

Luke Chapter 22 v 22 - 34

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Preacher: Joel Beeke

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 30] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[5 : 30] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

And you are the God.

We are the Lord. Thank you. We are the Lord.

[8 : 18] We are the Lord. Worship this evening that, Lord, we are saved by sovereign grace, that we are rescued by your hand, that we are kept by your power, and that power has come to us in and through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He shares that same title, which is uniquely that of God, so that we might know that he truly is God, God who became man, God who became for us our great prophet, priest, and king, God who took upon himself the sinfulness and the wickedness and the punishment of his people, God who suffered, God who died.

We can't take it in. Our minds are too small to grasp that the infinite, eternal, immortal God should suffer and die, that he should die for me.

O Lord, we ask that where we have become, as it were, familiar with these things, where we have become over-familiar with the wonder of your salvation to us, forgive us, O Lord, and make these things new and real and fresh to our hearts and minds, even this evening, that we may overflow with your Holy Spirit in worship and praise and thanksgiving.

And more than that, that because of the salvation you've given us, because our hearts are so captivated with the wonder of the love of Jesus to us, that we would be, as it were, driven out of this place with a great desire to tell others to, that we would be moved and motivated by the very love of Christ in our hearts to tell men and women and boys and girls of the Savior who we love, but who first loved us.

[10 : 06] O come upon us, we pray, and amongst us we ask, and by your Holy Spirit, work in us. Where our hearts are cold, and we confess for all of us that is the case, Lord, breathe upon them that life-giving fire, rekindle in us a warmth and a devotion and a commitment for you.

Where, Lord, we have backslidden in some way or other, and we have not confessed and brought these sins to you, Lord, bring us back and restore us. Where, O Lord, we have become conceited or proud, Lord, humble us.

According to your knowledge of us, O Lord, we pray, do your work in us and through us for the glory and praise of Jesus and his name.

Speak to us in your word, we pray, and make us again to be a people who are moving forward in the goodness and grace of God. For we ask these things as we bring every prayer to you and every request to you, in and through the one mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen. Amen. But I only choose not to lie to me.

[11 : 46] together by the power of your voice. Let the skies declare your glory.

Let the land and sea rejoice. You're the author of creation. You're the Lord of every man.

And your cry of love brings out across the land. 2057, Luke and chapter 22.

And we're going to pick up from verse 22. You're well aware of the situation. The Lord Jesus has shared with his disciples the Passover meal.

He's given those new words and new meaning to that meal. As he broke the bread and shared the wine.

[13 : 12] And then when we come to verse 22, we're going to read from there through to verse 34. Luke 22, verse 22.

The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him. They, that's the disciples, began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be the greatest. Jesus said to them, the kings of the Gentiles lord it over them.

And those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest.

And the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater? The one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table?

[14 : 23] But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my father conferred one on me.

So that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.

But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. But he replied, Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.

Jesus answered, I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.

May God add his rich blessing to his faithful word. Thank you.

[15 : 46] A young bride once came to me for counseling and with her husband and said to me in the process of the first counseling session, my husband does not meet all my needs.

When I gently tried to explain to her that no human being on earth could meet all our needs, but there is one who does and who can, she looked genuinely puzzled and he looked genuinely relieved.

You see, too often we Christians expect too much of each other and too little of our Lord.

And we devalue the friendship of Jesus, even as we overestimate the burdens that we place upon those we call friends in this life.

Jesus, as we've sung, is the friend par excellence. He is the office bearer who alone can meet all our needs.

[17 : 09] And when he does so, as he always does for his people, we experience with the saints of all ages that we then can go out and out of his office bearing begin to be faithful in bearing office to others in the shadow of his essential office bearing.

That is to say, he is the prophet who teaches us, who admonishes us. He is the priest who sacrifices for us and intercedes for us. He is the king who rules and guides us.

