

Sifting

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the greatness of God's love and mercy, and the importance of pleasing God, not the world.

Duration: 58:30

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Luke 14:33, John 6:66, Acts 26:18, 1 Peter 1:1, 1 Peter 1:5

Topics: "Sifting"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing a recent news event where a United States military bus was blown up in Greece. He highlights the fear and devastation caused by such events and contrasts it with the hope and freedom that believers in Christ have. The preacher emphasizes the power of God to hold the world together and the importance of relying on Him. He then talks about the Bible as a unique book that focuses on sin and salvation, showing the journey of a man from ruin to redemption. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God to teach and guide the listeners through His Word.

Transcript

...for giving your great love gift in Jesus Christ. Love so amazing, so divine. Lord, as we sang this, we thought that of the council chambers in eternity, before even the world was created, that you drew salvation's plan.

Your word speaks of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. We thank you that you multiplied grace. As your word says, if you mark iniquity, who would stand? If there was a cut-off point, most of us would have passed that point, or got to that point, before ever we responded to the call.

We have to say, I had long withstood his grace, long provoked him to his face, would not hearken to his call, grieved him by a thousand falls. Depth of mercy, can there be mercy still reserved for me? Can my God his wrath forbear, me the chief of sinners spare? The Lord, we thank you that you did. We're so worthless.

Lord, there's not much to us, even when we're redeemed, we're so terribly limited. So finite before you, one who is infinite. So fallible against one who is so infallible.

So weak against one who is the source of all power and all strength. We make our mistakes and miscalculations, but Lord, we're glad there's no program of yours that has ever been aborted, ever been

spoiled. We know that your holy word says that you work everything after the counsel of your own will.

We don't understand it, but Lord, we thank you that even this day, we've tasted of your grace, we've tasted of your mercy, we've tasted of your joy. We thank you that you keep burning in our hearts the fact that even now, in this wicked and perverse generation, even now, we're the sons of God. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but this we do know, that when we see him, we shall be like him.

Lord, that's incredibly glorious. That beggars our understanding. It would exhaust our vocabulary to try to describe it, we cannot do it.

But Lord, we worship you tonight. We bow before you. We think of the angels who have a continuous occupation, your word says in Hebrew there, that they cease not to worship him.

And we thank you that one day every knee shall bow. Every tongue, every system in this world is one day going to be purged, cleansed, there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Lord, we think of the vast cost of iniquity, the cost of maintaining armies, the cost of maintaining prison systems, the cost of other things, that are here trying, as it were, to scrub a mud floor.

They cannot change it, it's changed only when Jesus Christ, the son of God, comes. But Lord, we thank you that there's no despair in our vocabulary. The world seems to get dirtier every day, it gets more entangled every day, it gets more mysterious every day.

We hear men throwing up their hands and saying, where shall we go, to whom shall we go, what shall we do? But Lord, we bless you giving us the answer. We thank you we sang it tonight, as Cowper proved it in his own life, there is a fountain filled with blood. We thank you the heat of the summer cannot dry it up.

We thank you there's no way with that blood can lose its power. The blood shall never lose its power, till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more. Then in a nobler, sweeter song.

Lord, there's no way we can make a blind stab at that to understand it. The billions that have loved you and served you, died as martyrs, burned at the stake, even sing the praise of God. People in Russian prisons tonight, people in the shot and shell and hell of Afghanistan, while their country is ripped and torn, and yet they have a deep, settled peace in their hearts.

They've learned the hard way, Lord. There's nothing of any value in the material world. Lord, don't let us have to learn it that way.

Disenchant us if any of us are enchanted or mesmerized with the materialism of this world. God, we pray bless your word to our hearts. We thank you as one has said this book, this blessed book is a golden casket, where gems of truth are stored.

It is the heaven-drawn picture of Christ, the living word. Teach us more and more. Teach me, teach each of us day by day how to explore the possibilities of grace.

We thank you for giving us this blessed book. It's a map to guide us from earth to heaven, from the city of destruction round about us to the city of God, the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We thank you for that eternal kingdom.

We thank you for the eternal Son. And we thank you tonight, in the small measure that we can comprehend, we have eternal life. We're not the people we used to be.

Some of these precious men here had years of vanity and pride, vulgarity and sin they wouldn't even want to testify to openly in a crowd like this. And we know it's not necessary. But Lord, we thank you.

