

# Satan and His Work 03

by Welcome Detweiler

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*The sermon explores the traps of Satan that lead believers into despair, emphasizing the importance of restoration through God's grace and forgiveness.*

**Duration:** 36:00

**Scripture:** Luke 23:31, 1 John 1:9, 1 John 2:1

**Topics:** "Satan"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher expresses his sadness for the people of Keystone Heights who do not have anyone to preach the gospel to them. He then turns to the book of Luke, specifically chapter 22, and reads verse 31 where Jesus tells Simon Peter that Satan desires to sift him like wheat. The preacher reflects on the disciples' confusion and Peter's eagerness to preach to the crowd. He also mentions Peter's previous denial of Jesus and how he must have felt hopeless after Jesus' death. However, the preacher hints at Peter's eventual transformation and his role in spreading the message of Jesus' resurrection.

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## Transcript

I have to begin with a very sad note tonight, because I feel very sorry for the people who live in Keystone Heights. You have a wonderful gospel that can reach sinners and change their lives completely, and you have no one to preach that gospel to you, because they're all saved. Oh, take me back to North Carolina, where it's lousy with sinners, where I have the possibility of seeing souls claimed.

This is the third time I'm going to ask you to turn to Luke 23. The hymns should be well-worn. It may fall open at Luke chapter 22, and I begin reading once more at verse 31.

If I was sure that there were no first-timers here, or were not here last night, I wouldn't bother to read, because this is an extension or finishing what I started last night. But since I met some people who were not here, I just want to read a few verses. Verse 31 of Luke 22, And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desire 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, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Verse 60, And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. There are some very strong statements in our Bible, such as Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever, without the shedding of blood is no remission. Whatsoever and so hath that shall he also reap.

These are wonderful statements, tremendous truth coined in a few words, and among those I think we need to use those six words in the middle of verse 31, Satan hath desired to have you. The reason I have to continue last night's message is because we left Peter at a very sad station, did we not? And Peter went out and wept bitterly. Is that the end of Simon Peter? I rather think that Satan thought it was, or hoped it was.

The job is done. What I intended to do has happened. I wanted him.

I bought him. He is washed up. He's finished.

Simon Peter will go into hiding. You'll never hear his name again. That's exactly what Satan hoped would turn out because of the trap that he set for him.

Can you picture that scene? Of all that you have read about Simon Peter, tell me, what did he look like? A fisherman, a big-boned fisherman, a coarse-voiced fisherman who, no doubt, had a vocabulary that was beyond the dictionary. He knew how to curse. A rough, coarse man.

A man who, in his former days, would say, nobody cries unless he's just sitting. Big men never allow those tears to run. If it ever should happen, they'll run into hiding.

Strong men don't weep. That's what he is. Do you see that frame shaking? He's not only weeping, he's weeping bitterly.

Do you know what that means? Have you ever? Has there been one time in your life, when you can remember, that you just shook with tears? Whatever the cause may have been, it could have been a very stupid mistake that you made. And you said, I'll never get over it. Never get over it.

I told you last night that I had a few more traps that I wanted to relate to you. Peter's main trap here was self-confidence. I am ready to go into prison and into death.

Lord, you can count on me. I have willpower. Lord, I do have to teach Peter something because he could be a great man, but he has a handicap, and I have to rob him of his self-confidence.

But the devil could say, I got him in two traps. I got him in self-confidence, and look what he did, but I also got him to the place of discouragement. I guess a better word would be despair.

Despair is one of the devil's traps, and if he can get a Christian to a place where he makes a stupid mistake, from which he doesn't think there is any recovery, then that man will be silent the rest of his days, will go into hiding, and be a secret believer. And that will make the devil very, very happy. It was John Alexander Clark who spent many days in the Belgian Congo, and you young people probably never had the privilege of meeting him, but I did.

And I remember one story that I shall never forget. My memory may not give all the details, and if you heard him say it, you will allow that the main thrust of that message is still true, details or not, but a young man came to him one day and said, forget that you ever knew me. I've fallen into a dreadful sin.

I'm going back in the country, and you'll never hear about me again. I'm finished. And John Alexander Clark knew that he had trusted the figure, and went on well for the Lord, but the devil trapped him.

