

# Guest Preacher Rev. Hugh Ferrier

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Preacher: Rev. Hugh Ferrier

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, please turn with me, friends, to the words that we read there in Luke chapter 22, Luke 22. And reading again verses 31 to 34, Luke 22 from verse 31, where Jesus says, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat.

But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and when you have turned against strength in your brothers. Peter said to him, Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.

Jesus said, I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day until you deny three times that you know me. I'm sometimes asked the question, what do you enjoy most about the ministry?

What do you enjoy most about the ministry? And there are many things that I love about the ministry. The opportunity, and I don't say this lightly, but the opportunity to study the Word of God and to an intense level with less disturbance and distraction and others might have, is very much an unspeakable privilege.

I love that aspect of the ministry. But perhaps the thing that I love most, and I hope it's not too controversial to say, the thing I love most about the ministry is pastoral visitation.

[ 1 : 21 ] I love, I love visiting people in their homes. However, some visits can be a real challenge, and it's got absolutely nothing to do with the person whom I'm visiting.

Instead, it's when I get to the person's home, and you might get to their gate, or you might get to the door, and there's a sign up saying, Beware of the dog. And my heart just sinks.

And I think, Lord, why? Why am I in this rural island where every second person seems to have a dog that we need to be aware of? Those warning signs just leave my stomach churning.

Well, this evening, I want us to look at Peter and the warning that Jesus gave him, the caution that Jesus gave him. And we're looking at this then under two headings.

Those of you who are taking notes, we're looking at a fearsome adversary, and then we're looking at a faithful advocate. A fearsome adversary and a faithful advocate. First, a fearsome adversary.

[ 2 : 24 ] You see that in verse 31, where Luke focuses on the enemy who is facing Peter. The enemy who is facing Peter. Before going any further, let's sit ourselves in the chapter.

In verses 1 and 2, we find the chief priests and the scribes plotting the death of Jesus. Verses 3 to 6, we find Satan entering Judas, who then meets with these chief priests and officers, and makes arrangements regarding how he'll betray Jesus.

Verses 7 to 23, we find Jesus instituting his holy supper, his new covenant meal consisting of bread and wine that will point to his death and what it will accomplish.

Verses 24 to 30, we find the disciples then arguing among themselves about which one of them was the greatest. Jesus is now just a few hours away from his death on the cross.

In a few hours, he'll be arrested in the garden. He'll be condemned to death on the pavement of Gabbatha. He will be hung on the cross at Golgotha. And then he'll be placed in a grave belonging to a man named Joseph of Arimathea.

[ 3 : 30 ] The climactic moment of Jesus' long-awaited work of redemption is now in sight. The finish line is in view. But it's also described as being the hour of the power of darkness.

And during this dark hour, satanic assaults are going to come against Jesus with full force. But they will not just come against Jesus with full force.

They will also come against the disciples of Jesus with full force. And it's at this point that we hear Jesus' very solemn admonition in verse 31.

Jesus begins by addressing Peter with the word, Simon, Simon, behold. Jesus means business. As he uses the name of this disciple twice.

He only does this on two other occasions. If you go to Luke chapter 10, you find him cautioning Martha over her misplaced priorities with the words, Martha, Martha.

[ 4 : 28 ] And then again in Luke 13, he cautions unbelieving Jerusalem with the words, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. There is very much an urgency. There is very much a note of caution as Jesus calls out, Simon, Simon.

And it's interesting that Jesus uses this name, Simon. If you go back to John chapter 1, you find that Jesus had given this fisherman, Simon, the son of John, the name Peter, meaning rock.

But this same rock-like follower is going to show himself to be a frail, fragile, fickle man with feet of clay. He will show himself to be a man who is lacking in rock-like durability, rock-like dependability. And Jesus therefore says to him, Simon, Simon, behold. Simon, Simon, take note. Simon, Simon, pay attention.

And Jesus carries on with these very solemn words, Satan has demanded you. Jesus speaks about this figure called Satan. The word Satan means adversary or accuser.