Your arm was long enough and strong enough to lift us, to reach us. Your heart was big enough to embrace us. You didn't whip us.

You didn't demand a certain price. We thank you. We can come without money and without pride.

We can say, we could write over every jail, every divorce house. We could write over it all, what your holy word says, if any man being Christ is a new creation. We pray for the mysteries of this moment at the other side of the world.

As the sun is setting here, it's rising over there. Make it a great day of advance in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We pray again.

Bless your word to our hearts. We thank you, Lord, that it is manna to the hungry soul. We thank you it is meat that we can eat that the world knows nothing about.

We thank you it's the most refreshing things to our spirits. We could look around and get desperate and despairing, but Lord, we're looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher. We know that the destiny of this world is not in the hand of politicians, whoever or whatever they are.

We thank you, Lord, you've given Jesus, who is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the sentence, the conference, of all the great plans and purposes of God. I don't wonder if the psalmist says, lift up your heads, all ye gates. I wonder what he would have said if he'd had the book of the Revelation to read.

But anyhow, I had some vision. Lift up your heads, all ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty.

There's no weakness in thee. We bless you, Lord. You never get baffled.

Bless your wonderful name. So, Lord, I accept the worship of our hearts tonight. And again, we pray with the psalmist, open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law, in Jesus' name.

Thank you. Let's look in the first epistle of Peter, chapter 1. I remember reading some years ago, I've no idea where I read it, that the sin of people in the Old Testament was to reject the Father. The sin of people in the New Testament is to reject the Son.

And the sin of people today is to reject the Holy Spirit. I think it would be more correct to say we reject the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit today. What a wonderful book this is.

Another old saint said, reading, I hope you like to read. I like to read. You know what, I've got two eyes, in case you don't know.

I've got two hands. I wish I could hold a book in this hand and one in this, and read a different book with each eye. I might catch up with my reading, but I don't think I'll do that.

Reading will make a full man. Prayer will make a holy man. And then when you come down to this and realize this great book, temptation and experience will make a complete man.

So here we are. First epistle of Peter, first chapter, first verse, first word. Peter.

Isn't that thrilling? Peter, an apostle. Good night. If he could make it and become an apostle, what about us? And he wrote this epistle, in case you don't know, an epistle is not the wife of an apostle.

Peter wrote this epistle. Isn't that amazing? I think of two things when I think of Peter. He was vocal.

You know, he spoke more to Jesus, not only than any other disciple, than all the other disciples put together. And conversely, Jesus spoke to Peter more, to that one man, than to all the other apostles put together. Peter, an apostle, sounds like a contradiction in terms.

Let me go to my reference work here. Look at John, chapter 6, verse 68, please. The gospel of John, sorry.

Chapter 6. I can't read it all, but Jesus has been saying some very profound things here. Now look when he comes down to verse 66. It says, From that time, many of his disciples, notice it says disciples, not apostles.

All apostles were disciples, but not all disciples were apostles. We know John, chapter 3, everybody knows that. But you have to read the end of the second chapter, actually, that there were many followers, but they didn't believe in him.

But here it says, From that time, many of his disciples went back. That's bad, but this is worse. They walked no more with him.

Though he's going to live for years and do the miraculous and prove he's the son of God, yet somehow they got discouraged and they went back. Then Simon Peter answered and said, To whom shall we go? For thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and we're sure that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

Isn't that a wonderful statement? Now look at Matthew 16, verse 16. Look at verse 13, sorry. When Jesus came into Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do the men say that I the son of Manan? They said, Some say thou art John the Baptist, some say Elias, others say Jeremiah, one of the prophets.

He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? He saith unto them, Who answers the crowd? No, Peter saith. He's always so vocal. He's vocal, he's volcanic.

But also he's very variable. There's nothing very stabilized about him. Simon said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

And he said, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church. See, he wasn't Peter when Jesus found him.

He was Simon. The very name Simon means shifty, undependable. If you take just a grain of ordinary sand, look at it under a microscope, it's got peaks in it like that, and cavities like that.

You can't build with it. But if you put it under pressure, those peaks fit into those cavities, you get sandstone. When we lived in the city of Bath in England, the abbey there, the foundation was laid in the

year 444.