And he who made us office bearers in paradise, but we have broken that office bearing in Adam, regenerates us, reforms us, reconstitutes us as office bearers in his name.

And so we begin in this life to exercise office in his shadow. Heidelberg Catechism reflects that so richly when it speaks in question 31 of the name of Christ, the anointed, the chief prophet, the everlasting priest, and the guiding king.

And then, astonishingly, in that list of names, as it goes through question by question, the names of Jesus, it inserts a question that first seems out of place.

[18 : 48] But why, 32, are you called a Christian? But you see, it's not out of place. Because when you're in Christ, you're called to be a Christian, which literally, in the original, meant a little Christ.

Not in essence, but like him. And the answer is, Because I'm a member of Christ by faith, and thus impartaker of his anointing, that so I may confess his name.

That's our prophetic office. And present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness. That's my priestly calling. And also that with a free and good conscience, I may fight against sin and Satan in this life, and afterwards reign with him eternally over all creatures, our heavenly calling.

Now, one of the best ways to understand this incredible, comprehensive magnitude of how Jesus meets our needs through his grossly, underestimated, valuable, three-fold office, is not just to lecture about prophetic, priestly, and kingly ministrations, but to hone in on one biblical example to show how Jesus exercises that three-fold office in a very concrete situation.

And from that situation, to glean lessons, comforts, instructions, challenges that help us go out and be prophets, priests, and kings to him and for him as well.

[20 : 34] And that's the approach I want to use this evening from the words of our text in Luke 22, 31 and 32, where we read just these words. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has 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, or when thou art repentant, strengthen thy brethren.

So with God's help, our theme then this evening is, Who Can Meet All Our Needs? Or you might say, How Jesus Meets All Our Needs. And we'll have three thoughts.

First, as our prophetic admonisher, second, as our priestly intercessor, and third, as our kingly commissioner. Our prophetic admonisher, our priestly intercessor, and our kingly commissioner.

Now, as Peter mentioned already, Jesus spoke these words directly after he had instituted the Lord's Supper. and eaten with his disciples.

[21 : 50] This very, very special meal. And astonishingly, just after they had been arguing among themselves, who was the greatest among them?

Jesus is so faithful that he comes and he warns Simon Peter. I'm going to warn you, Peter. I've seen that Satan is ready to attack you.

Watch and pray that you don't enter into temptation, for Satan desires to have you. And Jesus says this in the presence of all the apostles.

He's confronting his disciples with the reality of the cruel temptations of the devil. He tells them all, but singles out Peter, who's the unspoken natural leader, that Satan wants to attack them and destroy them.

Now, the frightening thing is that Simon Peter doesn't take it to heart. The comforting thing is that Jesus does. You see, the frightening truth is that when Jesus warns us, like a faithful parent, he will also protect us.

[23 : 11] In fact, he uses his warnings as part of the means that he designs to keep us from temptation itself and from falling.

And there's many people that don't realize that. Armenians say, well, you Calvinists, you've got, obviously, you've got it all wrong when it comes to man's free will and man's ability because, or perseverance of the saints, for example, because Hebrews makes it very plain that if you don't stand, if you don't persevere, you will fall away.

You will apostatize. But what Armenians don't realize in the context of all of Scripture is that texts such as these are just warnings that Jesus gives so that we will persevere and we won't fall away.

It's sort of like when our children were young. We had a fairly long driveway, but we had a busy and dangerous road and we drew a big, fat, white chalk mark over the driveway and we took each one of our kids to that mark and we got down on one knee and looked them eyeball to eyeball and said, don't you ever, ever dare to go across this line or you will die.

You understand? It was serious business. Now, if they had ever gone over that line, well, my wife was watching them.

[24 : 34] She would have run out and got a hold of them long before they reached the road. But you see, the warning was used to keep them within the fences of safety.

And so God warns us and admonishes us as a prophetic gift from God to meet our needs so that we don't think lightly of sin, so that we don't play lightly with fire, so that we don't apostatize from Him.

