

## Promises of Danger and Development

Luke 22:31-38

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As Jesus spends His last night on earth with His eleven disciples, He turns His attention to Peter. Through their interaction, we learn about Jesus' ongoing intercession for His disciples, His control over Satan's power, and the inevitability of His promises coming true. Stephen Davey walks us through 5 of Jesus' promises in this message.

Several years ago, I was at a gas station one night and while I was there at the gas pump, a man pulled up on the other side. I could see that his wife was in the front seat and his daughter in the back seat.

When he got out, his little girl was wanting something from the gas station convenience store. He laughed and said to me that he always tried to get out of his car quick enough before his daughter had a chance to ask him for something.

I said, "I know what you mean. My kids love this place, they usually want gum, or candy, or those little white powdered doughnuts that come six to a pack—okay, those are for me!"

He said, "How many kids do you have?" I said, "Four." He said "Wow." I said, "You want one?" He said, "I have only one child and that's expensive enough; you have four children—wow, man—what do you do for a living?"

I hesitated; it was late, it was cold, I was tired. I didn't feel like beginning an evangelistic conversation.

Maybe I could tell him I raise sheep, that would be true. If I tell him I'm a pastor, he might want some on-the-spot counseling, or the answer to why evil exists in the world if there is a God. Something simple like that.

But I went ahead and told him, only because I knew God was listening.

When I told him I was a pastor of a local church in Cary, he said, “Which one?” When I told him, he said, “I can’t believe it, we were just now talking about visiting that church this Sunday—we’ve been looking for a church home—come here and meet my family.”

As I went around to their car, I had this little conversation with the Lord, “Lord, that was a test; it was late, it was cold, I was tired, now I’m happy to talk but I actually failed to represent you as I should have!”

The good news is that only this man would know that I failed, besides the Lord.

Well, how would you like to have throughout church history a record of your failure to represent the Lord as one of His disciples?

How would you like your moments of hesitation, or selfishness, or pride, or cowardice put into the record of Scripture, to be studied by billions of people for the last 2,000 years?

Well, as we’ve already learned in our study through Luke, the Lord has as much to teach us from the failures of His people as from their successes.

We’re not going to get to the courtyard scene today, where Peter fails the Lord, but we are at the point where Peter could’ve avoided it.

***So, let’s pick up our study today at Luke, chapter 22.*** Let me remind you that Peter’s denial didn’t suddenly take place in the courtyard, it had already begun in the upper room.

### **Jesus promises spiritual danger.**

He says here in verse 31:

*“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, ...”*

*Luke 22:31*

But just consider the implications of what Jesus just said: “Simon, Satan *demanded to have you.*” The verb means, “*he demanded permission*” or, “*he asked permission to receive you.*”

This reminds me of the permission Satan had to receive from the Lord to persecute Job. It’s a reminder that Satan is our adversary, and he hates those who follow God.

But he’s on a leash.

But just because he’s on a leash, held by the hand of our sovereign God, doesn’t mean we don’t need to avoid him and resist him.

Jesus never says to Peter, “Look, the devil wants to make you fail, but don’t worry—you got this!”

*No. “Simon, Satan already has you and the others in his sights, he wants to take you all down, discredit your testimony, destroy your effectiveness, steal your joy.”*

The Lord uses the analogy here of **sifting wheat**. In these days there was a small handheld thresher when someone wanted only a handful of kernels.

They would put the wheat heads into this thresher and then rather violently shake it back and forth to separate the kernels from the chaff, and then they’d blow the chaff away.

Jesus is telling Simon that the devil himself wants to personally shake his world and blow his life and his testimony; he wants to blow it away.

Now the key to this conversation here is the fact that Jesus doesn’t put a period at the end of **verse 31**, it’s a comma. Jesus isn’t finished, in fact, He adds another promise here, in that:

### **Jesus promises supernatural defense.**

Verse 31 again:

*“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you ...”*

*Luke 22:31-32a*

Satan has you in his sights ... but!

Satan wants to destroy you ... but!

“I (Jesus) have prayed for you already!”