It's made out of stone that's cut out of the hills, and they saw it like they saw wood. It's sandstone, it's soft, and yet it stood there for centuries. Jesus says, Thou art Simon.

You're shifty, you're irresponsible. But God's going to put him together. And you see that when it says Simon, Peter, an apostle.

One of the great pictures, there was a great picture you saw last week, you remember, for 39 million dollars by the Japanese, those old people. Well, they're the only folk with money. We gave them it.

You Toyota people gave them it. But anyhow, 39 million dollars. This week, a man thought he had a Rembrandt that might bring him thousands of dollars.

And when they tested it, it was a fake. He got 25 for it. That's a bit of a letdown.

I guess he visualized all the things he was going to buy with the thousands, and he got nothing. One of the greatest masterpieces in the world, I think it's in a cathedral now in Lisbon, or Portugal, or in Spain. It's the miraculous draft of fishes by, who painted that? Any art critics here? Raphael.

And when it was discovered, they hung it in an exhibition hall, and people came from the ends of the earth to see it. They oohed and they aahed, and they looked this way and looked the other way. You know, you see somebody going to an art gallery and they go right up like this looking at the landscape.

I often wonder what they're looking for. Bugs or what? It's like the rich lady went to the Lourdes in Paris, and she went round with a log net. You know what a log net is? A pair of glasses on a stick.

You know, you see, in the opera they carry them like this. So she goes round and she's looking at all the pictures. Going out, she said to the guard, the gendarme there, she said, I don't think much of your pictures.

You say they're priceless. I don't think they're... He said, Lady, people coming in this room do not judge the pictures. The pictures judge the people.

Sure she knew nothing, she knew nothing about art. And everybody gazed with wonder and adoration at this picture. Miraculous draft of fishes.

One day an Englishman, you know what rough men the Englishmen are, by the name of Ruskin, he has two great volumes on art. And he went and looked and he began to laugh and the crowd thought it was irreverent. What's wrong with it? Well, he said, Sir, I was wondering what's right with it.

Aren't the colors perfect? Aren't the proportions correct? Yes, yes. What's wrong with it? Don't you know? No. Do you? Yes.

Why? He said, where did it take place? On the Sea of Galilee. Or its old-fashioned name, the Lake of Gennesaret. Right.

What's wrong? He says, what's the dome of St. Peter's in Rome in the background for? When it took place a thousand miles away. Number one, it's wrong. Number two, how many people are there in the boat? Eleven.

Well, read the story. There's only seven in the Bible. That's a second mistake.

Number one, you put it in a, you put it in a, I don't want to say that, Italian setting and the second thing, you put the wrong number of people in the boat. Oh, by the way, the third one is, there's a man leaning over the boat there. He's got long, long lace cuffs, a lace collar around his neck.

Who's that? Oh, that's Peter. Did you ever try fishing with a lace collar and lace cuffs? You see, that's our idea of sainthood, you're to be dressed up. At one time, people said, you can't live in this wicked world.

Live in a monastery, live in a convent. What happened? Well, all over Europe, people, when they were dying, left their vast wealth to the monasteries and instead of being poor and having to sustain themselves, they became incredibly rich. All the show stuff that they had on the tables, the candlesticks were pure gold and everything that they used to despise, they began to love it and the whole thing went rotten.

You see, you don't have to wear a certain type of cloth but to be modest, for sure. You see, the idea is, the Peter of all people, he must be dressed up, he must be different from everybody else who is there. So you have Peter and Jesus says, how about Simon, that you will be Peter.

You know, he lays so much stress on the power of the Spirit. In Acts 1-8, you shall receive power. What's the testimony in Acts 15-8 and 9? Wasn't it Peter? Was it Peter giving a testimony in the house of Cornelius? What happened? He said, I'll tell you what happened when the Holy Ghost came to the Gentiles.

Acts 15-8 and 9 says, And God, who knoweth the heart, bared them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us. So people say, there you are, they spoke in tongues. It doesn't say that.

You'll never find Peter backsliding after he'd been in the upper room. He warmed himself at a fire till he got the fire himself. Once a man gets a fire in his own heart, he doesn't have to warm himself everywhere else.

Once the Holy Ghost got hold of Peter and purified him, then he becomes an apostle, a man of great authority, a man of... You know, there's a lot of humor in the Bible. I don't believe about cracking jokes in church really. I get a bit humorous sometimes.