Simon, Simon, behold. You see, that's really a triple warning. In the Bible, when something is mentioned twice, particularly a name, it's a sign of warning.

It's a sign that says, pay attention. What I'm saying to you now is extremely important. And the word behold means the same thing.

Pay special attention. So it's like, Simon, Simon, Simon. Simon, you've had it with your children, haven't you? Those of you who have children, if you say their name once, well, they may not hear you very well.

[25 : 53] But if you say, Kelvin, Kelvin, you got his attention. Pay attention. I'm warning you. That's what Jesus is doing here.

It's actually the third time in the book of Luke, he does this. You know the other times well. Martha, Martha.

Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. And now, Simon, Simon. But this is the only time the word behold is added.

It's as if Jesus gets down on one knee and looks Peter in the eye and says, you listen to me now, Simon Peter. You're the leader of these apostles and you think you can stand on your own, but I'm telling you, you need my grace to stand.

Satan wants you. He wants to have you. He wants to sift you as wheat. Now, it's interesting that when Jesus says, Satan wants to have you, he speaks in the second person plural, suggesting that he's warning all the apostles, as well as Simon in particular.

[27 : 13] And yet, he has a special warning for Simon because when he says, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee.

He switches into the singular. Here's one case in the Bible where the thee and the you still has their own meaning. Thee is, of course, singular. And so he's saying, I'm warning all of you, but I'm praying particularly for you, Simon Peter, because you're most susceptible because you're the leader.

And in between the lines, he's saying, because you also think you can stand and you love me more than everyone else. Though all men will offend thee, says Simon Peter, yet will not I. Jesus zeroes in on Simon Peter. And of course, Satan is zeroing in on Simon Peter as well.

He's already, he's already gotten Judas to fall, to leave the Lord's Supper and to go and get a band of two, three hundred men to accompany him, to come back and to arrest the Lord Jesus for a paltry sum of the price of a slave, thirty shekels of silver.

And so, as one old divine said, it's as if Jesus' warning sign in Peter, Satan thinks now that he has one of the lieutenants, he can go for the colonel. Simon, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan wants to have you.

[28 : 44] What a lesson that is for those of us who are bearing office in the church of Jesus Christ. You know, the more areas in our lives in which we're called to bear office, the more Satan wants us.

If you're an employer, you're called to bear a fatherly role of office over your employees. Satan wants you. If you're a dad or mom in the home, you're called to be prophets, priests, and kings to your children, Satan wants you.

If you're an office bearer in the church, Satan wants you. Actually, Satan wants everyone, of course. He wants young people. He wants to keep you from giving your young life over to him because he knows if he can get you for a good part of your life, he blunts your witness so that your life is very ineffective.

Satan wants to have you, particularly ministers. You know, John Calvin once said, the ministry is not an easy and indulgent exercise, but a hard and severe warfare where Satan is exerting all his power against us and moving every stone for our disturbance.

Richard Baxter put it this way, Satan knows what a route he can make of the troops if he can make the leader fall before their eyes. If Satan can ensnare your feet, your hands, your tongue, and make you fall, your troops will scatter.

[30 : 21] You need to pray for your ministers. They're susceptible to extraordinary seasons of attack from the arch enemy, Satan.

He wants to have them. But no matter who we are, you see, Satan, he's been studying human nature closely for 6,000 plus years and he knows our weakest points.

He observes all our behavior, all our words, our actions. He knows where we're temptable and he knows how to put temptations at that point of temptability strategically.

He's a good fisherman and he wants to reel us in. He wants to have you. And sometimes it's embarrassing and shameful how easily he can get us on his line.

Do you ever have that? You just, sometimes I think, you know, I've been a Christian now for half a century and it's just amazing and I'm not far more holy than I am.

[31 : 41] that Satan could get me to think that thought or speak that word so easily or I should be so much stronger.

