

The Sifting Process

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson's sermon explores the spiritual sifting process believers undergo to strengthen their faith and prepare them for God's purposes.

Duration: 56:26

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:5

Topics: "Sifting"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the concept of the sifting process as mentioned in Luke 22:31-32. He emphasizes that sifting times are sandwiched between revelation and usefulness in the life of a believer. The preacher highlights the importance of not preaching oneself, but rather preaching Christ Jesus. He encourages the congregation to trust in Jesus during times of sifting, as Jesus is praying for them and will restore them. The sermon concludes with the reminder that through the sifting process, God has an eternal purpose to rebuild and use believers for His glory.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, PO Box 260, Lindell, Texas 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. My message, the sifting process.

The sifting process. Please go to Luke 22, if you will, please. 22nd chapter of Luke.

I want to read to you just two verses, verses 31 and 32. I tell you what, if you will, let's start at verse 28. He's speaking to his apostles.

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto you, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Now folks, that is something to hear from the master.

The master says, I've appointed you as a kingdom. You're going to eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. You're going to have a throne judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Look what happens immediately. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brother.

He said unto him, Lord, I'm ready to go with thee both to prison and death. He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before thou hast thrice denied that you even know me. Heavenly Father, I can't preach this kind of message this morning unless your spirit rests upon me and that you give life to the letter.

I acknowledge my utter total need and dependence upon you. And I ask you, Lord, to speak through this vessel, broken as it may be, I pray you speak through it, that everyone will hear something from heaven. And for those, Lord, that are so confused, those that are so burdened because of what they're going through, I pray that you cast light this morning, that you give light in their darkness.

And when the service is over, their heart will leap for joy because they understand the Lord is with them and he will never forsake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Here in Luke 22, Jesus has just sat down with his apostles. They've had communion. It's the Passover.

And Jesus closed the communion service with these solemn words, the hand of him that betrays me is with me on this table. Now you think of the audacity of that. You think of the terror of the devil possessing Judas.

And Jesus takes a piece of bread and sops it in the vinegar and wine and he reaches out to Judas. And that is the hand of the devil himself taking the bread, which is a type of his broken body, as if to smash it in his hands. The utter arrogancy of the devil himself being at the Passover, not only at the Passover, being at the table and stretching forth his hand to the master.

It's an awesome, incredible moment at this communion table. I have seen ever since that Passover, it's been that Satan has brought down those who have never been delivered from a besetting sin. How did Satan get a hold of Judas? Nobody falls overnight.

Nobody just suddenly is demon-possessed. No one is suddenly given over to this. Satan entered him because he had a history of covetousness from the very beginning.

The Holy Spirit dealt with him because he walked with the Holy Spirit. He walked in the presence of divine love. He walked with the living word.

And there was nothing that could be said, there was nothing could be preached, no miracle that he had seen, nothing could touch that sin that was in his heart and he was given over to it completely. And this man absolutely was possessed of the enemy. There are mighty men, I've seen men that have been mightily used of God and I've seen them fall to the right and to the left.

Many of them were my friends and my acquaintances. They are no longer in the ministry. They have failed.

They have gone out into deep sin and to gross sin. Some of them have been close to the Lord because you see, Judas was recognized as one that followed him, one that had been with him, one who had performed miracles, but all the time he was a worker of iniquity. I had a minister call me at one time and he

said, I've got to talk to somebody, Pastor Dave, and I think I can talk to you.

He said, I'm in my mid-fifties and he said, I just came from a trailer where my preacher, father and mom live. They spent 50 years in the ministry. My dad's in the eighties, he's in his eighties now and they're poverty stricken after 50 years of ministry.

They can hardly make a living. And he said, I sat in that trailer and the spirit came upon me and I said, I will never ever end up like my dad in the ministry. There was something laid hold of me, a spirit laid hold of me and said, I will not die in poverty.

I will never give myself to this. I don't care how I have to do it. And what he's saying, I will, and I'll deal, I'll do anything, but I will never end up in a trailer.

I will never end up in poverty like my father and my mother. And the truth is I followed that man, hearing of it. He did will, and he did deal.