And Clark said, you live up there in the country, and you bring some of your vegetables down to the market, and sell them. You have that basket on your head, and you come down, you bring the vegetables down, but let's suppose on a certain day there has been a rain in the morning, and you're coming down in the afternoon. The path is somewhat slippery, and while walking along, all at once, both feet just slip up.

The vegetables scatter all over the place. Let me give you some advice. If that ever happens, lie still, and keep on lying still until the hyenas come and eat you.

What do you mean, Mr. Clark? I mean that. No! All right. Do you understand what I'm trying to tell you? You just told me that.

You just told me. But you're finished, and it's just the equivalent of lying down and saying, I'll do nothing. I quit.

Let the hyenas come and get me. Now tell me, you wouldn't do that? No. What would you do? I'd gather those vegetables, brush off my dirty clothes, and start again.

That's it. You're a wise man, and that's exactly what I want you to do. Are you sure I can? I thought I was finished.

No one is finished. No one. It would be just as ridiculous to do what you have intended to do as for a man to lie down when he slips and the vegetables spill, and he says, come on, hyenas, you need food.

Here I am. That would be ridiculous, and it's just as ridiculous for a man who reaches that point when he goes out and weeps bitterly, and he says, I quit. Of all the people that I know that are in a backroom condition, or who have had a terrible fall, such as Peter did in this case, regardless of what caused it, but he reaches that point when he says, I'm finished.

There's no use trying. I quit. The devil loves to hear those words.

I believe I can say that sliders usually follow a certain pattern. First of all is the slipping period. Sometimes that slipping period is inch by inch, just getting away slightly at a time, and farther and farther and farther.

Then some interested person notices it, and he says, by the way, I don't mean to intrude in your affairs, but you don't seem to be quite as happy in the Lord as you used to be. What do you mean? Well, you've got enough dirt to sweep around your own door. You left me alone.

That often is the action. This is something very sensitive, that you should notice and infer that I am not as spiritual as I ought to be. Who are you to tell me that? And from the slipping stage, it's very easy to get over into the snobbing stage.

You mind your own business. If I am not attending the meetings as much as I ought to, that's up to me. You just take care of yourself.

Very often, Christians get into a very rebellious mood when someone wants to help. And, by the way, in Galatians chapter 6 and verse 1, there is instruction given, Ye that are spiritual, restore such in one in the spirit of meekness, clearing thyself, lest thou also be tempted. And we do have a responsibility.

One of the greatest problems that we have when we see someone sitting is to know when to offer help and when not to offer help. We need to have a prayer before we do it, because it might make the situation worse or it might help. The great preacher that you young people don't know either was Alfred T. Gibbs.

And, on occasion, he said there's a time when it's good for backsliders to be left alone. Let them stew in their own broth, whatever that means. Must be a Scotch translation.

Let them stew in their own broth until they are well done. And I think we'll have to add another stage. The slipping stage, the snobbing stage, is followed some time later, maybe a long period, with the hobbling stage.

And that's where Simon Peter was. Shall we leave him there? Is that the end of Peter? I'm trying to think, when is the next time you read about Peter? I don't know if he was at the cross. There was a company of believers there.

We are not told about every one of them, but we know some of them. The mother of Jesus was there, and certain ones, and maybe he was there. And, as you saw, the cross lifted up and the Savior hanging there.

It may have just rushed him all the more. I've had problems. I've been weeping my heart out over my stupid mistakes, and I've been following a lost cause.

The Savior, we were sure he would have his kingdom. He's dead. We follow the lost cause.

There's nothing more to live for. The sky has fallen in. The world has come to an end, so far as we are concerned.

I think I am right. The next time you hear about Simon Peter, there were two men running to the tomb. They heard the message, he is not here, he is risen.

Picture Peter again as a big fellow, clumsy, flat-footed. When it came to running, he was pretty awkward, worse than a duck. John, well, he was built for speed, and younger, and the two of them are making their way to the tomb.

John outruns them. But John doesn't have the boldness. He doesn't particularly appreciate being around cemeteries.

But Peter is a rugged man. I'm not afraid to go in there. I want to see what happens.