You know, we, we haven't done much fishing in our life but I did do fishing a few times with my son and one of the first, I mean, I barely knew how to put a worm on a hook and I just went out with a cheap fishing pole and we were by a river and I threw the thing out and there were fishermen all around me.

Nobody was catching anything. I threw it out and immediately I caught something and I reeled it in and I didn't know what kind of fish it was and all the fishermen came around me and said, you caught a walleye.

It's like this big and I said, that's a great walleye for this river. What did you use? They said, I said, use? I used a worm. They said, you caught a walleye with a worm?

I didn't know it was a big deal. But for them, they said, that's, that's, you know, walleyes don't ever bite at a mere worm.

[32 : 51] Just see, we Christians, we, we can bite so easily at Satan's bait, even something that's not all that tasty, not, it's not all that palatable. And that's why Jesus comes to warn us too and say, don't be an easy prey from Satan.

Flee temptation. Remember, as the old Puritans used to say, there's a spark of hell in every temptation. Simon, Simon, behold. And amazingly, Peter just brushes past all these warnings.

This triple warning. And he says, Lord, I'm ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death. In other words, don't worry about me. I'll stand. But him who think he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Peter's not shaken by the seriousness of Christ's words and apparently not even by the fall of Judas. And you see, Jesus meets our needs as our prophetic admonisher to come and to warn us of the evils that are in the way.

Satan is that fallen angel who seeks to go to and fro in the earth, he says in the book of Job, and is a murderer and a liar from the beginning. Satan is the Judas among the angels, the great apostate, the angel who rebelled against what God entrusted to him on the first day of creation.

[34 : 21] And that's Satan wants to have you. In the Greek, the verb is used *exiteo*, which is an intensified form of to ask.

You could say to pray. Satan is prayed to have you or to ask excessively or you could even say as some have translated he's put in a suit for you. He's, he's, he's suing in heaven's courts for you.

Right? It reminds you of Job, doesn't it? Where Satan comes before God and says, I want Job. That's what Jesus is saying here. Satan wants to have you badly.

To do what? To sift you. To sift you as wheat. What does that mean? Well, in biblical times, you, if you were a farmer, you'd hire a few farmhands and they would have, you'd give them a broad instrument that was called a sieve and it had a handle on and they would hold it with both hands and they'd scoop up from the bottom of the threshing floor a mixture of dust and dirt and straw and chaff and they'd shake it this way with their wrists and all the dirt and dust would fall out of the sieve to the ground and then you'd shake it up and down like this and the straw and the chaff would come to the surface and just the wheat would stay in the bottom of the sieve and you'd reach in and you'd pull out the straw and you'd blow away the chaff.

But you see, Satan's goal is to shake you and to rock you back and forth so yes, the dust and dirt fall but the straw and the chaff come to the surface and he doesn't want it to be blown away or to be snatched away so that the straw and the chaff choke the wheat.

[36 : 20] That's the image that Jesus is painting here. To destroy the wheat he wants to sift you. Now, Satan has many sieves.

Prosperity can be a sieve if it goes to your head. Adversity is a common sieve of Satan. Temptation is another sieve. But you see, Satan's goal is to get you to forsake Jesus while you're in his sieve.

To lose sight of the only one who can meet all your needs. You know, Job began well, didn't he? He began well. He refused to listen to his wife who said, curse God and die.

But, a few chapters later, he cursed the day of his birth. He didn't do so well at certain points in that sieve. Abraham didn't do very well in the sieve, did he? He said, Sarah's my sister.

Jacob didn't do so well in the sieve. All these things are against me. Peter, you're not going to do so well in the sieve.

[37 : 32] You're going to deny me three times before the cock crows. You see, you and I don't always do so well in the sieve either, do we?

Sometimes we're weak. Sometimes we're proud. Sometimes we're selfish. Sometimes we're just unbelieving. And we say, I know all the theology.

