

People Jesus Met, part 40 – Boastful Peter (Three Things God Wants Us to Know About Our Troubles)

“Then Jesus told His disciples, ‘This night, all of you will fall away from Me . . . But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.’” Matthew 26:31a, 32

“Then Peter said, ‘Lord, even if every other disciple falls away on account of You, I will never fall away.’” Matthew 26:33

“Jesus said to him, ‘I tell you the truth, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’” Matthew 26:34

“But Peter declared, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will never deny You.’” Matthew 26:35a

All of this ended with a catastrophic personal failure in Peter’s life.

Today, Jesus is going to tell us three important facts about our troubles which will help us endure and get through them in a biblical, Christ-like way.

Here in Luke 22, Jesus is eating the “Last Supper” with His disciples.

In just a few hours, Peter will deny the Lord three times and slink away in shame.

“Jesus said, ‘Simon, Simon, Satan has asked permission to sift you like wheat.’” Luke 22:31

Jesus: “Peter, the devil himself has come to Me and asked My permission to do something to you.”

Nobody “asks permission to act” from someone who has less authority than they have.

Question: *“Who in the universe has more authority than the very prince of demons himself?”*

Answer: *“Only the Living God Himself!”*

The fact that the devil had to ask Jesus for permission to act against Peter is one more proof that Jesus is Jehovah God Himself wrapped in human flesh – just as He claimed!

“. . . to sift you like wheat.” Luke 22:31

A “sifter” is a machine that crushes the grain and turns it into soft flour.

What Satan was asking permission to do was to crush and pulverize Peter – to “grind him into flour.”

Satan was planning to do this:

#1 – By using Peter’s fears to get him to deny Christ

#2 – And then – by using Peter’s shame and embarrassment to get him to give up spiritually, quit the ministry, and go back to fishing

“But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back again, [I want you to] strengthen your [Christian] brothers and sisters.” Luke 22:32

It’s clear from what Jesus says in verse 32 that He has granted Satan’s request – and that Satan is going to come at Peter “with both barrels blazing.”

In John 21, Jesus came after Peter and revitalized his faith and restored him to the ministry.

Peter went on to become a mighty servant of God whose sermons and letters still strengthen the hearts of God’s people to this very day.

So What?

“The biggest problem/trouble in my life right now is . . .”

“Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.” Job 14:1

Here in Luke 22, Jesus tells Peter (and us) three important facts about our troubles that will help us endure and get through them in a biblical way.

Fact #1 – Our troubles are “inspected”

“Satan has asked permission to sift you like wheat.” Luke 22:31

As followers of Jesus Christ, Satan must “get permission” from Almighty God before he can lay a finger on us.

“One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD and Satan also came with them.” Job 1:6

“Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a man who fears God and turns away from evil.’” Job 1:8

“Then Satan said to God, ‘Does Job fear You for no reason? You have put a hedge around him and everything he has. You have blessed the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land.’” Job 1:9, 10

“‘But,’ Satan said, ‘stretch out Your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face.’” Job 1:11

“Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold everything Job has is in your power: but on the man himself, you may not lay a finger.’ So Satan departed from the LORD’S presence.” Job 1:12

“Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job? . . . He still holds fast to his integrity . . .’” Job 2:3

“Satan said, ‘Skin for skin! . . . Stretch out Your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will curse You to Your face.’” Job 2:4, 5

“So the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your power; but you must spare his life.’” Job 2:6

Both Luke 22 and Job 1 & 2 teach us:

#1 – God has set up a “hedge of protection” around every true believer in Christ

#2 – Satan must get God’s direct permission in order to go inside that “hedge” in any way

#3 – Even when God permits this, God sets precise limits on what Satan is and is not allowed to do to us

Nothing enters our lives as followers of Christ unless it has first been inspected and limited by God.

“For God is faithful; He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

“ . . . And when you turn back again . . .” not “if”! Luke 22:32

As followers of Christ, whatever our trouble may be, God says: “Oh, yes you can – because I’ve already inspected it, and made sure of it, before I ever allowed it to enter your life.”

Fact #2 – Our troubles have a “divine purpose”

“ . . . And when you have turned back again strengthen your brothers and sisters.” Luke 22:32

The entire letter of 1 Peter is all about suffering and trouble – and how we can trust God’s faithfulness through it.

“And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” 1 Peter 5:10

Peter learned this lesson, not from his success in the Book of Acts, but from his failure in Jerusalem.

"You are my friend in disguise . . . because you're going to teach me lessons I need to learn that I can't learn any other way."

Fact #3 – Our troubles are all "overridden"

"We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God." Romans 8:28

God will take every trouble we will ever face . . . and He will overrule and override it . . . and turn it into a blessing instead.

"Peter, you're going to have a catastrophic failure – but I'm going to override it – and turn you into a mighty servant for Me in spite of it!"

Galatians 2:7 – "Peter was [entrusted] with preaching the Gospel to the Jews."

Book of Acts – Peter is the central figure in carrying the Gospel to Israel

Galatians 2:9 – calls Peter "a pillar of the church"

Before Peter ever failed that night in Jerusalem, God had already overridden his failure (in His perfect plan for Peter's life) and turned it into good.

As followers of Christ today – before any trouble or problem strikes our life, God has already overridden it too!

#1 – They have been inspected

#2 – They have a divine purpose

#3 – They have already been overridden in God's perfect plan for your life