He's the first one that steps in the tomb. So, Peter is not finished, is he? And after our Lord Jesus Christ is raised from the dead, this may have been just a little before, the message was, go tell the disciples and Peter. That's strange, wasn't he one of them? Especially, I want to be sure, that that man hears about it.

I'm especially interested in, he needs special attention right now. He's had an awful fall. I want to encourage him, tell him that I rose from the dead.

The details of his recovery are not mentioned, but we do know that he recovered, and the best way to start recovering is just what he did, stopping. He might have gone on snobbing. I don't care what anybody says.

I don't know the man. But immediately he said, I'm wrong. There's no use carrying on like this.

The best thing is to confess it, and to immediately change. He's not the only man. I think we can say, in our Bible, we have a number of cases where men had a second chance.

Now, that is not true regarding salvation, and our cults are telling us, some of them at least, that if you are not saved now, you will have a chance later. That is not the message for sinners, because you do not have a chance later. When you finish your last breath on this earth, you are finished.

There will be no more message of invitation given to you to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. But, so far as Christians are concerned, and a second chance for being used in his service, yes, there are quite a number. You remember Jonah, do you not? The word of the Lord came to Jonah, and Jonah ran away from the Lord.

Then, with this wonderful verse, the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time. Isn't that wonderful? Now, God must be a patient God, because he could easily have said, Jonah, I gave you a chance. Any man that runs away from me, when I give you a wonderful opportunity to go to that city Nineveh, and preach to them, and runs away, is not worthy.

You're finished. Goodbye. There are plenty of others around.

No, he didn't. Jonah, you made a mistake and you know it, but I think this will help you. You might be a better preacher now than you would if you listened to me the first time.

This may do you good. And Jonah goes and preaches. The biggest evangelistic meeting in your Bible.

It goes beyond the day of Pentecost. A whole city, right from the top to the bottom, in sacks and ashes, recognizing what a preacher Jonah is. And he did it because God gave him a second chance.

I guess you would have to say that regarding John and Brother David. When he sinned, we could have said, he's finished. But there was a future today in ministry even beyond that.

There are certain things that perhaps cannot be repaired when we make mistakes. And I think we have that brought to our attention in the life of Samson. You remember the life of Samson? He made some very bad blunders and he had to pay for it.

Two things. His hair was cut off and he lost his sight. Some of the things that happen when we do things as did Peter cannot be repaired.

His sight never came back. But his hair grew again. That part was repairable and the other was not.

So, let's not think carelessly about getting away from the Lord. We may have to reap some things that cannot be repaired. Very often, some of the things can and some of the things cannot.

So, there are lasting damages. This would appear to be one of Satan's blunders. After Peter is stored and continues to be used of the Lord, and I must not forget that at the day of Pentecost, which was just around approximately 50 days after, he was weeping bitterly.

And I don't think there was a program printed for the day of Pentecost. There was no arrangement made for a preacher. It came spontaneously.

There they were. The disciples were there and the people were there. And they were trying to figure out what happened.

These men are evidently drunk with wine. And Peter said, what an opportunity. Look at these people.

Who could turn down an opportunity like this? I'm going to preach to them. And I'm going to start out by answering what has happened. I'll tell them.

But I won't stop there. Give them the gospel too. I think it's good that I went there because I think if Peter would have said, I'm going to preach to this crowd, I would have said, not you, Peter.

You sit back for a while. Remember what you did. I'm going to preach.

Okay, Peter, if you insist on only one thing, the Lord won't bless it. There won't be a soul saved. So, you'll just make a fool out of yourself again.

You can't be restored that quick. It takes longer. You'll probably never be able to be used of the Lord.

You're finished. Oh, there may be some little odd jobs. You may be able to sweep the chapel if they had chapels and so on.

Some menial tasks. But so far as ever be used of God, no. Peter, you forget about it.

So, you are thankful that I wasn't there. And let's hope I might have had a little more sense and been a little kinder. But you do know what happens.

God used a restored man, and I have to conclude from that that God's restoring grace is just as wonderful as his saving grace, and demonstrates to us that God is not finished. And after Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost, you think the devil was wasn't there? Of course he was. But I think he started kicking himself.

You know, I'd have been better off if I hadn't got Peter in that trap. I'd have been better off. It's one of my blunders.