I know that all things work together for good. But, and we rise up in rebellion. Which is exactly where Satan wants us.

And how frightening it is when Satan uses his sieves to stir up in us desires for sins that we thought we've long subdued.

And that we thought we've long destroyed. And they surface again. It seems as if everything, the grace of God has worked in us, disappears at such times as Satan's sieve.

[38 : 28] And we can become spiritually downcast. And we're not even sane to our soul in that condition. The way we ought to say like the psalmist, O my soul, why art thou sad within thee?

Hope in God. For he's the health of your countenance and your God. But we feel overpowered. We feel darkness.

We feel overwhelmed by the sieve of Satan. And we fear perhaps at such times that we'll return like a dog to its vomit back to our former life, back to the world. See, Satan's no trivial enemy.

But the beauty, the beauty is that though we are opposed by a cunning and resourceful enemy who can outlive us and outwork us and outwit us, and though our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?

Jesus, in his warning ministry to us, is able to overcome all of Satan's temptations. and that may be hard to see.

[39 : 36] Maybe it's hard to see right now in your life. You know, Satan is always, it seems, one step ahead of us. You know the story, there's a story of a watermelon farmer.

He had some thieves come and they were stealing watermelon from his farm over and over again and he got frustrated. So he put out a sign one night, said, warning, one of these watermelon is poisoned.

And no thieves came for two weeks. He thought he had the problem solved. And then, one morning he walked out to his watermelon patch and there was another sign beside it that said, warning, two of these watermelon are poisoned.

The guy had to throw away his crop. He didn't know. You see, as soon as you think you've conquered Satan, it's sort of like ISIS. You know, as soon as we think we've mastered one of their techniques to destroy and kill people, they come up with another way of killing people.

And you've got to go after that. That's like Satan. That's the way he works. As soon as you conquer one sin, by the grace of God, he has another set up to destroy you.

[40 : 46] But here's the comfort. Jesus warns us and prays for us. But, thank God for that but, to verse 32, ended just with a period at the end of verse 31.

That's all there was to say. It's a rather depressing message. But, I have prayed for thee, you personally, as individuals, as individual believers, one by one, that your faith fail not.

Not. God. He's not only a prophetic admonisher, he's a priestly intercessor. And what a beautiful, glorious thing this is.

You see, Jesus is anticipating the hour of the power of darkness. He's going to leave His disciples now and go into the belly of hell to suffer and to die for them.

It's the battle of all ages. It's the conflict prophesied already in Genesis 3.15, the first gospel promise, the conflict of all ages, the apex, or should I say the nadir, of His suffering.

[42 : 01] Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha, all the powers of hell would be unleashed. And yet, in the midst of it, amazingly, the Savior is saying, but I'm praying for you that your faith does not fail.

And you see, what Jesus does is He out-desires and out-praise and out-wits Satan. And He's got a stronger claim with God to have you than Satan does to have you.

Because He suffered and died for you and put Himself in your place, dear believer. And what that means is He can go to heaven's courts and say, Satan has put in a claim, but I have put in a counterclaim and I put in a counterclaim on the merits of justice because I have gone into Satan's sieve for this sinner.

I have paid a ransom price for his sins and I've come out of this sieve absolutely sinless. Jesus never stumbled in the sieve of Satan. You know His three temptations in Matthew 4.

Every one of them, He said, it is written, it is written, it is written. He passed every test. He refused to fall. Because He's the priestly sacrificer who gave His all so that we can be set free, He can now intercede for us on the basis of His merits and say, Heavenly Father, You know that I have a right to Simon Peter.

[43 : 39] I've merited His salvation. I've paid for His sin. I want Simon Peter. You see, if you're a believer, well, even an unbeliever, but if you're a believer, you're a wanted person.

Satan wants to have you and Jesus wants to have you. Thank God that Jesus is God and Satan is only an angel. Jesus is mightier than Satan.