You’ve got a powerful adversary, but you’ve got an even more powerful advocate. You’ve got a divine Defense Attorney.

Jesus actually shifts here back to a singular pronoun, He’s saying, “But I have prayed specifically for *you* Simon.”

Now we know from John 17 that the Lord prayed for all His disciples just as earnestly.

Imagine how long Jesus’ prayer list must be. Your name is on it too as one of His disciples!

The reality is, Jesus knows every disciple will fail Him, every disciple will fall to temptation, every disciple will talk when they should stay quiet and stay quiet when they should speak up.

Let me tell you, the one thing you and I do consistently is fail Jesus. And if you don't believe that, you need to talk to your wife. We don't excuse it; we must quickly confess it.

Which is why the believers have been given this amazing reassurance in 1 John. He's writing to believers and says in **1 John 1:8**:

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

*1 John 1:8*

In verse 10:

*If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

*1 John 1:10*

1 John 2:1:

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.  
But, if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ  
the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, ..."*

*1 John 2:1-2a*

Propitiation means satisfaction. Jesus satisfied the just demands against us, by paying the penalty for our sin.

And now He's praying for us in our battle, that we'll be strengthened even through times of failure and sin.

I personally believe that a source of discouragement today as a disciple of Christ is that we tend to think only of Jesus dying for us, or rising for us, and forget that He is praying for us.

The Bible says in Hebrews 7:25 that Jesus is **ever living to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25)**.

The Roman system of law allowed for an *advocatus*, from which we get our word advocate.

An *advocatus* represented their client in the courtroom and spoke on their behalf.

We have an Advocate—a Defense Attorney—and our Lord has never lost a case.

**Jesus promises spiritual development.**

Notice again here the first part of verse 32:

*“... but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.”*

*Luke 22:32a*

Don't miss this here: Jesus isn't saying, “Peter, I'm praying that you will never fail me.” No, Jesus has *already* prayed for Peter and He *already* knows that Peter will fail.

So why does Jesus tell Peter that here?

Jesus doesn't pray for us because He doesn't know what He's going to do with us after we fail. He's letting us know that He prays for us because **we are** going to wonder what He is going to do with us after we fail.

The Lord already knows that Peter's failure is just hours ahead where Satan will gain the upper hand, but Jesus effectively says here to Simon Peter and the rest of the disciples and to you and me today:

“I represent you as your Advocate. You are my client in the court of heaven, I'm praying that even in your failures your faith will become stronger.”

He's praying that Peter's sin will lead him to greater insight and spiritual development.

John Kennedy, a Scottish pastor in the 1800s once wrote on this text these words: “For all your guilty yesterdays, all your sinful today's, and all your unknown tomorrows, Jesus promises, ‘I have already prayed for you.’”

Dale Ralph Davis, [Luke: The Year of the Lord's Favor](#) (Christian Focus, 2021), p. 173

***Now with that, Jesus adds this little phrase here in verse 32:***

*“And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”*

*Luke 22:32b*

The idea here of **turning** implies repentance has occurred.

David E. Garland, [Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke](#) (Zondervan, 2011), p. 869

One translator put it this way, that Jesus said to Peter: “[Repent] and retrace your steps.”

Hendriksen, p. 974

You're not starting over as a believer; you are simply retracing your steps back to where you got off track.

“Peter, after you've gotten back on track, after you've retraced your steps back home strengthen— *sterizo*—your brothers.” That verb gives us our word for steroids.

Peter, you need to strengthen the spiritual muscles of other believers one day.

**Look again here at verse 32:**

*“And **when** you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”*

*Luke 22:32b*

Not “if” but “when.” This is a sweet prediction from the Lord, which must have helped dry Peter’s bitter tears. He still had a future and a purpose and a ministry to other believers.

He’s telling Peter—and every disciple to this day—your failure is *not* fatal.

Now, I have to remind you that at this point, everything Jesus is saying is going in one ear and out the other. Peter isn’t really listening.

And because of that, Jesus adds more details about his denials:

**Jesus promises serious denials.**

Verse 33:

*Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.”*

*Luke 22:33*

Matthew’s gospel account reads:

*“Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”*

*Matthew 26:33b*

“These other disciples don’t have what it takes. But Lord, but I will go with you to prison and to the death!”