Peter is a greater man now than ever before. I'd have been better off if I'd have let him had all the self-confidence. A mistake.

A blunder of Satan. I think we have to make this application. Bring it right down today.

Is it possible for people to get away from the Lord? I don't think anyone would come to this miserable place, spend their money at Park of the Palms, unless they were in high fellowship with the Lord. There couldn't possibly be a backslider in this crowd. Is it possible? I wonder why the Lord laid this message on my heart.

Unless there might be one person in here. You do claim to be a Christian. You have a clear testimony.

You don't want anyone to mention it, but your conscience is beating you and saying, you've been slipping. You didn't notice it, but now you notice it, and you're defending yourself. And who knows, you may even

be at the snobbing stage where you don't want anyone to talk to you about it.

That's my business. I hope that if that is true, that you will learn the lesson from Peter that you better get to that sobbing stage just as quickly as you can, and be restored as quickly as you can, and perhaps be used in the days that lie ahead as never before. I have to turn to 1 John, chapter 1, for the New Testament again to confirm that God is interested in restoring those that get away from him, live at a distance.

You know these verses so well. 1 John, chapter 2, and verse 1, A little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And then, chapter 1, and verse 9, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And this is spoken to a Christian. The title of John is addressed to believers. So, we have from our New Testament the fact that restoration is available to everyone.

Now, I think I should go back and say that sometimes we think of backsliding as being a dreadful, awful thing, and if a man goes into some deep sin all at once, an avalanche, then he needs to hear what Peter heard. There is restoration, but this applies to those of us who have just slipped a little bit, nothing public, but just not where we were when first we were saved. A bit of indifference, and a bit of laziness, and just drifting.

The devil is interested, and these words were spoken to a Christian, Satan hath desired to have you. He does not say Satan has desired to have you to cause a dreadful thing, but he has desired to have you, and he is content whatever percentage or seriousness of that getting away, just so you are not what you ought to be. Just so Jesus Christ is not your whole objective in life, live at a distance.

Don't take it too serious, and you have a good reason. The rest of the Christians are not taking it seriously either, and I want to be like the average Christian. Do you really? God wants every one of us to give our best to him.

He deserves it. He paid an awful price to save us, and he is ready to restore us and bring us back to that wonderful place. I think it would be good for us to read privately at least Psalm 51, where you have David come to that point where he is sobbing, ready to come back, and that 51st Psalm is a tremendous Psalm.

Our Bible would be oh so different if we didn't have that Psalm, and there are a number of Christians who read that Psalm and said, I didn't realize it. That fit me. I didn't fall into the exact same sin that David did, but I can use these words.

So, I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Create in me a clean heart. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

Hold me with thy free spirit. What a wonderful privilege for us to come back, start over again, and it may be the very best of our days may still be ahead. You know the application of Luke 15, the story of the prodigal son, and of course the first application is that the wavered son is a picture of lost guilty sinners, and the parodies of course are the subject there.

But, there is a second application that can be given to that chapter, and that is there are Christians who take a detour away from where they ought to be, and they come to that same place, Wits End Corner, and I doubt not that that man who could think and picture in his mind hired servants, and they have all the food

they want to be, and I'm starving here for hunger. And he thinks that, and thinks he must have been sobbing. Then there came a point where he said, I'm the only one who can do anything about this.

I will arise and go to my father, and I will say, I'm no more worthy to call thy son make me as one of thy hired servants. I'm going home. The devil was there.

That would be embarrassing. Your daddy will say, I told you so. You will be the laughingstock of the whole community.

He thought he could make it on his own. Now he comes back and he says, man, don't you do it. I'm going.

It's the only thing to do. I'm going back. And he did come back.

We have so many illustrations in our Bible, and I think I have to also put a warning out that if you are living at a distance from God, and God has been putting his finger upon it, and has been pleading with you in a very calm and loving voice, and you continue to turn a deaf ear to that pleading voice, there is a possibility, a good possibility, he loves you enough to bring out his rod, his love rod. You know what I mean by that? His love rod. He loves you enough and thinks of what you could do for him.

He's going to spank you. And I tell you, when you get spanked and you can blame someone else for it, it's not too bad. But if you have to blame yourself for it, that's a rough.