[ 5 : 38 ] He's mentioned in Zechariah chapter 3 as one who stands before the Lord accusing people, accusing the high priest Joshua. And here Jesus speaks about this figure, this accuser, this adversary, Satan, demanding to have you.

The pronoun you here that Jesus uses is plural, indicating that Jesus isn't referring to Simon, Peter alone, but to the whole group of men who have gathered in the supper room.

And Satan is demanding to have them. It is strong language. It is legal language. It is the language of a lawsuit. It's as if Satan has come before God, saying to God, I want these men.

And I don't just want these men. I have a right to these men. I have a claim on these men. Because these men are sinners. It's the same idea that we find in Job chapter 1, where Satan comes before God, and he demands an opportunity to attack Job, and afflict Job, whom he says isn't righteous. God says to him, have you considered my righteous servant Job? And Satan says he is anything but righteous. He is only following you. He is only faithful to you, because he wants what he can get out of you.

[ 6 : 57 ] It's the same idea that we find in Revelation chapter 12, where Satan comes before God, and he accuses the Lord's people. And Jesus says here, that Satan has demanded to have Peter, and demanded to have these other disciples, so that he might sift them like wheat.

Let's consider that image. In Jesus' day, a woman would have a sieve in her hands, and she would sift it. She would shake it violently, shake it vigorously, to separate the wheat from the chaff.

The fine wheat would fall through the sieve, while the thicker chaff would remain on the surface, and eventually be discarded, thrown away to the wind.

The sifting was very much a process of separation. And Jesus is saying here, that that is what Satan wants to do, with Simon and these other disciples.

He wants to take them, and shake them. He wants to tear into them, and tear them apart. He wants to pick them off, one by one.

[ 8 : 02 ] And once he has picked them off, one by one, he wants to pick them to pieces. He wants to toss them about, in such a way, that he will separate them, from one another.

But not simply separate them, from one another, but separate them from Jesus. And the life that is found, in Jesus, and Jesus alone. And so Jesus takes this moment, to lovingly warn Peter, and lovingly caution Peter, as well as all the other disciples, that this is Satan's aim, for each of them.

This is Satan's ambition, for them. Satan wants to sift them, like wheat. And now friends, as we consider these verses, we are being reminded, that Satan, the devil, is a fearsome adversary.

Satan, the devil, is a fearsome adversary. That's what we see, in Luke 22. Jesus is telling Peter, and those with him, that Satan is real. And he's telling Peter, and those with him, that Satan is more than real.

He is also active. He is dangerous. He is doing all that he can, to sift them, and separate them, from him. Jesus wants his disciples, to see, that Satan, the devil, is a real fearsome adversary.

[ 9 : 24 ] It's a truth, that Peter would reflect on, later in life. We find him writing, to a group of Christians, in his old age, that Christians, are to be sober minded. They are to be watchful.

Why are they to be sober minded? Why are they to be watchful? Well, Peter writes, since their adversary, the devil, prowls around, like a roaring lion, seeking someone, to devour.

And that is very important, for us to remember tonight. The devil is real. The 19th century French poet, Charles Baudelaire, once said, the greatest trick, that the devil ever pulled, was convincing the world, that he doesn't exist.

The greatest trick, that the devil ever pulled, was convincing the world, that he doesn't exist. And we see that today, as people laugh, at the idea of the devil, and they reduce him, to a harmless bit of fun, bit of light entertainment.

They'll even have, their children, dressing up as, little devils, at Halloween, and these other festivals. And even Christians, don't give, all that much serious thought, that much serious consideration, to the devil.

[10:37] They don't think of him, as prowling around their homes, prowling around their schools, prowling around their workplaces, prowling around their church services. I kept on saying it, to the leaders, at the Concrete Camp, last week, and Alison will probably, be hearing this in her sleep, and Donna too.

The devil would be, prowling around. That wherever, we are trying to do, a work of God, the devil's there. If the devil was there, in the upper room, you can be sure, that he will be, prowling around, other places as well.