I think jokes are out of place in a funeral parlor, aren't they? And most churches like a funeral anyhow, so why crack jokes? I don't... And then you see Peter. Where did Jesus find him? Stinking of fish. He leaves his fishy business and writes two majestic epistles, two of the greatest books ever written in history, written by a man who's selling fish.

He finds John. What did John write? He wrote the most gorgeous thing ever written in English, somebody has said, or in prose. The epistle of John.

Then the gospel of John. Then the first epistle. Then the second epistle.

Then the third epistle. What did they say when he came from the upper room? Oh, beware of these men. They're unlearned and ignorant.

Peter was one that was unlearned and ignorant. He wrote two great epistles. John wrote the gospel of John.

The first epistle, the second epistle, the third epistle. And to prove he was ignorant, he wrote the book of Revelation that baffles all the wise men. Even Jacob doesn't understand all of it, dear Jacob.

There's two chapters to go, then you'll be through. But isn't it wonderful what God can do? That was a miserable amen. Who said it? You know when Oliver Cromwell was dying, they backed him up in his canopy bed with pillows and all the statesmen of England were gathered round the bed.

They were looking sour. He raised upon his elbow. He said, Can't any of you praise God? He was dying.

Can't any of you praise God? You know, there are some things we should be ecstatic about. There should be a perpetual halo around them, if you like. Let me rush on here, if I can do that.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to strangers scattered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, and Texas. That's the very latest version. The very latest version.

Well, aren't we strangers? Sure, good Lord, we're not home, are we? I remember once I went to a holiness rally, and boy, I thought, boy, it'll be tough preaching here. A girl came on the platform. This was 1952 or three.

The girls wore their skirts fairly short. This girl came with terribly short skirts. She did drops, as I call them, hanging on her shoulders, rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes, almost.

And she sat there and shimmied, you know, like these girls do. She's singing, What in the world did you sing? This world, this world is not my home. I thought, well, alas, where do you belong? You don't belong around here.

This world is not my home. Aren't you going to straight to heaven with all your weird drops and jewels and all the junk on? This world is not my home. We're strangers here.

Why do we expect such good treatment from a world? As I've asked you often, do you think you deserve better treatment than Jesus God? That world is as antagonistic to God. I think one of the men mentioned that today, one of your friends. Jacob brings all his friends to our house for refreshments, but anyhow.

They came today. One of the men said, how harsh he found the world, how difficult the world is. It's never going to alter.

It doesn't mean we throw our hands up because there's still an awful lot of work that God wants to do, because Jesus deserves every tongue in the world, not to curse him, but to praise him. It's going to be that eventually. Now the next verse, you can see my brother John there, going out.

He'll explain the next verse to you. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace be unto you and peace be multiplied.

Come on. Wasn't it a beautiful little American lady that wrote that? That him, he give us more grace when the burdens grow greater. You know, we want God to load us up.

He says, you get in the furnace and I'll deal with the rest. He's not going to put halos on us just for fun and make us feel good. All he's concerned about in the language of another great hymn is my dross to consume and my gold to refine.

As I've said to you often, God is never capricious. God doesn't have to experiment with me. He doesn't have to prove me to himself.

He has to prove me to myself. I've made such vows. I've made such declarations.

I've sworn publicly. I've sworn secretly. There's nothing you can ask too much.

There's no burden too big you can give me. There's nothing you can ask that I will not sacrifice, visible or invisible. And the Lord says, I'll work it out.

So what does it say here? Grace and peace be multiplied. Verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. How much did you ponder that last week? I have a book called, I think it's the Gospel, The Gospels of Christ by, do you remember a writer, John by the name of H. L. Shepherd of Baptists? Do you have the book? We should get one for my friend here if he needs help.

You must get it honestly, Jacob. He says a phrase in there that really blessed me. He's talking about the, he's talking about the resurrection.

It said without, without the incarnation, the resurrection is impossible. But without the resurrection the incarnation is complete. This is the most amazing thing that ever happened.

There were two men in England years ago, both had the same name, both were knighted by the king. Sir Ambrose Fleming, one of them, both scientists, one of them said the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best attested fact in history. I want to preach one Friday night on these many infallible proofs.

