

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon May 9, 2021
Luke 22: 31 – 34 “Will Your Faith Utterly Fail?”

14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. 21 But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. 22 And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing."

24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 28 But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

35 And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." 36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. 37 For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end."

I. Introduction

- a. In the midst of this space and time preserved by Christ, this sanctuary of His fervent desire to enjoy this Last Supper with His twelve, reclining in the large, furnished, upper room, Christ our Lord has openly declared His fervent desire to eat this last Passover meal with them, and He has pointed them forward to the coming Kingdom Day when He will eat it in its fulfilled form with them, teaching them and us that Jesus - Crucified, Resurrected, Reigning, and Victorious – fervently desires to eat the Lord’s Supper with us today. With double gratitude, He has instituted the Lord’s Supper, saying of the broken bread, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” And of the wine, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” And, in the same

breath, Christ declares aloud that His betrayer reclines at the table with Him, according to God's perfect sovereignty, shocking His disciples into a general and personal suspicion, "Who would do this thing?" Then, Luke brings us into their prideful dispute over greatness, and Christ our Lord graciously teaches them of Divine Greatness, flowing from humility, love and service, not pride, power and elitism. Today, Luke takes us into another painful manifestation of pride, Peter's impending failure flowing from his own unperceived self-reliance, which also lays the question before each one of us today: Will your faith utterly fail?

- b. Overview of Luke's Last Supper (22:14-38)
 - i. 22:14-20 – the Institution of the Lord's Supper
 - ii. 22:21-23 – "the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the Table"
 - iii. 22:24-28 – the dispute over which disciple is the greatest
 - iv. 22:29,30 – "I bestow upon you a kingdom"
 - v. 22:31-34 – Christ predicts Peter's thrice denial
 - vi. 22:35-38 – Money bags, knapsacks and swords
- c. Luke 22: 31 – 34 "Will Your Faith Utterly Fail?"
 - i. Jesus warns Peter of Satan's request v31
 - ii. The Protective Prayer of Jesus v32a
 - iii. Jesus Encourages Peter with Future Hope v32b
 - iv. Peter's Proudful Self-Reliance v33
 - v. Jesus Speaks the Painful Reality to Peter v34
 - vi. Questions to know, love and obey God
- II. Jesus warns Peter of Satan's request v31
 - a. 31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat."
 - b. "Simon, Simon"
 - i. This double-use of Peter's name abruptly transitions from the immediately prior discussion with twelve thrones and glory in view. While glory, joy and love-based rule await the apostles in the future, they have some very important lessons to learn before any of them are ready to sit on thrones. How can you be ready to sit on a throne when you run away from your King's arrest and go on to deny you know Him?
 - ii. This double-use also gets everyone's attention that something important, even urgent, will follow, like we've seen in prior episodes in Luke.
 - 1. Lk 8:23,24 "But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. 24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"
 - 2. Lk 10:41,42 "41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."
 - 3. Lk 13:34,35a "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I

wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! 35 See! Your house is left to you desolate.”

- c. Satan has asked for you
 - i. “You” = plural. Satan has asked for all of the apostles, not just Peter.
 - ii. Mt 26:31 = Mk 14:27 “Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’”
- d. Satan must ask first
 - i. Note, the devil has no authority except that which is given to him by God. The devil serves God, even as the devil rages in hatred against God.
 - ii. Next, even though the devil must ask first, we should consider the power and cunning of this great enemy. Only a blind fool would stand alone against Satan.
 - 1. Calvin “It is a highly useful admonition, whenever we meet with any thing that gives us offence, to have always before our eyes the snares of *Satan*; as Paul also teaches, that *we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual armies*, (Eph. 6:12.) The meaning of the words therefore is: “When, a short time hence, you shall see me oppressed, know that *Satan* employs these arms to fight against you, and that this is a convenient opportunity for destroying your faith.” I have said that this is a useful doctrine, because it frequently happens that, from want of consideration, we are overcome by disregarding temptations, which we would regard as formidable, if we reflected that they are *the fiery darts* (Eph. 6:16) of a vigorous and powerful enemy. And though he now speaks of that singularly fierce attack, by which the disciples, at one time, received dreadful shocks, so that their faith was well nigh extinguished, yet he manifestly conveys a more extensive doctrine, that *Satan* continually goes about, roaring for his prey. As he is impelled by such furious madness to destroy us, nothing is more unreasonable than that we should give ourselves up to drowsiness. Before there is apparent necessity for fighting, let us already prepare ourselves; for we know that *Satan* desires our destruction, and with great skill and assiduity seizes on every method of injuring us. And when we come to the conflict, let us know that all temptations, from whatever quarter they come, were forged in the workshop of that enemy.”¹
 - iii. Thus, let us learn that the attacks we face from the forces of hell can only be defeated by the forces of heaven. When Satan asks to tear us apart,

¹ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*](#) (Vol. 3, pp. 216–217). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Jesus alone holds us together. When the devil tempts us to run away from Jesus, Jesus alone holds us near to Him.