And here is Jesus, and he's unequivocal, and he's uncompromising, in reminding his followers, reminding Peter, that the devil is real.

The devil is real, and he's not simply real, he is active, and he is dangerous. He's always at work.

He is always on the move. He is always launching, attack after attack.

He is always doing his utmost, to prevent and prohibit, hinder, hamper, hold back people, from coming to Jesus, in faith.

[11:44] That's what he's always about. And when a person, might eventually, come to Jesus, in faith, he is always trying to, push them away from Jesus. Pull them away from Jesus.

Probe them away, from Jesus. Jesus. Charles Spurgeon, understood this well, and he wrote, the point of Satan's, chief attack on a believer, is always his faith.

Not his body, but his faith. Sometimes he'll attempt, to destroy a person's faith, by placing them, in his sieve, of pain, and confusion.

And sometimes, he'll attempt, to destroy a person's faith, by placing them, in his sieve, of pleasure, and comfort. The devil, is a very clever creature.

He's a very cunning creature. He's a creature, who's been studying, the human condition, for thousands of years. And he's been studying, each one of us, throughout, our whole existence.

[12:47] He has a PhD, on our physical condition, a PhD, on our mental condition, a PhD, on our emotional condition, a PhD, on our spiritual condition.

He knows the areas, friends, where we are strongest, and he knows the areas, where we're weakest, and he even knows, and this is what frightens me most, he knows the areas, where we think, that we're strong, but we're actually weak.

The areas, where we say, I would never do X, I would never do Y, I would never do Z, and he knows, how to get us there. He knows the right way, friends, to attack, each and every one of us.

Phil Riken writes, do you know, how much danger you're in? I think of the girl, who ran away from God, as soon as she went to college. I think of the family, that decided, that they didn't need, to be in church, because that's not, where God is at work anymore.

I think of the man, who felt so powerless, against Satan, that he went back, to a lifestyle, of sexual sin. The most dangerous thing, in the world, is to fail, to realize the danger, we are in.

[14:00] What a statement. The most dangerous thing, in the world, is to fail, to realize the danger, that we are in. So, this evening, let's pay attention, to Jesus' word, of admonition.

And remember, that Satan, the devil, is a fearsome adversary. Fearsome adversary. But then, second, we have, this faithful advocate, verses 32, to 34, where Jesus, now focuses, on the faithful friend, who is praying for Peter.

The faithful friend, who is praying for Peter. We just heard, Jesus' solemn admonition, he's singled out Peter, but he's addressed, the whole group, of disciples, and he's warned them, that Satan, is wanting to, sift them like wheat.

He is wanting to, separate them from Jesus, wanting to destroy them, by separating them, from Jesus. And having heard, Jesus' solemn admonition, we can move, to Jesus' strong assurance. Verse 32, Jesus begins, by saying, but I have prayed for you. I love that word, but. It's a word, that changes, that transforms, a whole trajectory.

[15:15] In Genesis 8, we read, but God remembered Noah. There you've got Noah, and he's in the ark, and the whole earth, is submerged, in watery chaos, and it seems, that Noah's just, going

to be bobbing about, in that ark, forever and ever, and then it says, but God, remembered Noah.

Or in Genesis 12, we read, but the Lord, afflicted Pharaoh. You've got Abraham, and he's, and he's pretended, that his wife Sarah, is his sister, and Sarah's found herself, in Pharaoh's palace, because Pharaoh, has found her attractive, and it seems, that the whole promise, of the world, being blessed, through the seed, the line of Abraham, is now in jeopardy, it's hanging, in the balance, and then we read, but God, afflicted Pharaoh.

Or in 2 Samuel 11, we read, but the thing, that David, did displease the Lord. You've got David, and he's committed adultery, with Bathsheba, covered his tracks, by orchestrating, the murder, of her husband Uriah, and he thinks, that he's got away, with it, and this is the man, who's going to, be the line, through which, the Lord's people, will be blessed, and then we read, but the thing, that David did, displeased the Lord.