Real estate, shady real estate deals. He was the leader of over 300 pastors, a leader, an official of the denomination. And I'll never forget though, this cry, this cry of covetousness based out of fear.

I will never be that. You see, these kinds are easy marks for Satan. Judas was an easy mark because he had this mindset.

There's another well-known evangelist. I wouldn't mention his name. You would all recognize it.

He fell into deep sin and the nation was shocked and multitudes were shocked. And just before he was to be exposed nationally, I had his telephone number because he's a friend of mine. And I called him and I said, certainly this can't be true.

And I said, they're going to crucify you. And he said something I'll never forget. He said, David, when I was 10 years old, I started watching pornography.

At 10 years of age, he said, in all my ministry, I've been harassed. All my ministry, I've carried this burden, which means at times he would slip back into this, but it was not something that happened overnight. He had been set up as a mark and there was no victory.

There was never a time that there was genuine victory. You see, this was no problem for the devil. He was able to lay hold of a Judas.

There are many like Judas. They come to church. They worship.

You can't tell. They look holy. They look righteous.

They may be casting out devils, healing the sick. But you see, there's a problem in that life that's never been dealt with. There's a besetting sin.

It can be covetousness. It can be lust, whatever it may be. And it's an easy mark for the devil.

He can come in and he moves in and he possesses. So Satan enters into Judas. So Judas now has one man and he's going to go after the disciples one by one.

He's going to go after these apostles one by one because he knows the kingdom of God is coming. The scripture says after the Passover there was also a strife among them. Now, can you imagine this? They just had communion.

The Lord has told them he's going to be parting. He says, I'm going to be crucified. They didn't understand any of this.

If you follow the context of the other gospels, you'll find that they never did fully comprehend. And here they are. There was a strife among them.

Which of them should be accounted the greatest? Now, who's going to take over when he's gone? Who's going to be the greatest among them? Fresh out of communion, striving, arguing, who's going to be the greatest? This had to be a smorgasbord for the devil. This must have been a gleeful time for him. And he says, now who do I go after? Can you picture Satan saying, well, no, Nathaniel, no, because Jesus said there's no guile in him.

It can't be John. He's always leaning on the bosom of the master, and he'll whisper to the master, and I can't get to him. And he goes down the line, and he remembers that Peter has been told that his testimony was going to be the rock upon which Christ built his church.

And his thinking is, if I can get the rock crushed, if I can crush this, I get the foundation. I go after Peter. There was a decision made at that time to go after Peter, the apostle upon whose testimony Christ would build his church.

He made the decision. He would approach the master. He would approach the Lord and ask or pray that he could be given a season with Peter to sift him as wheat, the Scripture says.

Now remember, Satan could not get to Job without God's permission. And he was told that he could only go so far. He couldn't kill him.

He could touch his body. He could take him through trials that he could not comprehend. And he was going to take him through this without explaining to him that God had allowed it, and that there was an eternal purpose to it.

Peter, I'm sure Satan argues with the Lord, because he brings forth his strong reason. He comes before the throne. He said, look, you testify to the world that this man so believed you, that you were God in flesh, that you were willing to build your church on that testimony, that he said you're the very son of God.

And I'm telling you, he's not a rock. I'm telling you, let me have a time at Peter, and I'll break him. You'll find out you don't have a foundation stone upon which to build.

You have nothing but sand. And he goes and prays and asks, to pray means to ask, and he asked for permission to sift him as wheat, the Scripture says. Jesus had just told Peter, now listen to it again, and you'll understand why the sifting process had to come.

I appoint unto you, he's speaking to Peter and his apostles, I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father appointed unto me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Peter had to be ecstatic. See, now he's absolutely secure, he has a promise.

He knows he's going to heaven, he knows he's going to be redeemed, not only be redeemed, he's going to have a throne, he's going to have a crown on his head, and he's going to rule and reign. And he knows that he's going to sit at the master's table at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and all through eternity he's going to eat at the Lord's table. Now that's security.

