

Sifted, but safe in the arms of Jesus (Quality: Good)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 September 2005

Preacher: Wood, Clement (1920-2010)

- [0 : 00] I venture to draw your prayerful attention to Luke chapter 22 verses 31 and 32.
- Luke chapter 22 verses 31 and 32. 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.
- Amen. The Lord, at this time, was very, very, very near to Calvary's cross.
- The dear Saviour had said, Father, the hour is come, and what shall I say? Save me from this hour, but for this cause came I to this hour.
- [1 : 28] Now is my soul troubled, says the dear Redeemer. He had then instituted worthy and last suffer.
- And what do we read? A strife among them. As to which of them should be accounted the greatest?
- What need we have to watch against pride? What need we have to watch and pray against division? What need we have to pray to be clothed in humility?
- Oh, beloved friend, may we ever be watchful and prayerful. And he says here, and I'll just touch the point very briefly.
- He says, I am among you as he that serveth. There's a word for the minister. We serve God and serve the church.
- [2 : 37] There's a word for deacons. There's a word for church members. There's a word for all who fear God.
- And that all we attend to in Zion, and of course in our daily lives, should be in the fear of God, and to the honor and glory of God.
- He compasses them, and says, ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.
- And I appoint unto you a kingdom as the Father hath appointed unto me. Now comes a personal word.
- Is it a personal word for us? We need it. We have an enemy that's ever watchful to attack us, to hit us, to bring us down, to lead us into a way whereby we may bring reproach on the name and cause of Jesus Christ.
- [4 : 00] And the Lord said, Simon, Simon. A personal word.
- Although what he says here, to have you, I believe that also meant these other disciples as well. But this is a personal word now for Simon. The emphasis of a word, the name twice repeated.
- We have that in other instances in the word of God. Abraham. Abraham. And Jacob. Jacob. Moses.

Moses of the burning book. And again, later on, I don't name them all, but as one or two come also to my mind. Martha.

Martha. Martha. Thou are careful and troubled about many things. And Samuel. Samuel was another one. And yet another one.

[4 : 59] Saul. Saul. Why perfect? Here is thou me. Do you pray for a personal religion? Have you, by the grace of God, a personal religion?

Are your ears open to hear God speaking? What saith my Lord unto his servant? Simon.

Simon. Simon. Behold. Don't go to sleep. Don't turn aside. Don't close your ears.

Look. Watch. Listen intently. Here's words of weight. Here's words of power. Here's words so needful.

Here's a loving word of gracious warning. Satan. If you, and I pray it is so with you, those of you then, that are true believers in Jesus, you have a constant, untiring enemy that knows your weight points and is ready to attack.

[6 : 19] Sometimes, sometimes, in a subtle way, the wiles of the devil.

Questioning. Questioning. Questioning. His attack on Eve in the garden, hath God said.

We need to watch and pray. I believe a dear old saint years ago said he feared the black devil, but feared even greater the white devil.

By that he means the devil that comes with a temptation so pleasing to the flesh. A flesh temptation that might say to you, no, no, take it easy.

It doesn't matter at this once. Let yourself go. All sorts of pleasing temptations. My friend, we need to watch against the enemy of our souls.

[7 : 38] And remember how even this evil one has tempted the Lord Jesus Christ himself in the wilderness. And he that suffered that temptation is able to suffer his dear people.

He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Satan hath desired to have you.

To bring you down into hell. To snatch you from the Lord Jesus Christ. His desire to have you.

And will do all means. Especially to those that live close to the Lord. Especially the servants of God.

The pillars in the church. The mothers in Israel. Will be exposed to sore temptations. I do not say.

[8 : 47] Every day of our life. We do not know when or where. When you are in trouble. This evil one will tempt you.

That God doesn't hear you. That there is no way out of it. That you are not one of God's people. Will do all he can.

To undermine as it were your faith. Also to watch and pray. When the evil one comes.

When you may for a season. Be in a measure of quietness. Maybe in a measure of literal prosperity. Spiritual prosperity. And.

Another time. When he won't come. When you are asleep. I do not mean literally asleep. I am also speaking of literal sleep. I mean. When a person is.

[9 : 46] Wandering away from God. Backsliding. Not watching. Not praying. When their prayers are just formal. They read the word of God.

Without any appetite. But they wandered away. They are asleep. One of the most dangerous places. On the way to the celestial city.

In. The pilgrim progress. Was enchanted ground. They were so weary. That they would. Wanted to fall down on the ground. And go to sleep.

It was a sleep of death. And my friend. How. How was it that they kept awake. Memory says. Before they started to speak. About what God had done for them.