That's our comfort. An angel is a pretty powerful creature. One angel killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. But Satan is no match for Jesus.

He's got all power in heaven and on earth. And his prayers are astonishing when they're based on his own sacrifice. They never fall to the ground unanswered.

They're always effectual. Father, thou hearest me always, he could say. So what a beautiful way for him to meet our needs.

[44 : 52] The intercession of Christ, I've often said to my congregation, is the greatest underestimated doctrine in all of Reformed theology. Can you imagine a Savior at the right hand of the Father who, as Hebrews 7, 25 says, ever lives to make a intercession for you from moment to moment?

How can you grasp that? We can think about one thing in our mind at a time. Well, maybe you women can think of two or three. But the point is this.

You see, we've got our finite limits. But Jesus can pack millions of things into his mind. He's almighty God at one and the same time. And he can treat all his children as one massive corporate whole, as believers.

But he can also at the same time treat every one of them as if they were his only child. I have prayed for you. Simon Peter, that your faith failed not.

It's mysterious. It's beyond our comprehension. But I do know a few times in my life, and I hope you do as well, where I came so to my wit's end with my own prayers.

[46 : 06] I could hardly cry. I could hardly sigh to God. But my only refuge was Lord Jesus. My only hope is that thou art praying for me. I, oh, it's so wonderful.

And it's in the emphatic tense, by the way, in the Greek. I myself, Satan wants to have you, but I myself, I have prayed for you. And I am the Lord of glory.

I am the great I am. As we heard in prayer, the Yahweh, the almighty, the unchangeable, faithful, covenant-keeping God. The I was that I was, the I am that I am, the I shall be, I shall be.

I will never change, I will never desert you, no, never, no, never, no, never forsake you, Hebrews 13 says. I will keep you. But now notice what Jesus prays.

It's fascinating. He doesn't say, Simon, I'm going to pray for you that you won't stumble. He doesn't say that.

[47 : 06] He doesn't say, Simon, I'm not going to pray for you that your righteousness will stand or that your self-righteousness won't fail. I'm not praying for your self-confidence.

I'm not praying that your fleshly expectation of an earthly kingdom won't fail. That you're going to be the number one apostle forever and build a kind of kingdom for yourself under my kingdom.

I'm not going to pray that your fleshly holiness won't fail, or your fleshly pride, or your fleshly strength, or your fleshly wisdom, or your fleshly prayer even, or your fleshly self-righteousness.

All of that dust and dirt, I will let Satan shake you and I will let it fall. But there's one thing that I'm praying won't fail.

It's your faith, Simon Peter. Your faith. And why your faith? Well, because faith has one object, and the one object is Jesus. And only then are we safe when our faith is in Him.

[48 : 13] And you see, Peter's problem is that he's building on fleshly things, and Jesus will use Satan, listen to me carefully now, use Satan's devices to overturn all our fleshly confidence.

John Calvin has an amazing statement at this point in his commentary. He says this, he says, even the devil, even the devil can sometimes act as a wise physician for us.

You say, what are you talking about, Calvin? But you see, what Satan is trying to do to destroy us, Jesus uses that very thing, so as we get shaken back and forth, the dust and dirt falls, and the straw and chaff come to the surface, Jesus reaches in, as the great farmhand of his father, the great servant of the father, and he takes away the straw through our very afflictions and blows away the chaff so that his own wheat abides, and nothing falls to the ground and gets destroyed.

I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. Matthew Henry said, Christ honors faith the most because faith honors Christ the most.

You see, it's faith that abides the fire of temptation. Have you ever seen believers who have been afflicted beyond the point you think of ever being able to cope, and they're just filled with faith, and you're amazed, and you feel the reality of true and vital Christianity when you're at their bedside.

[50 : 00] You say, this is real, and you'll walk away as a pastor, and you say, they pastored me a whole lot more than I pastored them, because the priestly intercessory ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was tangible in them.