That should be enough to keep any man through the rest of his ministry, and the rest of his time, in faith and confidence in the Lord. I have a promise from God. He's going to take me through this life, he's going to use me, and then in eternity I'm going to be useful all through eternity.

What an incredible word he received. But suddenly, in that holy contemplation, these shocking words from Jesus, Simon, Simon, Peter, Peter, he emphasizes it because he has an awesome word. Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

Can you hear Peter's response? Can you imagine what he said? Because he was always quick to answer the Lord whatever popped into his mind. Very impetuous man, and he says, I'm sure he said, What? Satan is going to get at me? You're going to allow him? He came and asked you, and you said, Yes? I'm the man who walked on water with you. I'm the one of all the disciples who recognize publicly your godness.

That you are God in flesh. When others doubted, I didn't. What about resist the devil and he'll flee from you? What do you mean you're going to let the devil have a time at me? You're going to let him sift me? You see, this is an agricultural society at that time.

Everybody knew what sifting was. Two by fours, four this, four, about four feet, four feet, four foot square. And a screen, just a regular screen, so that it is tight enough that grain can't go through, but all the grit and the dirt and the bugs fall through, and it leaves the grain of the kernels of the corn and the wheat in the sieve.

It's called a sieve. One man on each side, the shovel in the corn and the grain, and shake it, really shake it until there's nothing left, but the grain and the kernel. And the question is why? You see, that's a good thing.

You're getting rid of all the dirt. Why would the devil want to sieve the man and bring out fruit? Why would the devil want to shake this man and get all the dirt out of him and all the thing, and have nothing left but kernels of grain and wheat, whatever it may be? Because you see, the devil's not omniscient. He's not omnipotent.

He can't read minds. He is hoping that when he shakes Peter, there's nothing left in the sieve, that all his faith evaporates, that there's nothing left that God can use. He's going to shake him.

He's going to stir him. He's going to put him in the sieve, and the Lord has given him permission, just as he gave permission for Job to be tested and tried. Lord, where is my protection? You see, this sifting process is not for everybody.

Overconfident, Peter had no idea whatsoever what he's about to face. His answer was, Lord, I'm ready. I'm ready to die for you.

I'm ready to be crucified with you. Lord, I am ready. Boy, did he not know what was coming.

He was not ready. Folks, you can't be ready for sifting. There's nothing you can do in the flesh to prepare for what comes in what the kind of experience that I'm going to explain to you in just a moment.

Because you see, I'm of the opinion that God allows Satan to sift over confident Christians who think they can do it on their own, who think they're ready. They're ready to die for Jesus. Bless God.

If the devil comes around me, I'll trample him, and I'll chase him, and he's gone. I hear that boasting arrogance all over the United States, and that, folks, that's preached from pulpits and everything else. Yes, we are victorious over the devil, but I want to tell you something.

There are things that you go through that you don't understand that the devil is behind it. It is the devil himself, and he has been given permission to sift you. Boy, am I going to get letters on this.

Beloved, you've got to understand there are movements in the spiritual world you and I don't understand. You can rail against the devil all of you want, but angels don't do that. I don't rail against the devil.

I don't glorify his power, but I'm not ignorant of his devices and the fact that in the spiritual world there are things going on that you cannot comprehend. You cannot understand, and we may never understand, but we understand his eternal purposes in allowing it. Unless you get afraid and you say, I fear then, Brother David, you're saying the devil could get to me at any time he chooses.

Unless you fear that the devil can bring you down at any time. Let me tell you, the only saints, now listen closely, the only saints that God allows Satan to sift are those he intends to use to rebuild his fallen church. Those who come out of the shaking and the sifting time with their faith intact, I can prove to you from the word will be used to restore the house of David that's fallen down.

And that house of David is the house Jesus is building in the last days before he comes. That's the house he's building right now, and we're a part of that house. See, to the other disciples Jesus instructed them to go get a sword.

That's spiritual warfare. Look at me. He said, I'm going away.

He said, I've been with you and I've been protecting you, but now you're going to have to live by faith, and go get a sword. And what he's warning them is that there's spiritual warfare. You're going to fight like you've never fought in your life.

