

Satan hath desired to sift you

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[0 : 00] Every time I talk reading in the Gospel according to St. Luke, in the 22nd chapter of Givinagin, from the 21st verse, Luke chapter 23 and verse 61, the Lord said, And he said, The clock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt twightly nine, that thou knowest.

Here in the Gospel, at this particular chapter, at that point, when Givinagin was born with the disciples in a very faithful and in a very gracious way, that he was not only preparing himself, but preparing them for the awful events that were to take place in that short time.

This particular incident in that night, this course between Givinagin and the disciples, this particular incident is recorded far as in each one of the Gospels.

We know that all the Gospels don't contain everything, and that the writings of the Gospels were selective, in what they each chose to contain in their Gospels.

But at this particular point, every one of the Gospel writers were led to record this particular incident. But we don't all record it in exactly the same way.

[2 : 01] And we have information here that in Luke's account, it is peculiar to Luke. In Luke's account, it is full of its own particular insights and Gospels.

If you look at the incident as recorded here in these few verses, perhaps it might be a helpful way for us to approach these verses by thinking of the three persons who are set before a seal.

There is Satan, there is Peter, and there is the Lord Jesus himself. If we look at these three persons as they presented to us here, if we remember that really everything that we're told about these three persons, everything that we learn about them, we learn from Jesus himself.

But these wealthy high-certainers about Satan, are told us by Jesus. Even what we learn about Peter, even though Peter himself is speaking in certain of these words, yet it's Jesus who gives the real understanding, the real insight, into Peter.

Not only when it seems of himself who is speaking and addressing Peter, but even when Peter is speaking for what Peter has to say, and what Peter has to reveal concerning himself in the words that he does say, were words that were drawn out of him by Christ.

[3 : 45] And of course, what we learn about Christ, we learn from himself. And what he has to tell us here about himself.

We look then at these three persons, the Satan. If Luke, who is a kind of this incident, concentrates our attention and Satan, and Satan's passing, in all the despair that Jesus is being received.

It is a reminder of how constant Jesus was of Satan's activity at this time. Right at the very beginning of this public ministry, each of the Gospels tells us in their own way of how Jesus was tempted by Satan.

And we are led to understand in the Gospels that those from Christians that came from Satan, right at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, and not to be regarded as a translated experience.

It doesn't just that then at the beginning, Satan prompted him and then left. We then have much in the way of reference to Satan, the pact upon the believers, throughout the rest of the course of his ministry.

[5 : 10] But at least one of the Gospels tells us that Satan just left him for a season, and we're led to believe that Satan kept coming back. But there is this in the Gospel that just as at the beginning of his public ministry, just when, as it were, Jesus was coming out into the ocean, and as when he had committed himself in his baptism in a very special way to do the Father's will and to go forth in the way that the Father was leading him.

Just as at the beginning, at that crucial point when he was launching out in the public ministry, Satan came with particular lines. He had seen in the Gospels that the readers began to speak more openly than he had done before, began to speak more explicitly, and he had seen in the Gospels that the readers began to speak more openly than he had done before, began to speak more explicitly than he had done before, began to tell the disciples in greater detail about his own soft things that were to await him at the Eucudum.

And we see in the Gospel that at that time, the very people had taken him aside and re-duped him and said, These things will never happen to you.

They must never happen. And Jesus had wrecked of man's death, the attack of Satan. But in the case of Satan, he had said to Peter, Let me behind you, Satan.

For you have a mind not for the things of God, but for the things of life. And now again, Jesus is very confident.

[7 : 09] Jesus is very aware of the activity of Satan. That comes out again when, as we read here, they come for him to arrest him in the garden.

Jesus commanded them and said, Well, when I was with you publicly teaching in the temple, you didn't stretch out your hands against me. You've come to me now in the darkness, sleeping me in the garden.

He saw to arrest the prisoner and he said, But this is your hour and the power of darkness. Jesus himself was very aware of the activity of Satan.

He was very aware of how Satan was not only going to attack him in the past night, but how he was going to attack the disciples.

And he said, And this is when he was raised to say, And Simon, He opened up his eyes to a full new Lord's teachings in the plural. And he's talking about the cross that Satan is going to make upon all the disciples.