And the way. That we might be. Enabled to. Counter this. Weariness. This danger. This laziness. This. Can't get the word I want.

[10 : 47] Sleepiness. It may be. Lethargy is the word. That's right. Is to rather trace out. What God has done for you. Turn again. To the word of God. Turn again.

And see. Earnest prayer. Pray for God. To save you. And to keep you. He hath desired. To have you. That he may. Sift you.

As wheat. The expression. Here. Is not. Sifting. To reveal. The grave. The Lord will do that. But this is the devil.

He will sift you. As wheat. And pretend. As it were. Make out. That all you've got is. Chaff. You've no religion at all.

The devil is a cruel foe. A crafty foe. And I say. As I see it here. That he may sift you. In such a way.

[11 : 45] That you may feel shaken. Tossed about. And wonder. Where your religion is. Where your God is. Where is the hope you have. My friend. If you're a real child of God.

If you're a true. And therefore a believer. Indeed. Lord Jesus Christ. There is something the devil. Will not overthrow. Though he may overthrow you. He will overthrow your faith.

He cannot destroy. What God has wrought in your soul. He cannot overturn. The promise that God has given to you. But the way may be very dark. We are led into some very deep places of times.

And some of God's dear people know what it is. To come into places of conflict. And temptation. Again think of the Christian.

And the way to glory. He had fought with Apollyon. Did he not? And almost was defeated. But oh. He was helped through. My friend.

[12 : 45] These things are very very real. And oh. The mercies that didn't stop there. When he said. May Satan has desired to have you. That he may sift you as wheat.

Didn't say. Well that's it. No. I say that reverently. Because it's bad. There's something here then. Some hope.

In your worry. In your anxiety. In your distress. Oh you tempted one. You tried one. Perhaps a little devil. I do not know.

Why I should try and preach from this word this afternoon. It got you. Is it going to save. And you wonder. And all what you see. Is the chaff. All you see.

Is that in the. In the. Refining of the silvers. Is it the word. The dross. Yes. You almost lost sight of. Any. Signs that you have.

[13 : 40] It will be so dark. And my friend. I'm not speaking in a pessimistic way. Nor. Nor in a wrong way. I've known some of God's servants. Who have been in such a state.

They've been in a mental hospital. Men of God. Although even there. Though they felt all had gone. And yet underneath. There was that hope. And God appeared for them.

I had. A very godly. Well I have all godly deacons. But. In my early days. At Tamworth Road. I was a very godly deacon. Among us. A very. Aged man.

Very tender. And the poor man. Had to go into a mental hospital. I remember following the ambulance. It was one of the saddest journeys. I've ever undertaken in my life.

I love the dear man. But the Lord brought him out. The Lord delivered him. But he had to go into a hospital.

[14 : 36] And have an arm amputated. But his deliverance was so wonderful. That he could sit up in bed. With the dear deacons with him. And he said. Let's sing the doxology.

The Lord appeared for him. Satan. You didn't get him. Another one that I had in the mental hospital. Only just a member of the congregation. A man that truly feared God.

I went to visit him. And the case. I don't know why I should name these cases. Just this one comes to my mind. On this particular visit. A very tender man. I couldn't control him.

There was no danger of physical attack. Not the least. But he was restless. He would keep walking about. I couldn't speak really.

I couldn't pray or read or anything. And I eventually had to give up. I felt utterly despondent. I felt Lord why have I come. And I just prayed.

[15 : 30] And I felt the Lord just gave me this word. And I said Joe. I said the Lord says. No I am with you all the way. Even unto the end of the world. I didn't know. Nobody even heard it. But he did.

He brought out. God brought him out. Sometime after he's a part to end. That's grave not his gravestone. My friend. These things are real.

That God will never forsake him. Never leave one of his children. To be captured as it were. By the enemy of souls. His sheep are his.

Redeemed by his blood. God. And. That they are safe in his hand. No man shall pluck them out of my father's hand. And so he says.

But I have prayed. For thee. Jesus. Praying. For us. You know.

[16 : 30] It's no small thing. When we're in trouble. When the minister. And the friends. Pray for us. We feel it's a sacred privilege. They should even condescend. To pray for us. We have an example today.

Your dear pastor. Will be carried. In the arms of prayer. And love. But greater still. The dear Lord.

And I. I was very struck. I read on. You see. Following. These words. He went into the garden. And there.

As stones cast away. There were the. Eight. And then the three. And then the Lord himself alone. Stones cast. Prostrate to the ground.

[17 : 27] Praying to his father. And. Praying. And if he will be willing. Remove this cup from me. Nevertheless. Not my will. But thine be done. Thrice repeating.