You're going to go through things you've never gone through before. And he's telling these 10 others, you're going to go through a fight. But you see, there's a difference between spiritual warfare and sifting.

Peter was the only one being sifted. Following me? You see, there's a difference. You see, there's a battle that no sword you have, there's no human sword can touch it.

It's a battle beyond you. There's nothing you can do to prepare for it other than seek God with all your heart and believe and walk in faith. But there's going to come a time that you're going to go through something that you don't understand.

Peter was not living in sin. Peter loved Jesus more than he'd ever loved him in his life. And just a few hours before he had taken a sword in his own hand and cut off the servant of the high priest, he was ready to fight to the end.

Five hours later in this sifting, he denies him, he even knows him. Satan injects into the mind of this man doing a sifting. You see, he's ready to fight.

He's prepared for spiritual warfare all right. He's going to defend the Lord and he does. And it's estimated it was just five or six hours later, Jesus is before the high priest and Peter is warming himself by the fire.

And you remember what happened, don't you? The maid looks at him, the maid just looks at him and melts him, scares him to death, just staring at him. How is it that he can take a sword just hours before he cut off an ear? Thank God the Lord healed the ear. How is it that five hours later a woman can stare at him and he breaks down? And she says, aren't you one of these? He says, no.

No, I'm not. Another person was there that evidently saw him cut the ear and he said, you're one of them. He says, I'm not one of them.

See, he is now in the sieve. He doesn't know where these words are coming from. First time he said it, he bows his head.

Where did that come from? My God, I said, I don't even know him. Because you see, the enemy is shaking him now. He'd been given permission to take Peter through something so deep and so profound that he was going to come out of it and speak and preach to a world who will tell him, you don't know what I'm going through and Paul or Peter is going to be, I said, I've been there deeper, further and wider than you've ever known.

And he's going to have a wisdom that God brings forth. He's going to go through a warfare, not just a spiritual warfare, but this is going to be hand to hand combat with the devil himself. So he's being sifted now.

He's in that sifting process and the devil is shaking everything in him. And finally, a third time, someone comes to him and said, I know you were with him. And he stands up and he says, I don't even know the man.

And he begins to curse according to one of the gospels. And even while he's cursing, when he's saying, oh no, the man, he is bewildered. He's befuddled.

Where does this come from? This is not Peter. This is not, this is not me. This is not my flesh.

And when Jesus looked at him, the Bible said, and the Lord looked at Peter and I'm telling you, that look wasn't saying to Peter, how could you do this to me, Peter? That look from Jesus was not, how could you blaspheme me after all I've done for you? That's not what it was at all. Jesus looked at Peter and he's trying to say, Peter, you don't understand this. Hold on.

I'm praying for you. Just like I've told you right now, you don't hear a word, but I'm interceding for you. The devil is trying to destroy your faith.

I need you, Peter. And you're going through it. Hold steady.

Prayed for you that your faith fail not. He didn't say, I pray for you that you won't go through this sifting process. I pray for you that your faith fail not.

And when you're converted, strengthen your brothers and the proper translation. When you have returned, when you are totally restored, then you're going to have something to give your brothers and your sisters. You see, God doesn't let anybody go through the sifting unless in his foreknowledge, he knows the conclusion.

He knows because he's praying. I get this in your mind, please. If the devil can pray to get him and get an answer, do I have to tell you the rest? If the devil can ask and get his request to take him into a sifting process, how much more is God going to hear the prayer of his own son to bring him out and give him faith and victory? Hallelujah.

Don't tell me you're going to listen to the devil and shut out the ear and the cry of his own son. And you have a father, you have a, you have a savior right now. No matter what you're going through, you've got a man at the throne of God, who's touched with the feelings of your infirmities.

And God's going to answer his prayer, even though you're in the sieve, even though you're being sifted. Jesus said, I'm praying for you. And you better believe he's going to answer.

It's going to be answered. You're going to come out of it. He didn't say, I'm praying that you avoid this.

He said, I tell you, Peter, in all honesty, the cock shall not curl this day before you shall deny me thrice that you don't even know me. Go to second Corinthians, if you will, please. Second Corinthians, first chapter.