[8 : 20] Although there was a special relevance in it for Peter himself. A local song, A local song, A local song that I hear in it.

In his pride, In his scheme, In all those goods and A kind of sighs, In all your emotions you're in In all your things, In all your things, In all your things, In all your things, In all your things, of concern, that, do you think that the Bible and the Old Testament is in the story of Job?

Stories that in many ways are still in history for us, and yet there we see something that we're seeing here again. Remember how in the story of Job we read about Satan coming and presenting himself before God, and Satan's sin to Job.

Well, it's all right for you to be pleased with your hidden shame to God. It's all right for you to be pleased with your servant Job. Everything's going well with him. He's prospering. It's all very well for him to serve you.

But let me have him. Let me have a passion. Let me rob him of these things that he has, and then you'll see what sort of man Job really is. And as the story unfolds, you see that God permits Satan to have his way up to a point with Job.

[10 : 01] And here we have the same picture. The same image. And in fact, the serpent doesn't answer all the questions for us. And we don't need to expect that we who are human beings, and we who are foreign human beings, we don't need to expect that we are going to have all the answers concerning what happens in the spiritual realm.

And yet there is an insight given here, in the way the angel speaks about sin. And out of love, he's warning Simon.

Simon in a way that's full of instruction for us. And what is the captain would be saying? Simon, Simon, Satan, as it's completed in our verses, has decided to have him. That he may fix you a sweet.

And when we have the faith of Simon and let the other disciples know that Satan, as it's written in our verses, had decided to have him, what he's really saying is, Satan asked for you.

We're not just speaking about some unfulfilled desire that Satan has. It is exactly that same picture that we see in Job. And we just assume, Satan asked for you.

[11 : 36] He's asked for you in the way it is expressed in the case that he not only asked, but up to a point at least, his request has been granted.

The Lord, in his sovereignty, for the fulfillment of his own hostages, was going to answer Satan's request.

He's the same as an enemy site. An insight that still leaves a great deal of mystery. An insight that still leaves unanswered so many questions.

And yet an insight that, while it isn't for a moment, underestimating or causing us to underestimate the distinct, any less, of the wickedness of the wickedness and the maliciousness of Satan, is reminding us that Satan is limited.

And that Satan is allowed to continue to exist. Because God himself and his sovereignty permits it.

[13 : 01] And Satan is allowed to do what he does. Not because he is limited. Not because he is limited. Not because he is omnipotent.

But because the self of an eternal God, the savior of his people, permits it.

That's what he taught us. When Jesus saves the time and in this particular language, Satan has asked.

A reminder that the limitedness of Satan. And was reminded that he is under the control of God.

But as we said, that's not to make us think any less of all Satan's hatefulness. Of all Satan's maliciousness.

[14 : 15] Of all these chiefly abilities. It's Peter himself, who is speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It's Peter himself to learn so much out of the whole outcome of what Jesus was talking about here, and warning him about here.

It's Peter himself to afterwards. He warns us to be in our guard. To be watchful, to be prayerful.

Because our enemy, our adversary, the devil, goes about as a roaring lion. Seeking whom he may devour. The two things have got to be kept side by side.

Satan is real. Satan is not the signal of imagination. Satan is real to Christ. Christ was warning the disciples to recognize that Satan would be very real in their own experience.

But he's telling us that he's limited. That he's telling us that he's malicious and he's wicked and he's evil.

[15 : 35] And the fact that God, in his own sovereignty, permits him to walk, doesn't make Satan's walk any the less evil, any the less wicked, and any the less to be feared.

Because Jesus is saying here, that Satan has asked for you, and he vows for you, that he may fist you as wheat. And Jesus is revealing here the pastures of Satan.

What Satan had in mind, what Satan was wanting to do, that he may fist you as wheat. Satan resides in these disciples, and he is saying, I'll show.

I'll show the world what these disciples are. I'll show them themselves what they are. They're nothing. And Jesus says that it was Satan's purpose to sift them at feet.

He's indicating that Satan's purpose was to destroy these disciples and to show them up at the end to be nothing but sift. There's no real wheat in them at all.

[16 : 44] Satan was out to destroy them. There is an insight into Satan here that's so important for us to grasp.

To grasp the reality of faith. The one who didn't hesitate to attack the Son of God himself. That sin, Satan, our foreign was permitted to attack the disciples.

