



Easter Sunday to blue Monday

April 2, 2018

LUKE 22:31-34 NKJV – (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.”

Two implications from this are important for our lives. One is that Satan has a lot of power in this world. No authority, but much power. He blinds the minds of unbelievers (**2 Corinthians 4:4**) and holds them in his snare until God releases them through the gospel (**2 Timothy 2:25, 26**). He can take life, as with Job's children; ruin health, as with Job's body; torment with demons; provoke evil deeds (**Luke 22:3**); and cause natural disasters (**Job 1:19**). The fact that Satan has such power in the world should give a kind of seriousness to our lives which unbelievers don't have.

That's one implication of Jesus' words. But a second implication is that Satan's power is by permission from God. There are not two ultimate powers in the universe. There is only one: God. When Satan wants to have the disciples, he must go to God first. That's an important word for our day, because the demonic forces of unreason and insubordination and hate and violence are becoming so strong and ever nearer to home that our faith in God's supremacy may be tested to the limit. We will need to remember words like these: "Satan demanded to have you!" Satan Aims to Sift Out Your Faith!

So what does it mean to “Sift?” Grain was agitated or shaken in a kind of fan or filter. The grain remained in the fan, and the chaff and dust were thrown off. So Christ says that Satan desired to try Peter; to place trials and temptations before him; "to agitate him" to see whether anything of faith would remain, or whether all would not be found to be chaff - mere natural odor and false professions.

Therefore the sifting of Simon Peter and the others is Satan's effort to destroy their faith. And this remains Satan's main goal today. It is relatively unimportant to Satan whether we are healthy or sick, rich or poor; what he wants is to sift out our faith. If he can do it by suffering, he will try that; if he can do it by wealth, he will try that. Peter learned a good lesson that night. Some 30 years later he wrote in **1 Peter 5:8-9**: "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him firm in your faith."

Satan has his role to play in fanning the flames of our refining furnace, and so God awaits the appointed Day of Judgment. But remember, Jesus Prays for Our Faith.

Lastly, do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be *faithful* unto death and He will give you the crown of life.

SCRIPTURE READING: ISAIAH 57:19

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Remember, a focused mind on God leaves no place for the devil.