Why does God allow chosen servants to be sifted? Verse three, beginning to read, blessed be God, even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who comforted us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble. Why is God allow sifting? That we who are being sifted may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, the word abound, they're overwhelmed in us.

So our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it's for your consolation, your salvation, which is effects on the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer. For whether we be comforted, it's for your consolation and salvation.

And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as your partakers of the suffering, so also shall ye be also of the consolation. Oh, hallelujah. God takes certain people through deep waters, through crises they can't understand.

He brings them through victorious so that they be a testimony, so that they be comforters, they are builders, rebuilding the house of God that has fallen down. Hallelujah. You see, Peter's sifting had nothing to do with temptation such as lust, fornication, or apostasy.

The sifting has to do with how we react when God allows Satan to directly attack the promises God has made to us. He would have you believe that when you're in a crisis, all the good things God has told you, every promise that he's made to use you, to bless you, is just a figment of your imagination or a dream that you've concocted. Did you get it yet? You see, this is the attempt of the enemy.

Peter has just been told he's going to come forth and he's going to have this crown, all the good promises God has made to him, and he's headed for the upper room. And the devil is coming along trying to get him so discouraged and get him doubting the Lord and trying to get his mind so full of evil thoughts that he

would say, well, how could that be because you're such an evil-minded person? You're not worthy of these promises. I want to tell you something, folks.

When you're being sifted, the devil will come. First of all, he'll try to make you feel absolutely unworthy. He'll try to deny every promise God has made to you that it's a lie or that's a figment of your imagination.

How would you like a thought to be planted in your mind, your good Christian mind, your sanctified holy mind? How would you like a thought to take hold of you that says, bow down and worship the devil? How would you like to have that? It's exactly what happened with the Son of God. Bow down and worship me. Now, folks, I don't know whether you understand this or not.

I have seen this over the years. The godliest men I have known, and God has blessed me over the years to allow me to meet and associate, not closely, but have some fellowship with some of the godliest people God has ever used. One was a carpenter from Canada.

He's in his late 80s now. I read two or three of his books. It would just melt me.

The man just exudes holiness. And I invited him to come to our home. I've done this on a number of occasions.

I'll bring him from England. I'll bring anybody from anywhere in the world to sit down and just see what makes them tick. I want to get something from them, from the Lord.

And he attended one of my meetings while he was there. He comes up to me after the service. He said, David, you've got to pray for me.

In the middle of your message, I've been bombarded with evil thoughts. Bombarded. I was so shocked.

I stepped back. I first thought, is he righteous or evil? Until it began to happen to me. Never once a thought of leaving Jesus.

No, no, no. It's thoughts that would tend to believe God is unfaithful. Thoughts that you're going to fall.

Thoughts that your children are going to be killed or maimed or lose their heart for God. I mean a million kinds of lies. It'll come.

Now, of course, nobody here knows what I'm talking about. You're sitting there saying, thank God. One of two things you're saying, boy, we must have an evil pastor.

I know you know what I'm talking about. But you see, he's trying to get this man to doubt the promises of God about his future and about his present. For me, one of the most touching scenes in the New Testament is found in John 21.

Don't turn there. You see, even though Peter is now restored, Jesus did come and he walked through the wall and he appeared before Peter and the disciples when they were in a closed room. And certainly that loving look of Jesus assured Peter of God's love, the love of the Father, the love of the Son to him.

He knew that, but he's still in the sieve. He's still being sifted and he said, I'm going fishing. When it says I'm going fishing, he went back to his career.

He went back to his fishing career and he seduced a few other disciples to go with him. And what he's saying, I'm washed up. I'm done.

I am finished. I sinned like no other man sinned. I denied Christ.

I denied. I sinned against light. There's no hope for me.

God cannot use a man like me. I'm forgiven. That's fine.

But I'm a fisherman and that's it. There's nothing left for me in the kingdom of God. God can't use me.

And how many there are like this, pastors and Christian workers everywhere who were might have used to God, who loved the Lord and have gone through a great trial and they failed. Peter failed. Every grain went through the sieve.