And to attack them with a malicious, evil, wicked intent to destroy them. And as we said already in the permanent teaching of Scripture, given to us by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, Peter himself is willing to warn us that that same act goes about as a roaring lion seeking nominative us.

But Peter tells us to resist. To resist him. And to resist him in the name of Jesus.

There are times when we are to flee from him. In certain temptations that he presents, there are certain situations, and the only state is to flee but we're to resist. And to resist him.

[18 : 16] And to resist him with this insight that is given to you. Resist him as those who know our Lord is safe.

And are able to show Satan to his face. That we know who is really in control. Who is really lost.

Well there's that insight into statement. And then we see what the Israelites have to tell us about Peter. And one of the first lessons we're learning about Peter is seeing the way Jesus addresses him.

And the name that Jesus uses. And he calls him. And he calls him. Simon. Simon. Simon. Satan. Satan. Satan has desired to haunt you.

He may shift you asleep. But I have prayed for thee. But thy face still not. And when thou ascends and converses with thy bread. And he said, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. And he said, I tell this Peter. The cock shall not crow this day. Jesus deliberately, we are sure, uses this title Simon.

[19 : 28] The name that was his before Jesus met with him. The name that was his before Jesus met with him. It is true.

And he said, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. And he said, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. And he said, I tell this Peter. Jesus met with him. The name that was his before Jesus had changed his name to Peter.

The name that spoke of what he was in himself. In his own strength, in his own weight, of himself, he was Simon. And Simon by himself was no match for him.

Jesus addresses him at Simon because Jesus saw that this man at this time was just so ready to forget that often than himself he only was Simon. And it was only in Christ and by the grace and by the power and by the mercy of Christ and by the lordship and the saviorship of Christ that he could be anything else that time. It was only in and off Christ that he was Peter the wrong.

But he could be that. That's what he was forgetting. He was forgetting who he was in himself. He was so ready to think of himself as Peter.

[21 : 23] And forgot the only right and claim that he had to be Peter.

And Jesus very faithfully, very graciously, reminds him that he's Simon.

Reminds him that he's Simon at the time when he thought that he was Peter. And thinking that he was Peter and thinking that in himself he was Peter, he was so unready to listen to what Jesus had to say.

He was so unready to look dependent, trusting, obediently, to listen attentively and carefully to Jesus.

And Jesus who had given him the name Peter and Jesus who could alone sustain him and keep him as Peter. And here he is and he's just Simon. And he thinks he's Peter but he's only Simon.

[22 : 32] And he's not listening to Christ. He's not listening to the warnings. He's not listening to the revelation that was being made of his own weakness. He's not taking seriously what Jesus was telling him about the true nature of the hominy that he was up against.

And he's saying to Jesus, I'm ready. I'm ready to go with me both into prison and to death.

Jesus thought that he was ready. He thought that really Jesus couldn't teach him anything at this time. He was ready for it all.

And he was on and he would demonstrate how ready he was. And Jesus went on to teach them that things in the days ahead were going to be very different from what they had been.

There was a time when Jesus had sent them out into a ministry round about Galilee. It was a time when Jesus was still receiving a great deal of popular acclaim.

[23 : 45] And there were plenty of people who were ready to receive the disciples when they came in Jesus' name. And he said to them, when I went out, did you need a post, a script, or shoes, or did you lack anything?

And no, it had all been pretty fair-sale. And Jesus was saying to them, but now it's going to be very different.

Now you're going to be on your own as far as the world is concerned. There's not going to be acceptance, but there's going to be rejection.

And he was speaking to them figuratively and he was saying to them, And the one who doesn't have a sword, let him sell his garments and buy one.

Jesus was telling them there that they were going to be opposed, that things were going to be different, but you see, Peter and the rest of them, they weren't listening and they took it literally. They weren't listening when Jesus was telling them that the enemy was going to be the powers of darkness, against which physical swords, the weapons of this world would be powerless.

[25 : 01] But Peter thought he was ready. And he wasn't listening.

And when he went out with the others with Jesus to the garden, and when he was selected with James and John to be specially named Jesus, and when he was told with the others over and over again to watch and pray, lest he entered into temptation, he still thought he was ready.