What are the infallible proofs of the resurrection? I won't even give you a clue. But let me say this here. He's begotten us again unto a lively hope.

How alive is the church? I believe, I don't like the word, I get excited, I don't like the word exciting. You get excited at a football match. Inspiring is different.

I think that's our territory. A lively hope of what? By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. There's an old hymn that says and we used to sing it Easter Sunday.

Today he rose and left the dead and Satan's empire fell. One of the great English preachers was J.H. Jowett. He didn't often get a week off, but when he did a weekend, he said I have to preach on Sunday.

He said I catch a train to London which is about 150 miles from where he lived. And he said I go hear that giant of the English prophet Dr. Parker. Well personally I tell you this, I do not like applause when preaching.

I don't get it, but some do. It's too much like the theater and a show. I don't like it.

But he said one day I was so tired, I was so worn out, I felt Lord if you just put your finger on me. And he said I went to hear Dr. Parker preach. And he preached on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And he said he did such a good job of those stuffy English people. When he said he lives, he said they stood up and applauded and applauded as though it were something visible. The resurrection, what did they do with Jesus? Put him in a tomb.

What did they do with the tomb? Put wax around it to make it airtight. What else did they do? They put seals on it to say it was officially sealed. Then what happened? You've got Jesus lying there on a slab.

How did he rise from the dead? Oh you say on the day of Pentecost Peter said that Jesus whom he crucified hath God raised up. But wait a minute. Jesus says you don't take my life from me.

Herod says watch your step I'll kill you. He says you can't. No man can take your life from you.

I believe that's true of you and I if we're in the will of God. I particularly like that when a plane is nearly turning over. I say the Lord does the keys of death and of hell.

I'm preserved to the final moment that I'm using and I'm useful to God. And after that I don't want to stay around. My neighbour wants me to live a hundred years.

Some days. Sometimes he wishes I didn't. But anyhow.

You've got the stone. Every demon in hell is rejoicing. Jesus says you won't take my life.

I'll take it up again. Again Peter says God hath raised him up. Romans chapter 8 and verse 16 says the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead.

So in the resurrection of Jesus you have the work of the Father, the work of the Son and the work of the Holy Ghost. You've got a stone against, against the tomb. You've got wax to keep it airtight.

You've got sealers on it. You've got four quarters on it. Sixteen soldiers.

I'll tell you what that poor old guy Herod he had more faith than the disciples. Whoever guarded a dead man. I don't know till Roosevelt went to die.

Roosevelt died you remember under strange circumstances and his grave was guarded for what two or three years after he died. So you've got the stone, you've got the wax, the seal, the soldiers and I think Satan said you know what I've been trying for thirty three years to beat this man and I can't do it. I got him to myself in the wilderness for forty days.

I tempted him on every point on pressures that Abraham never knew and Isaac never knew and no one else ever knew. I tempted him on all points. I tempted him as a man I tempted him sexually I tempted him mentally.

I tempted him on every level and I couldn't move him. I've lost every round. This is my final chance.

So you've got the stone and the wax and the seal and the soldiers and all the demons. Satan says think of something. One said your excellency I think the best thing for us to do would be to roll all the sin of the world against the stone.

All the iniquities of all the tribes that ever were the Amalekites Hittites Perizzites put all the sin of the world against that stone. Now you've the sin of the world you've the stone you've the wax the seal anything else? Well I think maybe it possibly would rise from the dead. Well I'll tell you what I think.

Oh come on now we've got we've got him sealed we've got everything against him there. Every accumulated billions of sins are against that stone. Because we're not he died for our sins but he rose for our justification.

I need more than being salvation I need justification and sanctification. Well what do you say to every demon put your shoulder to the stone. So you've got the stone the wax the seal the soldiers millions of sins and demons are against that we can't count the number of.

And Satan says alright hold it there and he goes down thirty count thirty and he goes down he gets to nine eight ten seven six five four three two one and suddenly he bursts out and all hell trembles and every angel has a jubilee in heaven. He's accomplished the thing he came to do he came to die for our sins and rise for and today he rose and left the dead and Satan's empire fell. What did he what did he do?

