**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | Strength in Times of Crisis |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Luke 22:31-34 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #2162 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. A crisis does not make martyrs; it only reveals them. You may be a martyr without ever dying for the Lord Jesus Christ.
      1. If we were faced with martyrdom, where would we find our strength in a time of crisis?
   2. 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)
   3. “One of the curses of the 20th century Christianity is cowardly Christians – those who will not stand up, those who are not bold believers.”
      1. We must find strength in times of crisis, and learn how to be courageous Christians.
   4. This is a moral majority issue, which has become a silent majority. We need a contagious epidemic of holy boldness.
      1. 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
   1. 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:
      1. The devil, which means slanderer
      2. The accuser, which means deceiver
      3. The dragon
      4. The father of lies
      5. The god of this world
      6. The serpent
      7. The destroyer
      8. The tempter
      9. The evil one
   2. In Luke 22:31, he is called Satan, which means adversary. His personality is described, therefore his plan is disclosed: he sifts the saints.
      1. 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.
      2. 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.
      3. 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
   1. Sabotage is an inside job; it comes from inside the fortress.
   2. Peter was so sure of his own ability, yet he was sabotaged by four things:
      1. 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.
      2. 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.
      3. 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.
            1. King David fell in his integrity.
            2. Abraham fell in his faith.
            3. 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)
            1. He went after the wrong enemy.
            2. He used the wrong weapon.

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.

* + - * 1. He had the wrong energy.
        2. He had the wrong attitude.

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.

* + - 1. When we decide to go out and live the Christian life in our own flesh, we will go down. We will fail.
      2. “Sin is an unexpected opportunity, compounded by an undetected weakness and an unprotected life.”

1. your actions will surprise you
   1. Peter did not expect to deny Jesus Christ.
      1. 1 Corinthians 10:12
      2. Proverbs 28:26
      3. Jeremiah 17:9
   2. 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 are we think we are.
   3. Peter learned when he failed that failure is not final.
2. your advocate wiLL secure you
   1. We have an adversary, but we also have an Advocate, who is Jesus Christ.
   2. In Luke 22:31, Jesus claims that He Himself prayed for Peter, that his faith wouldn’t fail him.
   3. 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)
   4. 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.
   5. By His sheer grace, Jesus was not finished with Peter.
   6. “God doesn’t love us because we’re valuable; we’re valuable because He loves us.”
      1. Nothing we can do will make Him love us any more or any less.
   7. Romans 8:33
   8. Even when Peter failed miserably, by his own choice and mistakes, he had an Advocate who secured him.
   9. Jesus prays for us, just as He prayed for Simon Peter.
      1. John 17:9, 15, 20
      2. Hebrews 7:25
   10. 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.
   11. The same cursing, stumbling and failing Simon Peter became the flaming apostle of Pentecost because Jesus Christ prayed for him.
   12. 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.
       1. 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.”
       2. 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.
   13. 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.
3. CONCLUSION
   1. In times of crisis, we must remember that our adversary with sift us and our abilities will fail us. Our actions may surprise us, but nothing surprises Jesus Christ, our Advocate, who secures us.
   2. 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.
   3. 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.
   4. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   5. 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.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16