

“The Intercession of Jesus”

Luke 22:31-34

Introduction

Throughout Scripture, we find a myriad of agricultural metaphors. Farming provides many vivid images that would immediately connect with the audience in biblical times. In Luke 22, Jesus refers to Satan wanting to sift the disciples like wheat. This is a particularly poignant and powerful image. After farmers have harvested their wheat, they begin sifting to separate the unwanted chaff from the usable grain. Separating the chaff - the useless shell or husk - from the edible grain typically involves beating or trampling the wheat on a stone floor. Then the chaff can simply blow away in the wind. Satan hoped that he could sift Christ’s disciples—and especially Peter as the leader—through trials and suffering, causing them to lose faith and bring about their spiritual defeat. Satan wanted to see the disciples beaten, bruised, and eventually discarded as useless, just like the chaff.

That is the bad news, but the good news is twofold. First, God is sovereign, not Satan. Satan can only do what God allows, so even if the disciples experienced suffering and attacks from Satan, they would know that God allowed it. God allows His children to experience these difficult things to show us our sin and weaknesses so that we can correct them and draw near to Him. Second, Christ is our intercessor, which means that He stands between us and God the Father to speak to God on our behalf when Satan tries to do us harm. We desperately need Christ's intercession because of our own sin, because of Satan's accusations, and for us to carry out our kingdom purpose. Peter had a key role in the early church, and Satan wanted to thwart that. Christ supported Peter and interceded for him, praying that his faith would not fail so that he could fulfill his God-given purpose. Christ intercedes for us as our Great High Priest, and His priesthood keeps us safe and supported. Satan cannot defeat us or make us ineffective when we rely on Christ, our High Priest, to intercede for us.

Christ's intercession calls us to personal repentance, spiritual intimacy and kingdom usefulness. When trials and pain make us aware of our sin, we must repent and pull in closer to God. That will allow us to be developed in our faith and deepen our relationship with God. Then we can be useful again. Christ called Peter to strengthen his brothers, which had to do with the ministry God was going to give him for others. God has a ministry and a calling for each of us. It is imperative that we trust Christ’s intercession and follow His leading so that we can walk in His kingdom purpose. Only Christ can protect us from stumbling and cause us to stand blameless in the presence of God (Jude 1:24).

Getting Started

1. What images does farming bring to your mind?
2. What other things can you think of that have to go through a difficult process, like sifting, to be made into something useful?

Let's Get Personal

1. Why does God allow us to go through suffering? How has suffering served a purpose in your life?
2. Have you ever felt useless? What helps you see that you have a purpose in God's kingdom?
3. How has repentance helped you draw closer to God? When is repentance most difficult for you?

Take the Next Step

1. How does Christ's intercession encourage you? How can you rely more fully on His intercession?
2. When God restores us, God expects us to use that restoration to be a blessing to others. How can you use God's restoration in your life to be a blessing to others this week?
3. What are Satan's most effective tactics against you that cause you to stumble or doubt God? How can you begin building your defenses against those tactics?
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Luke 22:31-34; Jude 1:24; Luke 22:62; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; John 17:15; Matthew 16:22-23; Revelation 2:10; 1 Peter 5:6-11; Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 7:24-26; John 21:12-17.
- 5.

Renew Your Mind

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to sift you men like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith will not fail; and you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Luke 22:31-34
