

Sermon 118: Immaturity, Stumbling, and God's Grace: Luke 22:23-34

Text: Luke 22:23-34 "And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me..."

Summary: Trials are an inescapable part of our Christian experience and serve as powerful tools in God hands for our good.

Proposition: We must allow Him to shape us through these struggles.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Part 1: Context: 22:23-24 "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest..."

- **A celebration: Luke 22:15** "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer..."
- **A warning:**
 - **Judas would betray Him: Luke 22:21** "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table..."
 - **Peter would deny Him: Luke 22:31-32** "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren..."
- **A shocking response: 22:23-24** "And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest..."

Part 2: Contrast: 22:25-27 "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve..."

- **Two contrasting approaches to authority:**

- **This world's system:**

- **They domineer: 22:25** "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them..."

- "Exercise lordship" means to "domineer" or "lord it over" others.
 - Ambitious people seize power by force and manipulation.
 - They generally maintain and expand that power the same way.

- **They expect honor: 22:25** "They that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors..."

- A "benefactor" is a title given to someone who has paid a great service to another.
 - This is ironic because the person abusing his power, by using it for personal gain, expects to be treated with honor at the same time.
 - Their subjects fear them.
 - They flatter to keep their leaders happy.

- **The Kingdom of God:**

- **The Kingdom of God is radically different: 22:26** "But ye shall not be so..."

- **God appoints: 22:26** "He that is greatest among you..."

- **Godly leaders do not seek the preeminence: 22:26** "Let him be as the younger..."

- **They are willing to do the lowly things: 22:26** "He that is chief, as he that doth serve..."

- **Christ is the perfect example:**

- **He willingly took the position of a servant: 22:27** "I am among you as he that serveth..."

- **He set Himself as an example: John 13:14-17** "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you..."

- **Paul established Him as our ultimate example: Philippians 2:6-8** "Being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross..."

Part 3: Comfort: 22:28-30 "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me..."

- **They are true believers: 22:28** "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations..."
 - **While many left Christ, these disciples continued with Him, because their faith was genuine: John 6:66-69** "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God..."
- **They will inherit the Kingdom: 22:29** "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me..."
 - **Though they would stumble, their position was secure: John 5:24** "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life..."
- **They will have a rich eternal experience in that Kingdom: 22:30** "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel..."
 - **Communion: 22:30** "Eat and drink at my table in my kingdom
 - **Authority: 22:30** "Sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel..."

Part 4: Conversion: 22:31-33 "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren..."

- **Peter's temptation:**
 - **Peter was dear to Christ: 22:31** "Simon, Simon..."
 - Christ addressed Peter as a dear friend, not an enemy.
 - While the things He would say were harsh, His love for Peter was constant.
 - **He and the other disciples were objects of calculated focus: 22:31** "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat..."
 - Peter and the rest of the disciples were about to face the greatest test of their faith to that point.
 - To "sift as wheat" is an idiom for to pick someone apart.
 - In the same way that Satan accused Job to God, so he accused Peter and the other disciples to God.
 - **Christ prayed for his faith to endure: 22:32** "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not..."
 - God did not insulate these men from the test.

- He willed for them to face it and endure triumphantly.
 - He prayed for their faith to endure and be strengthened, though they would stumble.
- **He predicted Peter's stumbling and recovery: 22:32** "When thou art converted..."
 - The word "converted" means to be turned back around.
 - Peter would stumble.
 - He would need to be restored.
 - He would be restored.
- **He reminds him that God will still have a purpose for Peter: 22:32** "Strengthen thy brethren..."
 - The word "strengthen" means to establish one so they are strong in the faith.
 - Peter would stumble and be shaken, but that weakness would not lead to an abandonment on the faith.
 - His weakness would lead to a strengthened tested confidence that could minister to others.
- **Peter's conversion:**
 - **Positional conversion: John 5:24** "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life..."
 - **Progressive conversion:** Changed into His image from glory to glory
 - **2 Corinthians 3:18** "We all...beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord..."
 - **1 Peter 5:8-10** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith...But the God of all grace...after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you..."
 - **James 1:3-4** "The trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing..."
 - **1 Peter 1:7** "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ..."
 - **Our faith will be tested and when it is tested it will be purified and strengthened if it is genuine.**
 - **God uses our failures and weakness to develop maturity and strengthen our confidence in Him.**

Applying the Text:

- **Comfort:**

- God's love for His children is consistent and secure even if we have stumbled or will stumble.
- We must take comfort in your Savior's consistent love even when we have stumbled.

- **Perspective:**

- Tests and stumbling are an inescapable part of our Christian experience.
- Satan is a fierce yet limited foe who cannot go beyond the bounds God has permitted.
- God wisely permits limited suffering and hardships to accomplish good in our lives.
- He demonstrates the genuine nature of our position through those seasons.
- He builds us and equips us for future service through them.
- We must face life's trials with a matured biblical perspective.

- **Encouragement:**

- He is always for us when we suffer.
- He provides what we need to escape.
- He lifts us up when we have stumbled.
- He reaffirms His purposes in our lives when we need those encouragements.
- Do not allow yourself to accept the lie you cannot get up when you have fallen.
- Do not accept the lie that He has abandoned you.
- Do not accept the lie He is done with you.