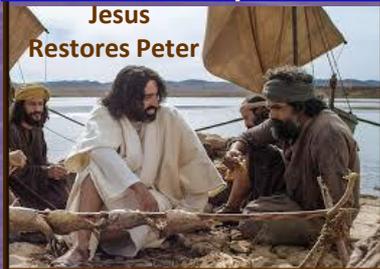


"They Are Refined Gold"

(Psalm 66:10) "For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined." (Proverbs 17:3) "The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests the hearts." (Isaiah 48:10) "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." (1 Peter 1:7) "That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ..." In the process of sifting us, God pushes us beyond our capabilities so that we have to trust Him; furthermore, He lets us fail at times so that we do not lose sight of our frailty and His perfection.

Jesus Prayed That Peter's Faith Would Not "Utterly Fail,"



Jesus Restores Peter

He let Peter know that he would suffer a setback of sorts when He said, "**when you have returned to Me**" (Luke 22:32). Jesus was in essence saying, "**Peter, you and your friends are going to be sifted... I mean really sifted, as you have never been sifted before... you will be shaken to the core, until you think you're going to die... but it's not going to be fatal... it**

will even cause you to wonder and doubt, but you'll come around... and when you do, don't forget what you've learned... and then you need to strengthen and encourage the others." Sure enough in the hours that followed Jesus' conversation with Peter, he fell — big time — he even denied that he ever knew Jesus! And then the Lord Jesus picked him up again... affirmed His unconditional love for him... embraced him... forgave him... and then reminded him of his calling to "**Tend And Shepherd His Flock**" (John 21:15-17).

"The Sifting Of Believers"

Sifted saints understand the value of the process that takes them from the heights of their self-sufficiency to the awareness of God's firm hand in conforming them to His image. Though Peter was sifted by Satan, God had a different agenda for allowing the process: he was sifted to serve! God is still sifting His people today for this very purpose — we are to be "**Others-oriented**" in life (servants if your will) – not "**Self-oriented**" in life. Our responsibility is to stay focused on God's truth and not be swayed or distracted by temporary circumstances. If we will stay faithful to the process, we will see God turn our times of sifting into glorious monuments to His grace and mercy. Incredible as it may seem, God will even use our faith failures to bless others! By the way, once you get through a sifting process, you have an obligation to strengthen and encourage others who are in the process of being shaken and feel as if they are on the prong of a winnowing fork.

"Threshing Floor"



The definition of "**Sifting Wheat**" It's a three step process. The first part is called "**Threshing**". At the time of harvest grain was reaped using a sickle. They were then bound in sheaves, or gathered into bundles and brought to the "**Threshing Floor**". The threshing "floor" was a circle of ground where the grain was placed and then trampled by animals or people, or some heavy threshing instrument. Afterward it involves spreading the wheat on the floor and beating it with an old tool called a flail. The second step was "**Winnowing**," and this was done by throwing the grain into the air and the lighter chaff would be blown off while the good stuff would fall back down. When the winnowing process is over, then comes the sifting of the grain. The wheat or barley will still be more or less mixed with certain amounts of chaff, little stones, and perhaps some tares. Sifting is therefore necessary before the grain can be ground into meal. This is the task of the women. The third process is the "**The Sifter**". The Sifter seats herself on the floor, and shakes the sieve which contains the grain, until the chaff begins to appear on the top, and this is blown away by lung power. The stones are removed as are also the tares.

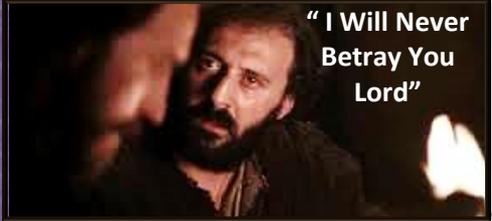
The LORD JESUS Made Reference To The "SIFTING"



On the night of the Last Supper Jesus spoke to Peter, "**And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."**

(Luke 22:31-32) Peter had a life-altering failure. Jesus warned that Satan had asked permission to "**Sift**" the disciple like wheat vigorous shaking is required to separate wheat kernels from debris. The Enemy wanted to shake Peter's faith hard in hopes that he'd fall away from Jesus like chaff. Peter fervently believed the promise he'd made to Jesus: "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not" (Mark 14:29). But Satan knows a few things about the power of fear. What's more, he realized that the disciple would be wounded by his own disloyalty.