I love the old it's a good English hymn you know death cannot keep its prey Jesus my low in the grave he lay death cannot keep its prey he broke the power of death and of hell I like to tease people some day when they talk about the gifts of the spirit they say there are no gifts of the spirit no gifts of the spirit no you've inherited this you've inherited that an old hymn we used to sing as children I was mystified by this still am of it the purchase of thy death divide give me with all the sanctified the heritage of love you remember what Paul said standing before a gripper the work of the ministry every minister should read this on his knees with tears every week of his life at least I think he should he said God call me one day to be a minister of the gospel and this is your charter

this is your mandate from the skies from the eternal one what is your job to undo every burdens and let the oppressed go free and break every yoke or literally in that chapter there he said the minister has to do what turn people from darkness to light from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me the church we live in today is an underprivileged church why? because we don't preach this brother said today in your presence in my office there that he goes to churches where they preach salvation but they don't preach the lordship well a man cannot be saved without the lordship of Jesus Christ it's our lord and saviour Jesus Christ if he isn't if he isn't lord of all he isn't lord at all he has to

have every part of me as David says so often and it took him a long while to settle down about the issue about being a Christian he didn't want to surrender his life he planned his career to have a to have his own what do you call it art studio and that he battled with that for three years I can't just bring my dirty sins I've got to give him my life my future my talent I have to put it all there and say here you are in the hymn we love I lay in dust life's glory dead and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall never endless be well why do we get Jesus risen don't you think we had a great time in heaven you all look so sad tonight what's happened you lost your wage what's he going to give us well let me read it from the book you don't seem to believe me let me read it here he's

begun us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to what listen to an inheritance number one incorruptible that's beyond the reach of death number two undefiled that's beyond the reach of sin and that fadeth not away beyond the reach of time I've got an inheritance some of you look bankrupt tonight God bless you I've got an inheritance incorruptible beyond the reach of death undefiled beyond the reach of sin it fadeth not away oh I have to give up so much all you give up is hell I had a man singing for me I did a meeting once in that great church in Canada for what's his name the old doctor Oswald Smith he said that's the best revival we've had in thirty years I want you to come back and we'll have the auditorium every night which sees over two thousand

we'll take the main hall in town every Sunday night if you come for a month but the deacons came up and said no sir we don't want that money treasure not told I talked about carnality too much they didn't like it

but we have an inheritance incorruptible that undefiled that fadeth not away isn't that good finally I got a yes thank you it's like auctioneering to a deaf and dumb crowd an inheritance get up in the morning I have an inheritance incorruptible maybe this is the day I'm going to inherit it or have you too much baggage down here huh what is it too much stuff down here let's finish the verse here verse four reserved in heaven for you who are reserved in heaven for you David won't remember well he remembers when we lived in Ireland we lived in part of an old mansion or castle some

called it down the road there was a lord by the name of Lord Belmore he was a huge guy must have weighed about three hundred pounds and he had a horse cab and when he got out of it you know there was a step on the you see those you remember those and when he got out the whole carriage it was so heavy well he died and left his gorgeous estate Job said that centuries ago well you say you know it's alright but we live in a dirty world you get contaminated you get stained I've used the illustration before when we used to go to the Bahamas we stayed in a home where there were servants and everything one of the fellows had a lovely yacht we were out deep sea fishing one day and I caught a fish about this size it actually did weigh thirty two pounds it was a king fish so we took it home

triumphantly and gave it to the lady a black lady she's a fantastic cook next day it came out on the silver platter oh how they dress the table up in those stylish homes everything was gorgeous you know four or five knives and forks and spoons and soup spoons and fish fork and fish knife and other knives and dessert knife and dessert fork you can always tell when you're on board the ship crossing the Atlantic because when they lay the table the Americans have to call their waiter to say what's all this stuff for they don't know what it's for it's the old English custom anyhow so I got a slice of fish and they said well preacher do you like it I said no oh I saw the lady put lots of lemon on it did you put any salt on it salt think I'm crazy how long does it take that fish to grow from

there to that length oh it's maybe 20 years old and it's been living in the saltiest water in the world and it still needs salt I said the skin on that fish isn't as thick as this paper and yet the salt can't penetrate it I said I can live in a lousy world like this covered with the blood and that sin can't get through to me while I live in a place of obedience and subjection to the blood the blood that will never lose its power kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time let me wind that up there through faith you remember Jesus let me say these declarations of Peter first of all the Lord says you're Simon you shall be Peter Peter says to whom shall we go thou ask the words of eternal life he declared him to be the son of God whom do men