And being. In an agony. Sinless agony. The creator of the ends of the earth.

Agony. A real man. A cup he was to drink. Attacked by Satan.

The prince of the power of the air. And his sweat was as were great drops of blood. Falling to the ground. I have.

Prayed for thee. That he himself. Would drink that cup. Of the wrath of God. Whereby. The holy God.

[18 : 28] Would pardon sin. And deliver us. From the demands of the law. The justice of God. The powers of Satan.

And all the evil that is. And I think too. As I go forth into. In meditation. Of the. Dear Savior.

Again. Just prior to going into the. Garden. Here. Then he prayed to his father. He just turned to it. He lifted up his eyes.

As we read. Out to heaven. And sometimes. Sort of the contrast. And I don't think God. The poor. The.

The. The. The. Publican. Couldn't lift up his eyes to heaven. Don't we feel like that. But our prayer goes up to heaven. And this dear Jesus hears it you know.

[19 : 23] He does. But he said. He lifted up his eyes to him. Because he's the holy one. And he said. And he said. The hour is come. And he says this.

As thou hast given him power over all flesh. That he should give. Eternal life. To as many. As thou hast given him.

And this is life eternal. That they might know. That they. The only true God. And Jesus Christ. As whom thou hast sent. I pray for them.

I pray. Not for the world. Where are we? Which side of that line?

Just as. The Lord Jesus at Calvary. There were two malefactors. One. Died in his sin. The other.

[20 : 22] Verily I say unto thee. Today shall thou. Be with me in paradise. Where shall we be? Neither pray I for these of them. And he said. I pray.

I pray for them. I pray. Not for the world. I remember the night. Mr. John Gosselin. Once quoted that. He paused. And he said. Poor. Poor.

World. They have all their so called riches. Their so called pleasure. Their social glory. But my friend. They have their sins.

They've got eternity. Oh my friend. A little that a righteous had. More than anything that the ungodly had. And blessed be God.

Oh that little that you've got. You wouldn't part with it. Would you? You said. Lord. Do confirm it. Again. He said. I the prayer. I for these alone.

[21 : 18] But for them. Also. That shall believe on me. Through their word. Look at his prayer. Hear the prayer. Even as they nailed the Savior. To the cross.

Father. I. As he said. Forgive them. They know not what they do. We admire that. Don't we?

Is that all? Be kind one to another. Tender hearty. Forgiving one another.

Even as God. For Christ's sake. Hath forgiven you. I'm not going to forgive. Oh my friend.

An unforgiving nature. It doesn't mean to say condoning sin. But unforgiving nature will bring. I feel barrenness to our soul. May the spirit of Christ ever control us.

[22 : 20] I say then. The dear. The Savior said. I pray for thee. That thy faith. Fail not. Let's just go now.

To actually what did transpire. If you remember. When Jesus had uttered those words. There was the multitude coming. And Judas Iscariot.

And they arrested the Lord Jesus. Whom do you see? He said. Let these go away. I am. As he said. There I am. They fell back.

But there they took him. And led him away. And even there. One of the servants. Took a sword. And smote off the ear. A servant of the high priest.

And there the dear Savior. Said. But. Said suffer ye thus far. He held him. But.

[23 : 19] We come now. What about Peter? He said. I am willing to die for thee. I am willing to go to prison with thee.

I am ready Lord. He said that. kids. Expressing his. Sanggirl. music. The glory of God. Our Lee. Father. Thank you. Time. James. card. Our Wayne.

To be there. Show me.ember. his weakness. I do not wish, and I remember my past saying, never damp a young believer in the days of their first love.

Let them enjoy it. Let them make the most of it. And that is right. That is quite right. But my dear friend, we have to, as we are baptized, and know something of the joy of the Lord, we are brought shortly to have our religion tried.

It is like the seed that's sown, the thirst that's laid. That's the tender growth. That's the promise. And there's no outward sign of charge, although I believe it is there, I believe from the husband, and I have no authority, well, I have no authority on that subject, but nevertheless, as you think of the growth, you see, it doesn't get tossed about with the wind, and it all speaks of prooffulness, growth, and promise.

[24 : 53] And you see, there is growth. And as soon as that grows, it will have thirst for blame. What happens? There's a child. What happens?

It can be battered down. But then, it still stands, it still grows, still there's the growth, and then finally, as the grain is ripe, it is the golden grain, loosened from the chaff, ready to fall, ready for the harvest.

I would just go back a point there, because I mentioned about the sith. I'll just pick that up again. The Lord with his sith.

See, when the harvest was over in eastern lands, the seeds would be brought to the threshing floor, the grain would be separated, and then it would be tossed into the air, and the chaff would fall away.