Or in Ephesians chapter 2, we read, but God, being rich in mercy, made us alive, in Christ. There you've got Paul, and he's writing down, the condition, of every person, before Christ, they were dead, in sins, dead, in trespasses, objects, of wrath, following the prince, of the world, and then, but God, being rich in mercy, made us alive, in Christ.

And here, Jesus says to Peter, but I have prayed, for you. Satan's demanded, to have Peter, demanded to have, these other disciples, so that he might, sift them like wheat, separate them, from Jesus, but Jesus has prayed, for them, but Jesus has interceded, for them, but Jesus, has pleaded, to his heavenly, father, for them.

[ 17 : 15 ] And Jesus says, but I have prayed, for you, singular. That's incredible. Verse 31, Jesus says, Satan has demanded, to have you, plural, addressing the whole group.

Now, Jesus says, verse 32, but I have prayed, for you, singular. Jesus hasn't, simply prayed, for this group, of men in general, he has prayed, for each one, in particular.

Prayed, for each one, by name. And prayed, for Peter especially. And Jesus says, that he's been praying, that Peter's faith, may not fail.

Note, he doesn't pray, that Peter will be spared, from Satan's sifting. He doesn't say, Father, keep Satan, from that, keep Peter, from that sifting. Neither does he pray, that Peter will not fail, while experiencing, Satan's sifting.

Instead, he has prayed, that Peter's faith, may not fail, while experiencing, Satan's sifting. Peter may faint, Peter may fail, Peter may fall apart, Peter may have, very little left, Peter may be left, with nothing more, than a thin thread, of faith.

[ 18 : 29 ] But if that thread, of faith, is still touching Jesus, united to Jesus, connected to Jesus, then that is enough. And so Jesus has prayed, that Peter's faith, however weak, that faith might be, that Peter's faith, may not fail.

And he carries on, and says, and when you have turned again, Jesus says, that Peter will turn again. He'll repent. He'll once again, be found going, in the right direction.

Isn't it wonderful, friends? I hope you can see it. Isn't it wonderful, that Jesus doesn't say, if you turn again. He says, when you turn again.

Jesus is confident, that yes, Peter may fall apart, but that will not, be the end for him. That will not be, the last word on him, when you turn again.

But he still isn't finished. As he says, when you turn again, strengthen your brothers. Peter will return. Peter will repent.

[ 19 : 36 ] But he will not simply return. He will not simply repent. He will be restored, and he will be used, once again, in a gospel ministry, of strengthening his brothers.

In John 21, Jesus will recommission Peter, with the words, feed my sheep. Feed my lambs. Take care of my people. Or in the book of Acts, we'll find Peter, taking the lead in the church.

As the church goes out, with the gospel, that word of salvation, to Jerusalem first, then to Judea, then to Samaria, then to the ends of the earth. And if you go through these early chapters of Acts, it's Peter, who's taking the lead.

And then even later, in the New Testament, we find Peter, writing encouraging letters, to Christians, who feel like they're living, in exile. Christians who are living, and feeling like this world, isn't home. And Peter is writing, to encourage them. Jesus is saying, Peter, you are going to fail. You're going to fall apart. But your failure, isn't going to be the final word on you.

[ 20 : 43 ] Because I, have prayed for you. And I wish we could end there. But in verses 33 and 34, we move from the strong assurance, to the startling attitude.

Throughout the gospels, Peter's always talking. Some of them say to the high five, that he's a bit like a girl, I had in my year at school. All the way from first year, to sixth year, she was putting up her hand.

Always the first to answer. And you just be rolling your eyes, thinking, here she goes again. And that's Peter, always talking. And once again, we find that he's unable, to keep quiet, even during such a, serious, significant moment.

Look at verse 33. He's just heard Jesus, solemn admonition. Just heard Jesus, this strong assurance. And now he exhibits, this startling attitude, as he says, Lord, I am willing to go, both to prison, and to death with you.

Peter, really believes, that he has enough resources, in and of himself, to remain faithful to Jesus, even as the fearsome, adversary approaches. It's really the Titanic, of all testimonies.