say that I am some say Jeremiah but who do you say I am thou the son of the son of he comes out with his great affirmations without any other person speaking and then you get to the resurrection those people were up early in the morning because it says what's the chapter in Luke I forget is it 24 I don't it's Luke it's John 24 anyhow on the Emmaus road what does it say it says early John says while it was yet dark can you imagine these poor depressed deluded disappointed disgusted despondent men setting off dark in the morning he's in a tomb he's locked up and they went on their journey and then finally when he's declared himself open their eyes they go back and they go back where they find somebody shouting do you know what he's risen he's risen from the dead and what and appeared unto

Peter in that love the man that denied him three times he didn't go to John the disciple he loved most he went to Peter poor Peter that staggered and stumbled and was undependable so long until he did as he was told he said tarry you know I think we've changed that word from tarry to hurry don't tarry to be endued get up and hurry go on get about your business no tarry but we're kept by the power of God

through faith ok let me quote one other thing about and when Jesus said to Simon Simon Satan has desired thee to sift thee as wheat that I've prayed for you not very practical is it why didn't he say Satan's down the road there and I knew he was going to jump on you I said you go back to hell and leave my child alone no he needed what Satan was going to do to sift him and sometimes I'm

sure absolutely many times in our life God employs Satan to sift us he has a purpose in letting Satan do something people often call and say would you pray with me that the Lord will take this from me I say no I won't why not I'm going through a terrible time I say well he put it on you you're asking me to take off what he's put on you there's no way of perfecting your character he has to prove you to yourself I wonder how many people do you think prayed for John Bunyan that little Baptist preacher in England for 15 years he rotted in that jail what did he come out with Pilgrim's Progress the book that exceeded sales of any book in history except the Bible and there he is in a prison year and year oh our dear pastor my dear husband is there the Lord is dancing in prayer no no he did it at

the right time you can think of a whole host of people that God didn't deliver until the last minute it's like this man builds his altar then he makes his sacrifice and you know it's easy to build an altar somebody else is going to be sacrificed on it's building an altar you're going to be sacrificed on and Abraham says to his son get hold of this rock let's build this you know he must have been a very submissive young fellow at least 18 years of age boy an 18 year old and his dad tied him up to day clock dad would be laid out at the side he laid down Durey gave us you know those famous praying hands one of these great pictures is where Abraham his long beard and he's standing with a knife and there's the boy prostrate lying on the altar and the blade is half way down what do you think

the boy felt like lying there is this my dad that loves me he's going to put this knife through me and suddenly a voice said stay thy hand he had to know God's voice he could have said look you see where the river bends there I was down there when God said go on mount Moriah and offer thy son God said do it this is the devil doesn't want me to do it but he didn't say that the voice that told him to do it said stay thy hand you say why didn't God want Isaac never did want Isaac he wanted Abraham's love do you love him more than you love the boy and he stayed his hand I gave an illustration in Australia an old shepherd came up to me he said you know you missed a point this morning I said I usually missed two or three no no he said I like the way you described him building the altar the

submission of the son and lifting rocks knowing he's going to be offered on it offered on it himself but he said you said that Abraham it said you you stay here and I and the lad will go yonder and come back again he believed that God was going to raise him up but he said it didn't happen until the last moment I said when he got the knife nearly down the wall the Lord said stay there at that moment there was a ram in the thicket just at that moment I said it doesn't say that is my king James he said but I know sheep he said I've seen a ram caught in a thicket it will do one of two things he'll stiffen his legs out and pull and sometimes pull his horns off if he doesn't he'll toss the bush over his head but he won't stay in captivity I said but the point I get it wasn't till the last final

moment when all hope had gone and God said you prove your point do you remember you remember a famous what was his name Stonewall Jackson E.M.