There was nothing left, but hey, there was nothing with dirt and grit left in this man, as far as the eye can see, as far as human nature. But God saw something more than that. God said, I've reduced him to nothing.

Peter now is no longer going to be an impetuous man. He's going to be able at least to listen to me. So he goes fishing and they fish all night and they get nothing.

You remember the story early in the morning, early in the morning, Jesus is on the shore and he's cooking fish and bread. And he sees the disciples nearing land. And he said, have you caught any fish? They didn't recognize him at first.

And they said, no. And he said, cast your net on the other side and a great haul of fish. And John says to Peter, that's him.

That's the master. Peter throws off his outer garment, jumps in the water and swims to the shore. They gather in the fish.

You remember what Jesus said three times? Peter, do you love me? Yes, I do. Again, Peter, you see, Jesus said, come and dine. He wanted to bring it back into communion because all service comes out of communion.

And he wants to stretch out his hands and feed Peter now. I want to show you something that to me, it melts my heart. You see, I preached just last Sunday about making sure we understand God's love for us.

How he loves us. You have to be convinced of God's love before he can truly use you. If you doubt his love, you really aren't free to be used wholly to your fullest extent of God's eternal purpose.

But this is something different. The third time he asked Peter, do you really love me? And Peter, not in anger, I'm sure, he said, Lord, you know I love you. You see, Jesus knew all along that Peter loved him.

He knew it all along. And he didn't want Peter to say this for the sake of those standing by in earshot. It's not for the other disciples.

Jesus knows that Peter is now assured of his love for him. But he's trying to get Peter not to doubt his own love for Jesus. He's saying, keep saying it, Peter, till you believe it.

And you're in a sieve, you're being sifted, but that sifting is going to stop the moment you are wholly convinced that you love me with all your heart and you're not going to listen to his lies anymore, that you must not love him because of your failure. You have to be convinced, first of all, that God loves you completely, unmerited, unconditional love, that he loves you through your failures. But then there has to come a time when you say, God, you know my heart.

I can say that before you now. With everything the devil has tried to throw at me, I can tell you now that I know my heart. I love him.

I love you, Jesus. You know I love you. I'm not perfect.

That has to be in your heart right now. Lord, I don't doubt your love. I'm convinced that you love me with everything that you have in your being.

But now, Lord Jesus, I'm not going to let the devil rob me anymore. Tell me I don't love you because at times I fail you or I say something wrong or that the enemy puts evil thoughts or some thoughts in my mind. Now, folks, don't walk out here thinking Pastor Dave walks around with a bunch of evil thoughts in his mind.

I'm an old soldier. I've learned a few things. But this is a wonderful thought, a wonderful, wonderful thought here, how Jesus just reaches out to him.

Now, I'm going to close in just a minute. But I know what it's like to enjoy what Peter enjoyed, the touch of Jesus, a special touch on my life, that precious promise that my last days are being fruitful. I've heard that from Pastor Carter.

I've had people from everywhere saying, Brother Dave, your best years are ahead of you. I'm not saying it for my sake. I'm saying that for everyone in this house.

Perhaps you too have tasted this special. You've had a special touch of God in your life. You know he's touched your life.

And you've had sweet communion with Jesus. You've been given promises that you'd never walk alone and that there's a crown of glory that awaits you in heaven. And then suddenly you find, as you see with Peter yourself, in a face-to-face life-and-death struggle with the devil.

Folks, there are things that happen in our lives that are not flesh. Because you see, the flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh. Who do you think is going to win that battle? Where is anyone here that thinks the flesh can overcome the spirit of the living God? So it goes into a deeper level.

It goes into this realm of a test where God, he does not give you into the hands of the devil, but the Lord has to step aside for just a while while the enemy is allowed to bring you into a realm that you've never been before to test you and try you. And some of you are going through that right now. I know exactly what that's about.

Job, when he went through his sifting, cried out, show me why you're contending with me. What is your controversy with me, he said. In other words, Lord, what is this deep trial all about? Usually the sifting of the enemy has to do with the mind, has to do with depression, it has to do with those lies in your home, and it has to do with lies from humans and from enemies, and it can be almost anything.

