



WILL YOU BE A SURVIVOR?

Luke 22:31-38



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You probably recognize the picture you see on the screen from the popular television series "The Survivors." That television program was fun to watch, but it was not real. This morning I want to tell you about some trials you are I are going to face in the near future are real. And I am sharing these things because I want you to be a real survivor, not just a star in a television story.

THREE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. How serious are you in your commitment to Christ?
2. What would it take for you to turn back and give up on Christ, drop out of church, and go back into the world?
3. Serious trials are coming. What makes you think you will be a survivor?

THE STORY OF SIMON PETER

One of the saddest stories in the Bible is the story of how Simon Peter denied Jesus. What made it so sad is that when Jesus tried to warn Peter that Satan was going to "sift him," Peter responded by telling Jesus how strong he was compared to the other disciples. A few hours after Peter bragged about how strong he was, he got scared, cussed, and denied that he was not a follower of Jesus.

SATAN HAD TARGETED PETER

Peter didn't realize that Satan had been watching him and had found a weakness he planned to exploit. When Jesus tried to tell Peter that Satan had been watching him and planned to "sift him like wheat," Peter ignored the warning and began to tell Jesus how tough he was. Let's read the account from Luke 22 and see what we can learn.

LUKE 22:31-38

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:
 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.
 33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.
 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.
 35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.
 36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.
 37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.
 38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough."

Packing Heat at the Lord's Supper



How many of you have ever noticed that Jesus told the disciples, at the Lord's Supper, to go out and buy a weapon even if they had to sell their clothes in order to buy one (Luke 22:36)?

WHAT HAS THIS TO DO WITH US TODAY?

1. Satan is Alive and Well

Satan is a literal being. He is not a symbol of evil. He is real and he is alive and well.

2. Satan had been watching Peter and the Disciples and had asked God's permission to test them.

Jesus was speaking to Peter, but the "you" is plural.¹ Satan cannot do anything without God's permission. Jesus was saying that Satan had asked permission to attack Peter and the other disciples just like he had asked permission to test Job in the Old Testament. God does allow Satan to do this, but God always draws the line. Read the story of Job to get a better understanding of how this works.

3. What did it mean to be "sifted like wheat?"



Have you ever seen a picture of a old-fashioned farmer sifting wheat with a winnowing fork? He would then take the wheat he had cut in the field and place it on the ground. Then he would take a sharp object and cut it in pieces, or have

an animal with sharp hooves walk on it until it is all cut up. Then, after the wheat had been cut in smaller pieces, he would pick up a pitchfork full and throw it up in the air. The wheat would fall to the ground and the worthless chaff is blown away in the wind. The wheat had been cut, walked on, stuck with a pitchfork and cast into the air. If the wheat could talk it would say that the process brought much pain.

Sifting (trials and suffering) separate the real from the fake. Satan was hoping that all of the disciples were fake and would turn away from Christ if they had to suffer or were put under pressure.

¹ The word (umav) , "you", is plural.

SATAN IS WATCHING US JUST LIKE HE WAS WATCHING SIMON PETER.

(Rev. 12:10)

" Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."

ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS ARE GOING TO BE TESTED

(I Peter 4:12-19)

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

HERE ARE SIX SPECIFIC TRIALS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER

1. You may become a part of the great "falling away." (2 Thess. 2)

Large numbers of members will fall away and drop out of church in the last days. Will you be in that great apostasy?

2. You will be hated by the world

(Matt. 24:9) 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

(John 15:8)

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

(1 John 3:13)

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

Miss California

Carrie Prejean, former Miss California, was deprived of her crown and title because she told the truth about abortion.

3. You may be Beaten

9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten:

4. You may be arrested & taken to prison

2. and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. 11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

5. Your Family may turn against you

12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. 34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

6. You may even die as a martyr.

Jesus predicted that the time would come when people would kill Christians and think they are doing God a great service.

SIX PROBLEMS IN PETER'S LIFE CAUSED HIM TO FALL

Let's take a closer look at Peter and see if we can discover what weakness Satan saw in him. I

discovered six things Satan saw that caused him to think he could bring Peter down. Are any of these weaknesses in your life?

1. Peter had too much self confidence.

When Jesus tried to warn Peter about what Satan was about to do to him, Peter started talking about how tough he was. It was like telling Jesus to "feel my muscle."

2. Peter didn't realize how weak he really was.

The truth is, we have no strength. Our only strength is from the Holy Spirit. We must understand that you can't fight spiritual battles with physical strength.