[ 21 : 52 ] Peter is looking, Jesus in the eye, and he's saying, Lord, I will never sink. And the iceberg's, already underneath him. Lord, I'll never sink.

I'll never fail you. I'll never fall apart. And there's the iceberg. You know, it's so easy for Peter, to make those strong, impassioned statements, in the upper room, surrounded by the other disciples, men whom he didn't really, think that much of.

If you go through the Gospels, you see Peter has got, this somewhat superior attitude, thinks that he's, somehow better than them. But it's going to be, far harder for Peter, when he finds himself alone.

When he finds himself, in the chill, of the high priest's courtyard. When he finds himself, surrounded, not by other disciples, whom he thinks, that he's stronger than, but rather surrounded, by men, who hate Jesus, with a passionate, vengeance.

And Jesus responds, to what Peter has just said, by delivering, a sobering reply, to the proud peacock. The proud peacock, who's strutting around, in front of the other disciples.

[ 23 : 04 ] Look at verse 34. Jesus doesn't argue with Peter. He doesn't say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute Peter. He doesn't say, Peter, Peter, don't you remember, when you started to sink, on the water, when you took your eyes off me?

There's none of that with Jesus. He simply looks Peter in the eye, and he sadly, gently, firmly says, I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you deny three times, that you know me.

That's all Jesus can say. Well, as we consider these verses, friends, we are being reminded, the Lord, is a faithful advocate.

Jesus, the Lord, is a faithful advocate. That's what we see here, in Luke 22. Jesus is telling Peter, and telling those with him, that Satan is demanding, to have them, so that he might sift them, like wheat, might destroy them.

He's been telling them, that Satan is doing, his utmost, to separate them, from Jesus, and the life, that is found in him. And now, Jesus tells Peter, that he has been praying for him, and praying for him, so that his faith, may not fail.

[ 24 : 26 ] Jesus has been praying, so that Peter's failure, as a disciple, will not be the last word, on him. Jesus has been praying, for Peter, so that he will turn, once again, and strengthen, his brothers.

Jesus wants his disciples, to know, that he, their Lord, is a faithful advocate. He's one, who prays, for his frail, feeble, fickle, people, again, and again, and again.

And I think, that's so important, and so encouraging, for us to remember tonight. Yes, Satan is a fearsome adversary, who wants to sift, and separate, every Christian, from Jesus.

Yes, Satan is a fearsome adversary, who wants to destroy, every single Christian, but Jesus, is the faithful advocate, who prays, for his people, at his father's right hand.

And he's a faithful advocate, who prays, that their faith, may not fail. He prays, about the chronic pain, of his followers, that they will not stop, trusting, in his goodness.

[ 25 : 47 ] He prays, about the troubled marriages, of his followers, that they will not, stop trusting, in his love. He prays, about the challenging, financial situations, of his followers, that they will not, stop trusting, in his care, and his provision, and his providence.

He prays, about the discouragements, of his followers, the dark nights, of the souls, that his followers, may find themselves in, that whatever happens, they will not, stop trusting, that he is near.

He prays, about his followers, when they backslide, when they almost, as it were, would make a shipwreck, of their faith, that they would know, that there is, a God of grace.

That there is, a second chance. That there is, a way back. J.C. Ryle, and I know he's, as Myrtle says, he's a good friend, of Myrtle.

And J.C. Ryle writes this, the continued existence, of grace, in a believer's heart, is a great, standing miracle. His enemies, are so mighty, and his strength, is so small, and the world, is so full of snares, and his heart, is so weak, that it seems, at first sight, impossible, for him, to reach heaven.

[ 27 : 07 ] The passage, before us, Luke 22, explains, the safety, of the believer. He has, a mighty friend, at the right hand, of God.

Surely, that should give you, cause for optimism, this evening. To have, a mighty friend, at the right hand, of God. This is good news, that we have, before us tonight.