And when the enemy did come, and when he came to arrest Jesus, Peter is there and he's got a sword, and he's ready to use the sword.

But Jesus had to show him that the use of the sword was not only useless, it was harmless. And Jesus knew that servant of the high priest.

Peter, instead of being ready, instead of being a support to Jesus then, was only a source of trouble. Oh, just think what it would have meant if Jesus had been brought to the Jewish authorities and then to the Roman authorities, and they were able to stay, and one of his servants acted violently, and cut off this man's ear, and there he stands without his ear.

[26 : 31] He could have meant to Jesus if that had been the situation. And Jesus had to intervene, not for his own reputation, but had to intervene and protect Peter from his own foolishness, and undo this mischief and feel that habit.

Oh, how unready Peter was. How he needed to be told. In yourself you're only Simon.

And it's only if you listen to me, so only as you prepare to hear me, to make you prepare to look believingly and trustingly to me, that you can really be Peter.

When you get here, you'll learn that this man who is free-minded that he's Simon, this man who was showing his own un readiness, was the one whom Christ had chosen, and whom Christ would not abandon.

Oh, there was a prediction that Peter would deny Christ, but there is the assurance all the way through here that Christ will not disown Peter.

[28 : 04] Even when he's showing how much Simon he is, that Jesus will not disown him. And Jesus goes on, and he speaks about this Peter, and he tells us things that will be true.

He tells us that even although Satan is going to be allowed to have the disciples, yet the same man will yet be turned, will yet strengthen the brethren, will yet truly be Peter.

I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, or when thou art brought back, when thou art turned again, strengthen your brethren.

And Peter is encouraged, because although Christ has called to him, Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to hurt him.

Before he's finished with him at this time, Christ is again calling him Peter, giving him the assurance that, although he denies Christ, Christ will not disown him.

[29 : 18] And even at the very point when Peter was denying Christ, remember how we read that Jesus turned and looked on Peter. Oh, it was a look of rebuke, no doubt.

And yet it was the look of the one who was looking to his own beside, to the one whom he had chosen, and the one whom he was bringing through this experience, so that he would come back, and so that he would be the one who could strengthen the brethren.

Jesus is owning Peter. He's owning him even when he says to him, strengthen the brethren, he had given Peter this name, this name Peter which means the rock, the solid foundation.

And he says, you'll yet be Peter. You'll be the one who will strengthen. And that word, strengthen, is the same word that can be used for the idea of laying the foundation.

You're the one who will again lay the foundation. You're the one who will again set your brethren on the solid foundation. And we see Peter doing it.

[30 : 40] We see him doing it in the acts of the apostles. We hear him doing it as we read the wonderful epistles that he wrote. The epistle from which we've already quoted when he warned us about the devil going about as a roaring lion.

The epistle in which he's telling us, be ready. Yes, be ready. Be ready in the way I wasn't ready. But be ready now. Look into Jesus.

And always be ready to give an answer to every man that asks you for a reason for the hope that you need. Do it with neediness.

Do it with humility. And then, and then, and the truth is, and we know that you are not afraid of the Lord, but sanctifying, magnifying, exulting. The Lord as your all-sufficient Savior in your heart.

Oh, how Peter was restored and truly strengthened the brethren.

[31 : 42] And as Jesus Oh, how much these refugees have to tell us about Jesus. about Jesus. We couldn't look at what we learn about Satan. We couldn't look at what we learn about Peter without at the same time learning about Christ, learning about his own perfect insight, his own perfect understanding, his own wonderful grace, his own faithfulness to his own promises. Jesus is saying here to Simon, I have prayed for you. Yes, of course, Jesus prayed for all the disciples. He's saying, Satan has desired to have you all, that he may lift you all this wheat. And Jesus was praying for all the disciples. We hear him. It's recorded for us in John's Gospel how in this very evening he prayed for them all.

But he prayed in a special way for Peter. He had his own propitiosities for Peter. Think of Jesus at this time. He had so much to say. The cross was looming up before him in his own perfect, sensitive humanity.

The awfulness of it all was being made very clear to him. In his own consciousness as the Son of God, the darkness that lay before him was overwhelming.

He had so much to think about concerning himself. But in the midst of it all, his heart was burdened for his own.