But even then, though the grain were fought to the ground, there'd be grit, and needed the sith. And only the grain would be left, or where else would go.

[26 : 10] And blessed be God, and you read in Amos, not the least grain shall fall to the ground. But here, I say, he says, thy faith, you'll not know what, Peter.

He's following afar off. He didn't run right away. He's hanging about, as we might say, but he's afraid. Peter, where's your faith now? Where's your love now?

Where's your ardent seal now? I've got a stone to throw at the dear man. We're conscious of our failings.

Ashamed of Jesus, yes, there have been times when we should have acknowledged him and have failed. and there, then there's, various ones, one say, that this man was also with him.

Woman, I know him not. There also are of them. Man, I'm not dead. Mark this. These three temptations didn't come all in, just in a moment.

[27 : 13] They didn't come, in a matter of just ten minutes, because there was a pause of an hour. Peter had time to think, but now, Satan still caught him.

Now, Satan, it looks to me as though you have this man in your hands, but now, there's hands stronger than yours, Satan.

It's Jesus. It's Jesus. I would read as Jesus comes out the cock crowing. The historian had never told you this before, has said that, it's said that Peter, after he said, if he heard the cock crowing, he would weep.

I would think there's quite good foundation in that, and I'll tell you why. In a personal experience, not in the way religious, but I preached down at Chard at one time between pastorates, and stayed down there, and I always remember early morning the cock crowing.

Now, if I hear a cock crowing, immediately think of Chard. And you know what it is, you hear a sound, or you smell something, and it brings back to memory something in your life.

[28 : 30] I believe that. But what about Jesus? His eyes as a flame of fire? Will there be the consuming of this man? Will there be the wrath of the dear Lord, Saviour?

No. We really look upon his failing Peter, and as a look of love, and yet a look of grief, doubtness, and yet a look of power, a look that broke the man's heart?

You see, devil, you couldn't do that. Jesus did it. Jesus loves him still. Jesus won't let him go, and he won't let you go either. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

What a contrast between Judas Iscariot and Peter. They both went out. Judas earlier went out and hung himself. Peter went out and wept.

I'm afraid for thee that thy faith fail not. Now we come to something very precious. You remember on the resurrection morning, that those women went to the sepulcher, and the angel met them.

[29 : 41] Hear not, I know that you see, Jesus was crucified, he's not risen, he's not here, he's risen. Come see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly and tell his disciples. That's what Matthew says.

Mark says practically the same words, but there's two more words in Mark. Do you know what they are? And Peter. I've thanked God for those two words.

And Peter. Tell him, as it were, that the love of Christ, a forgiven sinner, he's to come to perverse and foolish after I strayed, and yet he'd laugh and sought men on his shoulder, gently laid, and home rejoicing brought me.

And Peter. Again, this is recorded in the first episode of the Corinthians in the 15th chapter, and the Lord had appeared to Antich Cephas. Again, in the disciples, coming back from the upper room, the Lord is risen and has appeared to see for such another name for Peter.

It was a personal visit of the Lord. We don't have any more detail, but there seemed forgiveness, restoration.

[31 : 04] Then goes forth to Galilee. There's a night they've been toiling with fishing and catching nothing, and most unusual circumstances in Galilee.

I've hardly ever heard, so I understand. There's somebody on the shore, the dark night, nothing caught. Perhaps you know something about that in your life.

The dark night and the morn dawning, it seems so dark, it seems so hopeless, but there's somebody there and you don't know it, perhaps, to start with, until he comes with a word.

Oh, son of my soul, thou saviour, dear, it is not night if thou art near. Oh, what a wonderful word it is, and a true extent I proved it, I know it.

Come and die. Remember John, as it is the Lord, if Peter cast himself into the sea. You see the distinction? The love of John, the zeal of Peter, impetuous, but, oh, want to get to Jesus.

[32 : 13] Well, Peter, what right have you got it? Yes, the Lord have forgiven him. And then, again, the test, love us thou live all this three times.

Ever thought about the fire that was kindled there? We read in that record, that fire of coals, was it? Always think of that, Peter sitting there.

Wouldn't he think of the fire that he sat by? Wouldn't he bring it back to him? And at the door turning, he said, look, Simon, the son of Joseph, love us thou me. Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.

Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. Oh, but the third time he was grieved. Lord, thou knowest all things thou knowest I What did Jesus say? Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.

Who's this preaching on the day of Pentecost? Who is this that hears the word of God? Who is this fearlessly standing? Here is this charging the Jew with crucifying their Lord.

[33 : 10] It is Peter, the man of God, endued with power from on high. And Satan, that's the man that you thought you would have. And my dear friend, you may feel, yes, you're not a painter, but you may feel to know something of the power of Satan at times.