I think Peter expected Jesus to give him a hug and a little plastic trophy that read: “Most courageous disciple.”

**Instead, Jesus responds here in verse 34:**

*“I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”*

*Luke 22:34b*

“Peter, you’re not going to die with me; you’re going to *deny* Me.”

Notice how **verse 34** begins: Jesus says, ***“I tell you, Peter.”*** That’s another way of saying “Peter, look at me, I have something to tell you.”

Whenever my mother used to say, “Stephen, look at me, I have something to tell you.” I knew it was not going to be a compliment.

Jesus could even have raised his voice some, “Peter, I’m telling you, there’s a rooster in your future.”

Now think about this: for the Lord’s prediction to come true, people will have to ask Peter if he knows the Lord in order for Peter to deny it; for a rooster to crow, there must be some chickens around somewhere.

So, if Peter is as smart as he thinks he is, he will avoid people and he will avoid chickens, and if he sees a rooster, he’s going to run in the opposite direction!

But where does Peter go? Into a crowded courtyard, that’s where people and domestic animals would be milling around. Why would he go there? Because he thinks Jesus got it wrong.

By the way, there’s nothing in the New Testament accounts that say this rooster was a block away over in the next neighborhood. I have every reason to believe that this rooster walked right up to Peter and let it rip.

Now here in the next few verses, the Lord makes a fifth and final promise.

### **Jesus promises severe difficulties.**

Verse 35:

*And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.”*

*Luke 22:35*

Jesus reminds them of their earlier evangelistic trip recorded in **Luke chapter 10**, where they were sent out empty handed, with no food, no extra sandals or clothing, no money, and the Lord miraculously provided for them.

But now that’s going to change. The Lord will still provide, but more subtly, and not without the disciples experiencing difficulty as the dispensation of the church age will soon begin.

***Jesus says to them, here in verse 36:***

*“But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.”*

*Luke 22:36b-37*

I believe the Lord is describing the disciples’ post-resurrection ministry.

Davis, p. 174

Think about it: when the Lord was with them physically, they never went hungry. No disciple fell out of the boat during a storm. The enemies of Christ were supernaturally restrained.

But that’s all going to change.

Now this sword wasn’t for the sake of aggression or violence; it wasn’t to save their lives from martyrdom.

Which is why Jesus will tell Peter to put his sword away in the Garden of Gethsemane a few hours later.

The sword was simply standard equipment for travelers; it was common equipment on the highway where robbers and wild animals hid in the shadows.

It won’t be long before these men will travel their known world, most often by themselves.

- Matthew will end up martyred in Ethiopia.
- Phillip will be martyred in modern day Turkey.
- Thomas will make it to India where he will serve before being martyred near the city of Chennai.

When I traveled to preach in Chennai, I visited the little chapel that commemorated his ministry.

Jesus is simply delivering the news that their ministry is about to radically change. It’s going to be difficult and dangerous as they travel the world.

So now, Jesus tells them, “Plan ahead; don’t go unprepared; get your money together and pack some extra sandals and put food in your backpack and carry a sword to ward off bandits and wild animals.

One author called this “The Disciples Defense Starter Kit.”



Davis, p. 175

Now what's interesting is that the disciples missed the point, because they did a little inventory among themselves in **verse 38**:

*And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough."*

*Luke 22:38*

Which means, "Enough of that kind of talk." As if to say, "You missed the point." Of course, they will understand what He means later.

Swindoll, p. 487

Now here's the question for every disciple to this day: where do you see yourself in this conversation between Peter and Jesus?

Are you **defiant** with the Lord's will today? Resisting His authority? Trying to redefine His word to suit your sin?

Peter is arguing here with the Son of God, and I'm sure Satan was smiling as he hears Peter tell Jesus that He's wrong.

Perhaps you don't see yourself in this scene as defiant, **but distant**.

You're a believer, but you've strayed and perhaps you alone know it's true. You need to turn around and retrace your steps back to where you once were, serving the Lord, reading His Word, confessing your sins.