And here he is, and he's got a special prayer for Peter. Oh, how pressured every one of his own children are to him.

[33 : 51] There's never a time when he's so preoccupied. That he can't think about us. Think about us as individuals. Think about the road that we're taking.

Simon, I've prayed for thee. But thy faith fail not. Oh, we are the two extremes. There's Satan.

And he's praying in a way. He knows that he's wounded. And he knows that the sovereign God is in control of everything. And he's got to come and he's got to ask.

And he comes and he asks in all his hatred and enmity and malice against God and God's people. And he is crying.

The one who has admitted himself to be obedient to the Father. The one who has made himself the high priest of his people. The one who has put himself in the position of a supplement.

[34 : 53] And he's asked. And he's asked. And he's praying. And he's praying in love. And he's praying in concern. And he's praying for the thing that Peter needs above everything.

That his contact with Christ will not be broken. That he'll still through it all be kept in that living vital communion.

With Christ. And he's praying for the thing that I see still not.

That Satan and Apophones. Satan wanted to prove that these disciples had nothing. That they were all empty. That they were all shams. That they were all false.

That they were all false. Christ had a power. Christ had knowledge. Christ had understanding. Christ saw how much of Simon there still was.

[36 : 02] Christ had a power. But Christ saw that there was. The real Peter. The Peter that was his own creation. The Peter that was the work of his own sovereign saving grace.

Christ didn't say no to Satan. You can't have them. You can't have them at all. You can't have them in any way. Yes, you can have them.

And it's going to be awful. It's going to be terrible. It's going to be terrifying. But I am going to have my hand in it all.

And at the end of the day. There will be 50 this week. But only that the child. Only that the Simon. Might be put away.

And that there may be more. Of the Peter. Of my own creation. The man he was praying for. Satan knew the man he was praying for.

[37 : 05] Satan knew the enemy. And Christ knew the man he was praying for. Christ knew the enemy he was up against. With perfect knowledge.

With perfect love. He prayed. And he prayed of the one. Who had perfect acceptance with the Father.

Whose petitions. Can't be turned aside. How much there is here to learn.

To learn as we were saying about Satan. Who still acts. Who still to be feared. Who still to be resisted. Who still as malicious and hateful as he ever was.

But he's limited. How much there is to learn. How much there is to learn about ourselves. That in ourselves. There is no good.

[38 : 06] And that we daren't go anywhere in our own strength. Oh there was so much that was commendable about Peter. Sometimes grants were too hard on Peter. Peter did have an affection for Christ.

A real affection. Although he followed into the high priest. Coast yard. As far off he did follow. You see. Peter was in the position to deny Christ.

Just because he was following. To our own strength. You see. Again. We might ask where did the others go. They were even further away. And yet Peter.

There. Even though it was in love he was there. in his own strength. He couldn't resist faith. Oh, how much to learn about ourselves.

That in ourselves we are nothing. Now we need to listen. Listen all the time to credit. Listen to his faithful words.

[39 : 12] Listen to his exposures of our own weakness. Listen to him so that we trust only in himself. Know how much to learn about Christ.

Here he is our great high priest. And the truth that we learn is that there's no hope for any one of us except we're looking to this high priest.

Every one of us in ourselves as nothing. You see, Satan can quite legitimately point us out to God and say, look at that man, look at that woman, look at that young person, look what they've done, look at the guilt that they've incurred, look at the evil heart that they've got.

They're mine. I deserve to have them. I deserve to be able to have my way and just expose them for all that they are. And apart from the life and the forgiveness, the healing, the renewal that comes that comes through our fine priest who died for us, apart from Christ's work for us and in us, there's no hope for anyone.

and even when we're brought to this, even when we've been made his own, the only hope of perseverance, the only hope of being brought through all the assaults of Satan and all the problems of this life is that we have this great high priest whoever lives to make intercession for us.

[41 : 14] How is it with us tonight? Are we looking to that Jesus? The one who through death brings cleansing and forgiveness.

The one who's the Holy Spirit is able to make us new creatures, to take us and to change us from being the Simons that we are to be the Peters of his own new creation.

And are we looking to think that the one who's still knowing us, still knowing our own, still knowing his own gracious, prosperous Father ever lives to make intercession for us.

Amen.