Jesus, is more, than a crucified, saviour. He's the one, who's risen. He's the one, who lives. And he's not just, risen. He's not just, the one who lives.

He's the one, who loves, to make intercession, for his people, as their, ascended saviour, as their, great high priest, as their, faithful friend, who will not, fail them, will not forsake them, will not, turn his back, on them.

I was recently, reading about, John Kennedy, the famed minister, of Dingwall Free Church, and on one occasion, he was preaching, at a communion service, in Thurzl. And he was preaching, on this text, from Luke 22, and he said this, he encouraged, every, tempest, tossed soul, in caithness, or elsewhere, to lay, all its weight, on this gracious, advocate, all its guilty, yesterday, all its sinful, today, and all its unknown, tomorrow.

[ 28 : 37 ] Every, tempted, tempest, tossed soul, in caithness, lay its weight, on this gracious, advocate, all its guilty, yesterday, all its sinful, today, and all its unknown, tomorrow.

This evening, friends, let's pay attention, to Jesus' word, of assurance. And remember, that there is a faithful advocate, for those who are weak.

A faithful advocate, for those who are wayward. A faithful advocate, for every, tempted, tempest, tossed soul, in Barvis, in Lewis, and in elsewhere.

And the only question, that's before us, is this. Have we laid, our weight, on him? Have we laid, our trust, on him?

Have we laid, our faith, on him? All our guilty, yesterdays, put on him. All our sinful, todays, put on him.

[ 29 : 50 ] And all our unknown, our unknown, our own, our own, our own, our own, our own, our own, our own, put on him. I don't think any of us, would have the strength, to leave this building tonight, if we felt, we were going out, in our own strength.

But we're not going out, in our own strength. If you are a believer tonight, if you are a Christian tonight, you are going out, knowing, that you have a faithful advocate, you have a friend, you have a Jesus, who is praying for you, moment by moment, at the Father's right hand, that your faith may not fail.

And, and if you came here tonight, and you wouldn't have called yourself, a professing Christian, what's holding you back, from him?

What's preventing you, from closing in, with such a faithful advocate, such a friend, this Jesus?

Well, let's close, by singing the words, of Psalm 121, Psalm 121, sing Psalm's version, that celebrates, the keeping, of this God.

I to the hills, will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come, mine aid, by safety cometh, from the Lord, who heaven, and earth, hath made. Psalm 121, Scottish Salter version, on page 416, if you're able, to stand for this singing, please do so.

[ 31 : 29 ] I to the hills, will lift mine eyes, from the grants, that come, my name, my safety cometh, from the Lord, heaven and earth, thine, thy foot■■■■, not blessed side, nor will, his number, that he deep, be able to come, He keeps Israel, his lambs not nor sleeps.

The Lord redeems the Lord thy shed.

On thy right hand will stay. The moon by night these clouds collide.

Nor yet the sun by day. The Lord shall keep thy soul.

We shall preserve thee from all hell. Then forth thy coming out and in.

[ 33 : 44 ] God keep forever who. Let's pray. Our God and our Father, thank you that you are the one who is a helper and a keeper of his people.

And we thank you and bless you for the words that we've been able to consider this evening from your word. For the reminder that there is this faithful advocate with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we thank you that that is the only comfort and confidence of the Christian. Not our faithfulness, but his faithfulness. And we pray that each and every one of us tonight, however old or young we might be, would leave laying everything on this Jesus.

Thank you that we pray that we pray. All our guilty yesterdays, all our sinful todays and all our unknown tomorrows. That our faith would be leaning on him and on him alone.

Thank you that he is the one who doesn't simply make intercession for the likes of Peter. But we are told in your word that he is the one who makes intercession for all his people.

[ 34 : 51 ] And that when they may find themselves not knowing what to pray, not knowing how to pray. And even when they may find themselves unable to pray.

Even when minds have perhaps been damaged. Even when they may find themselves at their weakest and at their most vulnerable. Where there is nothing left in them to even make a prayer. That he is still praying for them. Encourage us with those truths we pray. And part us with your blessing as we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.