Retrace your steps back home.

Perhaps you're **discouraged** today about your failures in the past, discouraged about your present situation, or as you look just up ahead.

Remember, beloved, you have an Advocate.

- He's taken care of your past.
- He's teaching you in the present.
- He will triumph with you in the future.

And all along the way, Jesus is praying for you.

And let me tell you, all of Jesus' prayer requests about you will be answered at the right time, in the right way, for the right reason.

***He ever lives to make intercession for you.***

Imagine, He *lives* to talk to God the Father and God the Spirit about you.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne, another Scottish pastor, was known for saying,

“If you could hear Jesus praying for you in the next room, you would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is indeed praying for you right now.”

Distance makes no difference. He is praying for you and me, today.

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# Study Guide

## Summary

In this sermon, we explored the promises of danger and development that Jesus made to His disciples, particularly focusing on Peter's journey as depicted in Luke 22:31-38. The narrative begins with a personal anecdote about a late-night encounter at a gas station, which serves as a prelude to discussing the challenges of representing Christ in everyday life. The sermon delves into the spiritual dangers that Jesus warned Peter about, emphasizing that Satan seeks to sift believers like wheat. However, Jesus also promises supernatural defense, praying specifically for Peter's faith not to fail. The sermon highlights the inevitability of failure in the Christian walk but reassures that Jesus' intercession and advocacy provide strength and restoration. Finally, it touches on the severe difficulties the disciples would face in their ministry, urging believers to prepare for spiritual battles while relying on Jesus' ongoing prayers and support.

## Key Takeaways

1. Jesus warned Peter that Satan sought to sift him like wheat, a vivid metaphor for spiritual attack. Yet, Jesus also promised His intercession, highlighting that while Satan is powerful, he is on a leash held by God. This teaches us that spiritual danger is real, but we are not defenseless; Jesus Himself prays for our faith to endure.
2. The sermon underscores that every disciple will fail Jesus at some point. This is not an excuse for sin but a call to humility and quick repentance. 1 John 1:8-10 reminds us that denying our sinfulness is self-deception. Instead, we should confess our sins, knowing that Jesus, our Advocate, has already paid the penalty and continues to intercede for us.
3. Jesus' words to Peter, "And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers," reveal that failure is not the end. Repentance allows us to retrace our steps and return to our spiritual path. Our past failures can become sources of strength and encouragement for others, showing that God's grace is sufficient for all our shortcomings.
4. Jesus advised His disciples to prepare for the challenges ahead, symbolized by taking a moneybag, knapsack, and sword. This preparation is not for physical aggression but for spiritual resilience. As modern disciples, we must equip ourselves with spiritual disciplines—prayer, Scripture, and community—to face the trials and temptations of life.

## Discussion Guide

### Bible Reading:

- Luke 22:31-38
- 1 John 1:8-10
- Hebrews 7:25

### Observation Questions:

1. What did Jesus warn Peter about in Luke 22:31, and what metaphor did He use to describe the spiritual attack?
2. According to Luke 22:32, what did Jesus promise Peter after warning him about Satan's intentions?
3. How does Hebrews 7:25 describe Jesus' ongoing role for believers?

### Interpretation Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus specifically prayed for Peter's faith not to fail, even though He knew Peter would deny Him?
2. How does the concept of Jesus as our Advocate in 1 John 2:1-2 provide comfort and assurance to believers?
3. What does Jesus' instruction to the disciples to take a moneybag, knapsack, and sword in Luke 22:36-37 symbolize about their future ministry?

### Application Questions:

1. Reflect on a time when you felt spiritually attacked or tempted. How did you respond, and what can you learn from Jesus' promise of supernatural defense?
2. Jesus told Peter to "strengthen your brothers" after he had turned back. How can you use your past failures to encourage and support others in their faith journey?
3. What spiritual disciplines (e.g., prayer, Scripture reading, community) can you incorporate into your life to better prepare for spiritual battles?
4. Think about a specific area in your life where you feel distant from God. What practical steps can you take this week to "retrace your steps" and return to a closer relationship with Him?