That the Lord will stand by you. We may and we do fail, but there is forgiveness with you. Now we don't speak of that forgiveness life. I should think Peter must have suffered, I'm sure it is those tears, that broken heart, that grief.

Because if we hurt somebody we really love, it's not just hurting us, we don't know what to do with ourselves. We've hurt someone that we love.

Oh foolish man, oh stupid man. My dear friend here, was restoration. I pray for thee that thy faith failed on. Now this is true of God given faith.

It will never fail. You say, but how is it that Jesus on one occasion said, how is it that you have no faith? The meaning there didn't mean that they hadn't any faith at all.

[34 : 19] I'll tell you why. Because you remember, they went to Jesus to awaken him, said, master, careest thou not that we perish? They had faith, just a little faith to go to Jesus.

It meant they hadn't faith in exercise. You see, faith is the gift of God. It's indestructible. But it is like the mercury in the thermometer.

It is cold, it shrinks, it is warm, it expands. It's there though. And so, my friend, in the sometimes you feel, I don't think I have any faith, and yet underneath, it's just like hope.

You feel, I have no hope, yet you've got a hope against hope, yet a hope against hope against hope. Somehow you're going to be brought, and you will be brought through. You may be like Suki says, tossed, I like that, but I don't like the experience, and you know much about.

It's an old English word, tossed, it means tossed about. But my friend, you'll be brought through. He won't fail it, I pray for thee, that thy faith fail not.

[35 : 30] Oh, friend, you feel to fail, I do, so often. Oh, but then what does the Lord say here? And when thou art converted, now this does not mean that he was not converted or called by grace, it means when thou art restored.

David said he restoreth my soul. Precious, when you restore, as he was, he then said, strengthen thy brethren.

And I believe, well I see, how that dear man of God was enabled and used of God mightily to strengthen the brethren. And it is so in the house of God, in the family of God, that such that are blessed and helped though they may go through deep waters, though they may fail, and though the devil gains as it were the advantage over them and seems to defeat them, like Gad, a troop shall overcome him, overcome him, but, what was the name?

They shall overcome at the last, they will. Little faith will carry you to glory, large faith in Israel will bring heaven down into your soul, the experience of it.

I know whom I have believed, said Paul, and I am swayed that he will keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. It's that real faith that clings to Christ, because it's the object of faith, it's the blood of Christ.

[37 : 10] Nothing in my hand I bring, but simply to thy cross I claim. That's it as I understand it, as I know it, in my old age, because Satan gets very busy with me.

But my friend, he can't pull my hand away from the cross. He can't pull my hand away from Jesus Christ. There's about all I can hold on to and nothing else. But it's him.

He won't fail. He'll hold you. He'll uphold you. He'll keep you. He'll bless you. So, beloved friend, though Satan is such a power that he will not gain the victory.

Let me turn, as I come to the close, of the word of the Apostle John himself, as he writes later, he are of God, little children, and have overcome them because, because you're so great, because you're so strong, because greater is he that is in you.

than he that is in the world. Christ in you, the hope of God, greater is he than anything else. They are of the world.

[38 : 28] Therefore, speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God knoweth us, and so forth. And then later, in the next chapter, the dear man says, whatsoever is born of God.

That's a born-again sinner, isn't it? Born again of God. A new birth, born again of God. And he says this, overcometh the world.

And this is the victory that overcometh the world. Not that person in himself or herself, but what's in that person. The Lord himself, and precious faith, as he says here, this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. The Lord bless these few rambling thoughts, pardon all of us, and groan to us, oh, we need a real religion.

They will stand. On that rock, you may feel the same. We sometimes say rock bottom. You never sink beneath that rock.

[39 : 54] You can't sink lower than that rock. That rock is a cleft rock, a hiding place. That rock is a standing place.

Yes, he's the rock. never shall be moved as the word of God. That doesn't mean to say you won't be tossed about. You'll never be removed, never be taken off the rock.

That's your mercy. So one says, rock of ages, breath for me. Let me hide myself in thee. Let the water and the blood from thy riven side which flow, be of sin the devil cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power.

The tonies, they're a feeble folk. They know strength to defend themselves. They had no prickles like a hedgehog, no horns or anything.

They were feeble, ever so afraid, even a shadow crossed the path. They were under the law, unclean. they weren't valued by the world.

[41 : 10] One thing about the tonies, they did keep together, and the pony could run, and he had a place to go to, at the death of the rock.

There it was safe, and there away, safe in the arms of Jesus. Amen. of care.

Amen. Anybody know, how can you do