It's usually not a battle with lust or things like that for those who've walked with God and loved Jesus. The enemy knows he can't get you in that realm, but everyone has their own button the devil can push, so to speak. He knows how to touch something in you, maybe family, maybe your past, the way you were brought up, something that just gets to you, and he takes you into it deeper than you've ever gone before.

You're being sifted, but Paul the apostle confirms everything I've been saying in 2 Corinthians, back to 2 Corinthians. With this, I'm going to close. 2 Corinthians, fourth chapter.

I want to nail this down so you leave here without any doubt of what I'm talking about. 2 Corinthians, the fourth chapter, beginning to read verse five and six. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Now, listen to me, please. Look this way, if you will.

I'm going to show you how sifting times are sandwiched in between revelation and usefulness. It's always sandwiched in between. Look to what Peter or Paul has just heard.

God's commanded. He said we don't preach ourselves. See, he's past that point.

There's no ego in him. I'm not preaching myself anymore. He points everyone to Jesus Christ.

This whole message is Christ. He's come to a place in his ministry and in his work, in his testimony. Everything is Jesus.

The light has shined out of darkness. There's revelation shining out of his heart. He preaches revelation.

There's a light of the glory. He's bringing to the people the knowledge of the glory of God. Immediately sandwiched in that, in verse 8, we are what? Troubled on every side and yet not distressed.

We're perplexed but not in despair. Persecuted but not forsaken. Cast down but not destroyed.

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in us. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake. That the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal flesh.

So then death worketh in us but life in you. Now look at me please. You see he's just coming.

Listen to the words. Trouble, distress, perplexity, despair, sense of forsakenness, persecution, cast down, dying, death. It's all there but Paul suddenly is giving a revelation as why he is going through all of this and it's a revelation if you'll accept it why God is allowing the enemy to get to you for a moment.

He was allowed to sift Jesus for 40 days. The Bible says he left him for a season. You know how long he left him? Less than 24 hours because he goes from there into the temple and in the temple he says that remember he told them that there was only one widow that was delivered and she was a Samaritan.

They got mad and the devil possessed that whole crowd and took him to a cliff to throw him over. Jesus walked away. That was the devil possessed people.

The devil came within 24 hours and tried to kill him. Don't be afraid folks. When you come through the sifting and your faith in Jesus Christ holds fast and it will hold fast because Jesus is praying for you and he says you're going to be restored.

That is when God uses you. Sandwiched in between. Out of that comes verse 14.

Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus so raise up us also by Jesus and present us with you for all things are for your sake. Paul said I'm going through this for you. Folks you're going through it for your family, for your children, for those around you on the job.

You're going through it for others. That the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God for which cause we do not faint though our outward man perish. Even though I'm being sifted I'm not going to faint because God has an eternal purpose.

He's going to use me to his glory. He's going to rebuild his church that's fallen down through my experience. Let's stand please.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Lord I'm looking for those who know what I'm talking about.

I'm looking for those this morning that have been so depressed and down because they don't understand why after loving you so much, caring so much, and working for you that they're still being so hounded by the enemy. Oh God, oh my Lord let us not faint. Let us realize that we just have to stand still and trust in the prayers of our heavenly Father, our Savior standing before the throne of God that he will give us strength and power and he will bring us through.

Hallelujah. Just as sure as Christ was driven by the devil into the wilderness to be tempted of the enemy as he is in the world, so are we. You're going to bring us through to victory that you may use us mightily for your kingdom's sake.

If you're here and you're not right with God, you're backslidden, I want you to come. But if you're here this morning and you say, Pastor David, I'm going through the thing you're talking about. I am being sifted and I know it's the devil.

I know the enemy has been taking me through a time of terror in my life and I want to know and understand. I want to know and understand. I want faith right now.

I want my faith build up that I'm not faint in this process and I'll understand that God has chosen me for this purpose because he wants to use me. He needs me. Folks, it's because he needs you.

It's because he has plans for you to use you. Come quickly. Make your way upstairs.