And he was praying that their faith not fail. Now, the word for not fail here is *eclipo* in Greek, which actually means to come to an end or to give out.

We get from it, in English, the word *eclipse*. Say, the eclipse of the sun or the eclipse of the moon. That it won't be hidden, completely blocked out, but that your faith will persevere even in times of darkness.

righteousness. And you see, that's what Jesus does. He will keep that noble grace united in a believer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

No enemy, no Satan can touch faith, that bond of union by which Christ dwells in our heart. He cannot destroy that saving faith that works by love, that produces hope, that is the heart of true godliness.

[51 : 15] Jesus meets our need as prophetic admonisher, but also as priestly intercessor.

But thirdly, he meets our need as kingly commissioner. And when thou art repentant, strengthen my brethren.

Have you ever thought about these words? They're amazing, actually. Did you ever notice that Jesus doesn't say, if you repent, Peter? After you deny me, it was a terrible sin, we're not going to minimize the sin.

After you deny me three times, if you repent, I will restore you. No, that's not what Jesus says. He says, when? When you repent.

You see, it's the word of a king. And where there's a word of a king, there's power. Jesus knows Peter is going to repent because he's going to make him repent. When thou art repentant, go out and strengthen your brethren.

[52 : 27] So he gives him a royal commission, even before Peter does the sin, to show how fully he meets all our needs. And to show how calm Christ is, as he's about to go into the furnace of affliction himself, he comes with calm, majestic, kingly commission to Simon Peter, showing that he's retaining his supremacy over Satan.

He knows that Peter will be repentant. Satan wants to destroy Peter, the way he's destroying Judas Iscariot. But it won't happen. Christ is in control.

J.P. Lang, the commentator, says this, the holy supplication of mercy on Jesus' part countervails before God the daring appeal of the accuser.

You see, Peter never would have repented if left to himself. Why did he repent? Well, there he is in the hall of Caiaphas, warming himself, and he glances over, and Jesus happens to walk through, and gives him one look.

He goes out, and he weeps bitterly. One look, one word, from the almighty sufferer, and you will repent.

[54 : 02] You will repent. Go out and strengthen your brethren. What does Peter do?

He goes out and strengthens his brethren. How? Well, look at the book of Acts. Who stands up on the day of Pentecost when they said, these men are drunken and filled with new wine?

It's Simon Peter. Peter. What? The guy who just weeks before can't handle a little servant girl coming up to him by a fire? He's going to handle all those people and be bold?

The 3,000 are saved under that sermon? Simon Peter. How is it possible? The Christ, the kingly commissioner, meets all his needs, gives him the courage, gives him the words, gives him the freedom, even to speak in tongues.

It's all Christ, you see. He meets our every need. And all throughout the book of Acts, who's the unspoken leader among the apostles? It's still Simon Peter, but it's a renewed Peter.

[55 : 07] It's a broken Peter. It's a restored Peter. And you see, Peter being broken, repentant, is more useful than when he was never broken and never repented.

As one old minister, one old divine used to say, Peter had not been broken. He would never have been able to feed the little lambs.

He stood too tall. He would have beat him. But now he's a sinner himself. He denied his Lord himself. He's going to be patient now. He's going to persevere.

He's going to say, if God can save me and keep me saved, denier that I am. He can save you. He can save anyone. That's how a preacher has to feel, you see. If God can save me, he can save anyone in the world.

Tuesday, we're going to be in Bunyan country, many of us. And John Bunyan was brought upon by the Holy Spirit. He said, I have the worst heart in all of England. He said, Paul didn't know what he was talking about in 1 Timothy 1, 15, when he said, of whom I am chief.

[56 : 10] He said, the only reason he said that, because he didn't know John Bunyan yet. Because I am chief. Chief of sinners. Save by grace alone. And so Peter goes out to strengthen his brethren.