- e. To sift Peter as wheat
 - i. The devil desires to tear Peter apart, unto utter failure, like Judas. And, the devil has no intention of destroying only one of the apostles. Satan wants to send every single one of Christ's apostles dead and defeated into the Field of Blood for strangers with Judas.
 - ii. Bock "Using an agricultural figure, Jesus says that Satan has asked to sift ... Peter like wheat.... The picture is of grain in a sieve, where the head of grain is taken apart (cf. Amos 9:9). Our English idiom of "picking someone to pieces" or "taking someone apart" has similar emotive force. Satan would like to bring Peter to ruin and leave him in pieces, exposing his lack of faithfulness. This leader of the Twelve is a prime target, and Jesus knows it. The warning should make Peter alert."²

III. The Protective Prayer of Jesus v32a

- a. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail;
- b. "But" – "Don't worry, Peter, there is a Great Power at work for you, holding you together, keeping you from the path of complete disintegration." Even though Satan would drag Peter to the fate of Judas, the Lord Jesus Christ would not allow this outcome for His elect.
- c. "I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail" – Jesus comforts Peter with the greatest comfort of all, the invincible prayers of Jesus Christ on his behalf. Jesus would not agree for Peter to be turned over to Satan unto total loss of faith. While Peter's faith would be too weak for the coming temptations, Peter would not lose all faith because Jesus is always faithful to keep His elect.
 - i. Henry "Thou wilt be most violently assaulted, *but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*, that it may not totally and finally fail." Note, (1.) If faith be kept up in an hour of temptation, though we may fall, yet we shall not be utterly cast down. Faith will quench Satan's fiery darts. (2.) Though there may be many failings in the faith of true believers, yet there shall not be a total and final failure of their faith. It is their seed, their root, remaining in them. (3.) It is owing to the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ that the faith of his disciples, though sometimes sadly shaken, yet is not sunk. If they were left to themselves, they would fail; but they are *kept by the power of God* and the prayer of Christ. The intercession of Christ is not only general, for all that believe, but for *particular* believers (I have prayed for *thee*), which is an encouragement for us"³
 - ii. 2 Tim 2:13 "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

² Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1742). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

³ Henry, M. (1994). [Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume](#) (p. 1903). Peabody: Hendrickson.

- d. Note, first, the attacks of the devil against God’s eternally elect cannot destroy their faith.
 - e. Next, note that their faith is invincible only because Christ holds them firmly, not because they hold Christ firmly. He holds us so we can hold on to Him.
 - f. Next, note our Lord Jesus Christ prays for His beloved saints individually, by name. Brothers and sisters, the intercessions of our merciful and mighty High Priest are not only in general for His corporate Bride, but also individual, as He prays for each of you by name. Furthermore, why wouldn’t our Precious Savior also pray for Foothills, His Bride here in this place at this time?
- IV. Jesus Encourages Peter with Future Hope v32b
- a. “and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”
 - b. The prayers of Jesus Christ are always effective. Consider Elijah’s prayers as described in James 5:16-18: “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”
 - i. Is Jesus a righteous man? Does Jesus have a nature like ours? Are the prayers of Christ fervent? If Elijah could lift effective, fervent prayers, how much more Jesus Christ?
 - c. Peter will return to Christ because Christ has prayed for Peter, that his faith should not totally give way. Christ gave the devil some room to work in Peter’s life, unto sanctification, not unto apostasy and destruction.
 - d. “When you have returned to Me”: While Peter is yet unable to see the whole picture, eventually, this great phrase of future hope will be of great encouragement to Peter. Peter will turn away from Jesus for a time, but because Christ never turns away from Peter, because Christ prays for Peter, he will return to Christ. Judas utterly failed, having no faith, no saving prayers from Christ on his behalf.
 - i. Sproul “Jesus had defined Judas as one who was diabolical from the beginning; there was no spark of faith in his heart, he was never a converted man. Peter, on the other hand, was a man who was truly born again, and yet he denies Jesus. I don’t believe we can lose our salvation, not because we are able to keep it, but because Christ himself preserves us. He will not allow us to be snatched out of his hand; he intercedes for us continually as our high priest. The great difference between Peter and Judas is not their intrinsic character but that Jesus says to Peter, ‘I have prayed for you.’ It was a foregone conclusion, as far as Jesus was concerned; that is why he did not say ‘If you turn again’, but ‘When you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.’”⁴

⁴ Sproul, R. C. (1999). [*A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke*](#) (pp. 393–394). Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.