And you will have to blame yourself for if he does spank you. He doesn't always stop right there, does he? In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, we'll read that because of this, some are sickly among you. My help? Would he touch my help? He has done it on a few occasions.

To bring people back. No, he's not a cruel God. I call his love rod.

He loves you enough. He sees perhaps if I touch his body, he'll be brought back and it'll be worth it all if I touch his body. And again in 1 Corinthians 11, he goes even farther.

Some are sleeping. There are Christians on earth that are not fit for earth, but they are fit for heaven. Now, that's difficult to understand, isn't it? They're saved.

They're under love. But they are no longer an asset to God. They're a liability.

And from God's wise point of view, he says, it would be better if I didn't leave them on earth. I'll sack them away. Would you call that entering heaven with a red face? I don't know whether that's the right expression, but thought is there.

Going to heaven prematurely because I wouldn't listen. God had plans for me. I was stubborn, and I didn't listen to his voice, and I didn't come out.

I guess I'll have to touch on the subject of Peter again, because there are still some people who would tell me that the moment Peter said, I don't know the Lord, he lost his salvation, and he had to be saved over again. That is not true. Peter did not lose his salvation.

He lost the courage to stand for God, and he lost that blessed communion with his blessed Savior. He didn't even want to look at him. I think when the Savior looked at him with kind, loving eyes, you couldn't look him in the eye.

Peter hadn't turned. Something happened. He could come to him and just praise him and joyous presence.

Not now. I've got to go and hide. Peter went out and wept, really.

No, Peter was not lost. He lost communion with the Lord, but he didn't lose his salvation. And the reason I know that is no one proved to me that Peter denied his Lord from the heart.

Let me slip up to Peter right after he does it the first time, the second time, or the third time. Peter, do you mean what you are saying that you don't know the Lord at all? No, no. But I'm scared.

I'm scared. I'm afraid they'll do to me what they'll do to him. No, no.

Peter never denied his Lord from the heart. In Romans 10 and 9, we read, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' If you have to believe from the heart to be saved, you have to deny from the heart to be lost." And no one has ever convinced me that Peter was a lost man because of this episode. He was saved, but he lost a tremendous deal.

God's wonderful salvation is tremendous. Saving a man like this, and when I think of God picking out the various ones to be used, here is a choice vessel. If you want to scold Peter for what he did, don't do it too long, because you're not finished yet, and someday you'll have to eat your words, and there's a possibility you could do even worse than Peter, God forbid.

But let's examine our hearts tonight. Is it possible that I am living at a distance from the Lord? Is it possible that right where I am now, spiritually, the devil is happy, and he is saying, set a trap for him? He doesn't know it. He doesn't realize it.

I'm getting him, and it looks like I'm getting him more and more, and at the same time, the Savior is watching. He says, he's grieving me more and more and more. Oh, that he would come to that sobbing age, and give up, and say from the heart, Lord, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

On other evenings, I have mentioned there's a possibility there's an unsaved one here. I would love to help you, and I must say that again, because I don't know. I believe someone slipped in, not quite sure about salvation.

I would love to help you, if you'd help me. And then you've heard this message tonight, and it's not very often that Christians who are in a butlinen condition will come to the speaker, or to another Christian, and say, I'm in a backslidden condition, can you help me? This is a rather secret thing. We don't want it to get out publicly.

But I suggest, if you have tried to get back, and you need just a little help, and you think it helps you, I offer, if not, will you do this? Go home, and before you go to sleep tonight, read Psalm 51, and see if you can't use David's words honestly in his presence. And I believe you'll be able to get up from your knees if you do, and say, thank you, Lord. It's just like starting over again.

I shall, by thy grace, do whatever you command me from this day forward. I confess, the devil got me. His desires were granted.

Shall we pray? Our Father, we thank thee for thy word. We thank thou hast told us about Peter. We thank thee for the one way he was restored.

We bless thee again for thy restoring grace, and that thou in thy patience dost look into the hearts of poor stumbling people, and give them a chance. Look down into every heart tonight, and examine us by thy Spirit. Help us to be honest in thy presence, and Lord, keep us from making the devil happy in the slightest degree.

Keep us from grieving thy beloved Son, who loved us and died for us. Help us, O Lord, from this day forward, to be our best for thee. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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