Strengthen his brethren. How does he do it? He does it not only in the book of Acts, he does it in his two wonderful epistles. That he writes, inspired by the Spirit of God. What does he declare in those epistles?

How do they begin? Then we are kept by the power of God through faith unto everlasting salvation, to an everlasting inheritance.

Kept by that faith that our Savior preserves. What a glorious thing. And he admonishes them, watch against the wiles of the devil. He seeks to go about as a roaring lion, strengthening his brethren.

He declares the bitterness of sin in those epistles several times, strengthening his brethren. He emphasizes the weakness of the flesh in his epistles, strengthening the brethren.

[57 : 16] He talks about the joy of restoration, strengthening the brethren. So what about you? Do you know something of the prophetic, the priestly, the kingly commission?

The office of Jesus Christ operating in your life. And does it make you want to go out then and become a prophet to confess his name to others? And a priest to sacrifice yourself in gratitude for the well-being of others?

And as a king to fight against sin and to look forward to the heavenly inheritance, are you out of his office bearing, bearing office for him?

When you're backsliding and you're brought back, do you go out and speak to others and strengthen your brethren? Are you a counselor to wanderers?

Do you tell others what a bitter thing it is to depart from the living God? The older you grow, are you more amazed that you're saved?

[58 : 30] The older you grow, are you more amazed at the office-bearing ministry of Jesus? The older you grow, do you have to confess, he alone meets all my needs?

Or are you still saying, I'm going to try to stand on my own like Peter? Or I'm going to expect things from other people that they meet all my needs and you'll be always disappointed.

Always disappointed. Are you living in Christ, in out of Christ, and through Christ, by Christ, to Christ?

Or are you just living by yourself? You know, if you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, may I close with this illustration? There was once a chess champion who was going through Europe and he stopped at an art museum and it was fascinating when he came across a chess piece of artwork where two players were playing a game of chess.

One on one side was dressed up with horns and was obviously representing the devil and the player on the other side was a young man who was biting his nails and Satan was reaching over and he was taking his own queen and he was just about to checkmate the young man.

[59 : 58] It seemed like there was no move to make. And the title of the painting was checkmate. And the chess champion just looked at that painting closely for a good long while.

And suddenly he shouted out to the young man. He said, wait, wait, there's a move you can make and you can actually checkmate Satan. And then he thought, oh, how foolish.

The young man can't hear me. But you see, you can hear me tonight. And I'm saying to you, there's a move you can make to checkmate Satan.

By the grace of God, repent of your sin and believe. Throw yourself at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Say, I cast myself upon thee, Lord. If mercy, I cast myself on mercy. If mercy must cast me out, then mercy must do it. But mercy will never cast you out.

[61 : 00] Throw yourself upon Jesus. Plead for mercy. And you'll checkmate Satan. And you'll find an office bearer who will meet your every need.

Let's pray. Great God of heaven, we thank thee so much for the gospel. We thank thee for a savior who is prophet, priest, and king.

And who takes us and makes us as little prophets, little priests, and little kings to follow him. But oh, how we thank thee for thy full-orbed, comprehensive ministry to meet our every need through thy threefold office, Lord Jesus.

So please help us to appreciate thy prophetic, priestly, and kingly office much more than we ever have done before. Lord, help us to love thy Son and the loving hymn to love thee, the triune God.

Thou, heavenly Father, who just love thy Son and do all things for the glory of thy Son, may we too fall in love with the triune God and do all things for thy sake.

[62 : 13] Have mercy upon us. And for those who do not yet know thee, Lord, help them to fall at thy feet, to plead for mercy, to repent and believe the gospel, and take a stand for the cause of Christ.

We pray for this church. We thank thee for the warm hospitality they have shown us today. We thank thee for Peter Robinson, their pastor. And Lord, we thank thee for the opportunity to co-labor with him today among this people.

Do bless his ministry richly and abundantly, we pray, and his family in tender mercy and compassion. And build up this church by the Holy Ghost.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.