Go to the stairs on either side and come down. In the annex, if you will, please just step forward between the screens. Please don't block the screens.

I'll pray for you. There's no distance in prayer and I'll pray for you there as you're standing in front of between the screens and here in the main auditorium. If the Holy Spirit's speaking to you, you obey him.

No one should press you. That should be the call and the wooing of the Holy Spirit. Do you remember what Ananias told Paul when he was told by the Holy Spirit to go and pray for him? He said, tell him to prepare for suffering.

That was because he was such a chosen loved man. You may feel that you're suffering more than people around you and you may be, but this suffering is always an emblem of his love. He knows the power of his own prayers.

Understand that. He knows his power. If you know this afternoon, if you can just be convinced, convince your own heart right now that no matter what I'm going through, no matter what the trial is, it could be in your home life, it could be on the job, it could be poverty, it could be almost anything.

Your problem won't be my problem. Mine's different than yours and you're different than everyone else around you. Everyone goes through different things.

Some things that bother you, I'd probably laugh off. And things that would burden me, you'd probably be able to laugh it off. So God knows that.

He's kind and he's patient and he's loving and he's caring. He doesn't want you to carry that burden anymore. Now, what you're going through may not just dissipate right now.

You may bind the devil, you may try to cast them out and everything else. And the Lord just says, ride it out by faith. Just be still and know that I'm God.

Just ride it out. It's going to come to an end. It'll pass away.

If you'll just trust him, that's all. Folks, it boils down to faith. There is nothing else you can do but believe and trust his word.

That's the rock. That's the way he brings you out. And I want to tell you, I will not let the devil call anything in me unclean that God has cleansed.

When he was up there, he was told, don't call that unclean which I have cleansed. He has cleansed you with the blood. No matter what thoughts the devil tries to put in my head, I'll never let him tell me I'm unclean.

I'm in a struggle sometimes, but he'll never, he'll never ever convince me that I'm dirty or I'm clean because I've been sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lord. I want you to pray this. And in the annex, will you pray this with me now? Heavenly Father, I come to you now with all my struggles and all my hurts and things I'm going through that I don't understand, things that trouble me and they confuse me.

But I know you have everything under control. Forgive my sins. Blot out my transgressions.

I come to your love, Jesus. And I know in my heart, I stand here now because I do love you. I love you with all my heart.

And I reject the lies of the devil that I don't love you. You know I love you. And I know you love me.

And I rest in that. And in Jesus name, I am not filthy. I am not unclean by the blood of Jesus.

I am clean. I am holy in Christ. And the devil's a liar.

And I rejoice in a clean heart and clean hands. Raise those clean hands and thank God right now in Jesus name. I am clean.

I am clean in the name of the Lord Jesus. I am cleansed. I am righteous in the name of the Lord by faith.

Clean and holy and righteous. I'm so glad he took my sins away. I'm so glad he took my sins away.

Beloved, listen, before we dismiss this service, in the annex, wherever you may be, how many times did Peter say it to Jesus? I love you? Three times. I want you to just keep saying it over and over all day today until you're convinced. Lord, I love you.

I love you. I love you. Lord, you know I love you.

You know my heart. I love you. I haven't arrived.

I've still got battles, but oh Jesus, I love you and I know you love me. Folks, that's when the devil has to flee. That's when the shaking is nearing an end.

Hallelujah. That's when the sifting comes to a very near end. You know when the sifting stops, you just don't suddenly, oh it stopped.

No, you just wake up one morning, oh thank God I have his love and he loves me. You just wake up one day and it's there. Hallelujah.

Here in the main auditorium and upstairs, you come down and go through exits eight and nine and get your, there's no charge for the book and I don't know which one of the books they're right now, but and also preaching tape and some refreshments and some New Yorkers and in room 204 in the annex. Let's sing it with everything in us. I'm so glad he took my sins away and while we sing it, would you embrace as many as you can.

We don't like to mix the sexes here, but if all you want to do is shake hands, find somebody you don't know, make yourself known. I'm so glad, next service three o'clock and six o'clock. This is the conclusion of the message.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3608.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-wilkerson/the-sifting-process/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net