"Why We Need Christ In Our Humanity"



"I Will Never Betray You Lord"

Peter was told by Christ on the night of the Last Supper before the Passover before Christ was delivered up to be crucified that satan wanted to take over Peter's life and destroy him, and destroy the plan God had

for his life. BUT.... Christ said that He prayed that Peter's faith wouldn't fail and that when his weakness would be converted and strengthened then he would strengthen his brethren. See, Peter told Christ that he would go with Him to prison or even be put to death for Him, but when the rubber met the road, Peter just didn't have that in him. It just goes to show that we may feel we have a total conviction in us or that if we are put in a certain situation for a certain person we love or regard that we would handle it and do a certain thing, but when we are put in that actual situation, we may not actually be able to do what we thought we would in our hearts and minds. That is what makes us human and that is why we need an intercessor and that is why we need Christ in our humanness and in our lives for us to fulfill what God would have us to do and to be. So, we really need to think about it deeply when we pass judgment on another and we say well if I were him or her, I would have done x, y, or z. Because the truth is until we are actually in the exact same position, we really have no idea what we would do until that moment arrives and we are living in that circumstance. That is why we are not even capable of judging others and we to this day have no right to judge.

"The Humanness Of Peter"



Peter was a fisherman and like many men that work in blue collar jobs, Peter cursed a lot and had a pretty foul mouth. So much so that his truest nature came out when he came under pressure after they had delivered up Christ and the prophecy that Christ predicted about Peter denying him 3 times before the cock crowed that would come to pass. (Matthew 26:73-75)

"And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus Who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly."

"Wearing the Saint Out = Sifting of the Enemy"

For us to totally understand the full impact and fullness of this text is to understand the totality of what it means to be sifted and who Peter was and the life he lived, and how meeting Christ totally changed Peter's life. In the book of Daniel Chapter 7:25, we get a glimpse of how the devil operates when he sifts us where it talks about the antichrist in the end times speaking great things against God and how he "mentally" wears out God's set aside ones, His saints. Daniel 7:25 "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Here is a perfect example of how the devil operates, afflicts, and sifts. The mind is the place that the devil loves to throw the fiery darts of his sifting and if he can conquer your mind, then he can begin the sifting process and his goal is to completely break us down and leave us in despair and confusion.

"Our Deepest Faults Will Be Revealed In The Sifting"



It is so true of us as humans as to put us under the most dire of circumstances of pressure and we will see what we are made of. Our deepest faults will be revealed. Has the satan ever desired to have you and/or sift you like wheat? So few of us realize that if God has a

significant plan for your life, then the devil also has a plan of serious attack to destroy us and take us down. The devil wants nothing more than for us to constantly question ourselves and condemn ourselves, and for us to have self hatred in our hearts, to doubt that God can even love us let alone want to save us if he can't get us to ultimately even deny God. He ultimately wants our souls and wants us to join him in death as he has a pit dug for us and wants to bury us alive and wants us to even put the dirt on our own selves and bury us alive. We so often fall for his tricks and into his trap that we don't even recognize what we are doing. He is the fowler and God warns us against his antics, yet we still can fall for it time after time. Christians cannot be tempted (sifted) in a way that God cannot use for their good and His glory. He uses weak, imperfect people... the strong (the self-assured and self-confident) have little need for God; they think they can make it on their own. So those of us who have faced our weaknesses head-on and watched as God took control of our inadequacies (2 Corinthians 12:9) "And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."