them quiet until that precise moment, and in that precise moment He made one of them crow just like that.

Do you know what Peter had to know? I'll tell you what he knew: my God is still in control. You know why Peter denied Jesus? He was petrified! They were taking Him to the cross! It looked like He was out of control! He'd been beaten! Denied! Cursed! Whipped! Falsely accused! On His way to Calvary! It looked like everything was out of control. And then the rooster crowed, and He was still in perfect control



Friend, you listen to me. We're on the winning side. There's not a blade of grass that moves without my Father's permission, and I'm going to stand true to Him, God helping me. Not in my own strength. But God, give us some more who will say, "Yes, I believe in God. Yes, I'm not ashamed of Jesus. Yes, I'll carry my Bible to school. Yes, I'll bow my head and pray in the restaurant! Yes, I'll share my faith with my neighbor! And I will not deny the Lamb of God who suffered, bled, and died on that cross for me. And thank God that when we do, though, He's there to secure us.

Father, seal the message to our hearts. And Father, help us to find strength in time of crisis, that we'll never be ashamed of You, and never deny Your name. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? "Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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