The Bible warns in (Ephesians 6): For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places

3. Peter became confused when under pressure.

The very last thing Jesus told His disciples before they left the Last Supper was to go out and buy a weapon. He didn't stutter. He told them to sell their clothes if they had to do buy a weapon. Peter told Jesus they had two pistols at the Lord's Supper (actually two swords). Yet, when the police came to arrest Jesus, Peter pulled out a knife and cut the man's ear off. Peter was trying to cut his throat but the man ducked and Peter cut his ear off instead.

Peter thought he was doing right but Jesus confused him by healing the man's ear and telling Peter to put his sword away. It as that point that Peter became so confused he just left. He must have said, "I'm, outa here!"

4. Peter followed afar off.

From that point on, Peter was following Jesus, but he followed afar off. What does that mean? It meant that Peter was following Jesus, but Peter wasn't as close to Jesus as he usually was.

Are you as close to Jesus as you once were? If not, you, like Peter are following "afar off."

If you do not spend time every day in prayer and reading your Bible (with a notebook), in my opinion, you are following afar off.

If you are not faithful in Sunday School at 9 am on Sunday Morning, you are following afar off.

If you are not in church every Sunday unless you are sick, working, or on vacation, you are following afar off.

If you are not tithing, as God's Word instructs you to, you are following afar off.

If you are not trying to win others and carry out the Great Commission, you are following afar off.

Do you understand what happens when you miss even one service? Look at Thomas. He was a chosen disciple. But, when the church met together Thomas was absent. Jesus showed up and shared some things with those who were present, Thomas didn't believe them. What was Thomas remembered for? He is known through history as "Doubting Thomas."

Some people are absent for a while and wonder why nobody calls them. Nobody calls them because nobody misses them. Nobody misses them because nobody knows them. Nobody knows them because they don't come enough for people to meet them.

I will guarantee you that if a faithful member of a Sunday School class is absent, the other members wonder where they are that very Sunday and will probably call to see why they weren't there.

5. Peter hung out with the wrong crowd.

Do you know why so many churches are changing their names? It is because we're come to the place that most communities have little respect for the churches.

People in the communities don't respect the churches is because they know people who attend those churches.

Those members go to the same bars and clubs as others in the community.

Those members drink the same booze, they watch the same movies, they listen to the same worldly music, etc.

Peter had come to the place he was warming his hands at the same fire as the enemies of Jesus. It was at that point in his life that all Satan needed was a young woman to bring him down.

Let's be honest. If one of our church members was backsliding, missing church, not reading his Bible, was hanging out with the wrong crowd, and happened to be sitting in Hooters or at Cafe' Risque', could a little (topless) waitress bring him down???

6. Peter cussed.

It was then that Peter broke out and started cussing. When that little topless waitress heard him cussin, she was convinced that Peter was "one of them." She knew a disciple wouldn't cuss like that.

THE REST OF THE STORY

Thank God the story doesn't end with Peter denying the Lord. He did deny the Lord and then went out, broken-hearted, and I believe, left the ministry and went back to the fish-house.

You can read the entire story from John 21 which we have included on page five of this message.

1. Jesus had already prayed for Peter

You need to understand that it was Jesus' prayers for Peter, not Peter's strength that kept Peter from bombing out altogether. Do you know what Jesus is doing in heaven while you and I are struggling down here on the earth? He is making intercession for us.

(Hebrews 7:25)

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

2. Jesus sought Peter out and fixed breakfast for him (John 21:9-13)

Peter was so discouraged at this point that he had left the ministry and gone back to his old job (fishing). Jesus didn't wait for Peter to come looking for Him. Jesus went looking for Peter. He not only found Peter, Jesus cooked breakfast for him and his friends. Jesus never gives up on His children, no matter how hard they fall.

(John 21:9-13)

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. 11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. 12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

3. Peter had denied Jesus three times (John 21:14-17).

Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to confess him three times to make up for it. God never gives up on His people.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. 15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE SIFTING?

1. Do you really understand how weak you really are? Or are you like Peter and want to show God our muscle?
2. Are you following Jesus as close as you should be? Or are you careless about Bible study, church, and prayer meeting?
3. Are you hanging out with the wrong crowd? Do you attend those ungodly clubs where there is drinking, dancing, and sensual activities?

Your time is running out. What are people going to remember you for? We all need to repent of our sins and get right with God today.

ITS TIME TO MAKE SOME CHANGES

1. How many of you will promise God today that you will begin reading your Bibles and praying every day?
2. How many of you will promise God today that you will get in Sunday School and be faithful?
3. How many of you will promise God today that you will stop hanging out in those clubs and bars?

4. How many of you will promise God today that you will stop drinking beer, wine, and whiskey?
5. How many of you will promise God today that you will clean up your language?
6. How many of you will promise God today that you will start trying to win lost people to Christ?

Have a Blessed Day!