- e. “Strengthen your brethren” – Peter’s failure followed by repentance will teach him a great lesson, perhaps the most important lesson any Christian can learn. And, from this lesson in humility, Peter will be changed, increasing in faith and reliance upon Christ. From this new spot of maturity, Peter will walk more in the Spirit and thus be able to strengthen and encourage his brethren, who will also run away from Jesus that very night.
 - i. Henry “when thou art recovered by the grace of God, and brought to repentance, do what thou canst to recover others; when thou hast found they faith kept from failing, labour to confirm the faith of others, and to establish them; when thou hast found mercy with God thyself, encourage others to hope that they also shall find mercy.” Note, (1.) Those that have fallen into sin must be *converted from it*; those that have turned aside must *return*; those that have left their first love must do their first works. (2.) Those that through grace are converted from sin must do what they can to strengthen their brethren that stand, and to prevent *their falling*”⁵
 - ii. Ps 51:11-13 “Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.”
 - iii. Mt 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
 - iv. Broken by our own weaknesses and failures, restored by God’s tender mercies, we are made able to love others with compassion, kindness and forgiveness, made able to help others up to the well of God’s mercy, where we all drink and drink, and where we are all changed, where the Kingdom of Heaven’s fount flows out to all the earth.

V. Peter’s Proudful Self-Reliance v33

- a. 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."
- b. Note, first, Peter ignores the Word of Christ and ignores the threat of the devil, focusing instead upon his own assessment of 1) his loyalty to Christ and 2) his ability to resist the devil’s sifting. This is proudful autonomy on display.
 - i. Proverbs 18:12 “Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.”
 - ii. Bock “Peter confidently declares his absolute and unshakable commitment to Jesus. Events will show this overconfidence to be an underestimation of how pressure can sift a person’s alliance to Jesus. Peter simply says that he is ready ...to follow Jesus to prison and death. The reality of Jesus’ suffering has finally registered for at least one of the apostles. Peter senses that Jesus is headed to jail and death, and in the privacy and safety of a secluded meal he pledges his loyalty to Jesus. The

⁵ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1903). Peabody: Hendrickson.

reality of soldiers will change everything. Peter's claim to suffer imprisonment will come true in the Book of Acts, and his martyrdom will follow some time after this (Acts 5:19; 12:1–17; Leaney 1958: 271)."⁶

- c. Yet, also, note how Peter does openly assert his loyalty to Christ, unlike Judas who never said a word of loyalty to Christ that we know of. So, while Peter's confidence was misplaced, his words to Christ appear to originate from love toward Christ, even if still looking to self-reliance.
 - i. Henry "This was a great word, and yet I believe no more than Peter meant at this time, and thought he should *make good* too. Judas never protested thus against denying Christ, though often warned of it; for his heart was as fully set in him to the evil as Peter's was against it. Note, All the true disciples of Christ sincerely desire and design to *follow him, whithersoever he goes*, and whithersoever he leads them, though into a prison, though out of the world."⁷

VI. Jesus Speaks the Painful Reality to Peter v34

- a. 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."
- b. Jesus knows what is in Peter's heart, and Jesus knows the diabolic temptations of the coming hours would outmatch Peter's faith and reveal Peter's prideful self-reliance.
- c. Henry "*I tell thee, Peter* (thou dost not know thine own heart, but must be left to thyself a little, that thou mayest know it, and mayest never trust to it again), *the cock shall not crow this day before thou even deny that thou knowest me.*" Note, 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. It is well for us that Christ knows where we are weak better than we do, and therefore where to come in with grace sufficient; that he knows how far a temptation will prevail, and therefore when to say, *Hitherto shall it come, and no further.*⁸
- d. Andrew Murray (1828-1917, S African minister) "Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure. Humility is not so much a grace or virtue along with others; it is the root of all, because it alone takes the right attitude before God, and allows Him as God to do all."

VII. Questions to know, love and obey God

⁶ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1743). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁷ Henry, M. (1994). [Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume](#) (p. 1903). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁸ Henry, M. (1994). [Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume](#) (p. 1903). Peabody: Hendrickson.