Bounds in one of his books if you know where it is tell me I've forgotten Stonewall Jackson E.M. Bounds says God killed Stonewall Jackson because he knew how to pray too well he had never prayed once for a major deliverance when God didn't give him victory and forget the politics and everything else he was

praying that the south would overcome the north and God said this is my will but rather than disappoint my child I'll kill him and he said he killed him now accept it or not that's what he said but very often God takes me almost it seems to the breaking point and when he visualized the blood may be coming out of the boy but what does it say he says he believed it didn't make any difference in other words God says I can't win because this man has such faith he's going to demand and raise him from the dead anyhow we don't like that we won't deliver us in the final moment and the Lord says you never get total victory in trying to back out of something that's mountains high you have the classic example Satan hath desired thee to sift thee as wheat but I have prayed for thee what that you shall prosper know that your faith fail not the most precious thing you have is your faith and the devil is going to test it every conceivable way and yet again as I've said so often I read Hebrews 11 and I read about those people they never had the full revelation of God they had scrappy pieces of it that's why I think of the judgment coming on America or England you can talk about the sin of Jeremiah and all those people but they never had a Bible in every home in Israel like we have and they have here they never had hundreds of Bible schools they never had gospel messages sent into every home every day and into every radio and every automobile we're going to answer to God but the judgment for that what are we doing with it but again going back to this my faith your faith is precious I like that American hymn my faith looks up to thee thou lamb of Calvary I like the last line that says when ends life's transient dream when death's cold sullen stream shall o'er me roll or the second verse may thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart my zeal inspire we need fresh anointings I don't care when you're baptized with the Holy Ghost we need fresh anointings didn't Phineas say I walked over Boston Common but it didn't work for me he said I walked over Boston Common many times I felt a new inrush of divine light I felt a new anointing of the spirit of God and then he went out and did exploits for God didn't have the media didn't have all the stuff we have today but I stood outside of his church there in Rochester New York and there's a sign outside and it says Charles G.

Phinney had a revival crusade I think he called it in this city a certain year and one hundred thousand people were not converted to again of the spirit of God a hundred thousand and God's the same yesterday then forever he invites us prove me now but look at all the vicious issues of life that Peter went through the bitterness of denying his Lord the scorn the mockery that's Peter the failure and yet God brings him through and sanctifies him makes him meat for the master's use and then again he took his own life and God's the same.

He's the same. The Lord's talking atmospheric Out of faith you know fellowship with the saint. It seems all hell is let loose and God's gone to sleep.

He doesn't care and yet is the same yesterday then forever and he's still in the same business. People often call me and say will you put me on your prayer list? I usually say no. They get a bit disgusting I said if I pray for everybody that want to be on my prayer list I'd never go to bed id never sleep I'd never eat.

i stay in the room praying all time. Well, I think if you prayed for me, I think that something may happen. Well, I can recommend to you somebody who prays far more successfully, with more strength and power than I've ever had.

Who's that? Jesus. Well, if I knew you prayed for me every morning, I'd say, listen, he's at the right hand of the Father every moment, living to make intercession for us. We go to secondary causes, let the church do this, let somebody else do it, come on.

It's time for us to get on our feet and believe him and embrace the promises and say, Lord, here I am, every part of my being, spirit, soul and body, my mind, my will, everything is yours. Again, I lay in dust life's glory dead. Well, I don't know what you think about the world, I think it gets more crazy every day.

I think we don't need to take the whole night doing it, but what do they say, how many people are still buried in that place that collapsed? Nine are known dead, nineteen men are missing, and I don't know how many are injured. Then on the six o'clock news, in Greece, somebody blew up a United States, what was it, a bus taking, a United States military bus was blown up and a number there killed. I think of those men buried in all that debris and stuff, hour after hour, terrified, terrified.

They're not thinking now about their nightclubs and their drinks and everything, their world has literally gone to pieces, without God and without hope. You know, we ought to rejoice in the fact that we're the sons of God, that we're free from sin, from bondage, that we have a hope eternal in the heavens, that the resurrected Christ is there, and there's an estate, and we can be kept by the power of God. He can hold the world up, he can keep a fish in the sea, and he doesn't get salt in it.

He can keep me through the blood in a wicked world, a world that gets more and more polluted. And we can bring joy to the heart of the Lord. Let's pray tonight, again, pray for these precious Indians, I hope you are doing that.

And Mexico, I think joy is in Mexico, isn't it? Reynosa. And Dave Wilkerson, apparently, looks as though he's going to go through and get a place in, I better not prophesy too much, in New York anyhow. But let's pray for these ministries.

I think that we're speeding up very quickly towards a judgment. Let's go to prayer.

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