

# Day 08 – *January 20*

**Tammy Palumbo**

**Faithfulness in Trials**

**Key Verse: Luke 22:31-32**

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**“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.”**

It is perhaps helpful to imagine the scene surrounding this prayer: Jesus and his disciples around a table, eating, talking and enjoying each other's company and companionship. But only Jesus knows the truth: this is his last supper with his disciples, and one person at the table will betray him that coming night. Jesus also knows that Peter will deny him three times before the rooster crows and so takes this moment to warn Peter about what is to come.

Jesus attributes Peter's defection to the direct activity of Satan. But more important than who is influencing Simon Peter's behaviour, is who is encouraging him in his faith journey: Jesus himself. While Jesus acknowledges that Satan has asked to “sift all of you as wheat” implying that only those with a strong faith will persevere through the coming trials, Jesus reminds Simon Peter from whence his help comes: Himself. Here is the good news: Jesus knows that after these trials that he faces, Peter will return to his faith-filled life spreading the Good News. So instead of berating Peter, he encourages him by letting him know that not only has he prayed for him, but that there is a future after failure. Perhaps this is the best part of these short verses: that Jesus acknowledges that Peter is

going to mess things up – but he will still use him to advance the kingdom once he “has turned back.”

This turning back is sometimes referred to as metanoia “a Greek term that denotes a change of mind, a reorientation, a fundamental transformation of outlook.” It implies that a person has recognized where they have gone wrong, chosen to ask God for forgiveness (repented) and then walked again in faithfulness doing God's business. Is this an area or season of life that you have experienced? For many, the difference between being a “new Christian” and being a “mature Christian” are experiences like this one. The key is recognizing that Jesus knows that you will mess things up – just like Peter – but that all you have to do is “turn back” and now you too can “strengthen your brothers.” You too can help other brothers and sisters in Christ seek God, grow in relationship with Jesus and spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith and witness.

So instead of being defeated as Satan clearly hopes, may you be encouraged as you face trials in life that you can turn to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, for understanding, forgiveness and encouragement.

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

In what areas of my life am I more like Peter?

In what ways can I draw nearer to God with metanoia and repentance?

In what ways can I demonstrate faithfulness to God's call on my life?



**PRAYER:**

Dear Lord Jesus,

Today I humbly ask that you strengthen me for the days ahead. For the days of trials and ones where I am unable or unwilling to declare your sovereignty over my life. I ask for forgiveness for all the times I have denied you. Direct my thoughts to you and help me to seek Jesus – the pioneer and perfecter of my faith – to direct my actions and words. I ask the Holy Spirit to increase my faith and fill me with perseverance and courage no matter what today brings. I ask these things in Jesus' holy name, Amen.