

• *The disciples face the greatest upheaval of their lives*

The disciples are facing the greatest change they are ever going to experience. Jesus, whom they have known as a close friend for more than three years, is about to be executed. The disciples will be scattered. For a couple of days they will not know what is happening. Never will they have Jesus back with them in precisely the same way as before. Jesus has a word for these disciples of His, as they face the greatest upheaval of their lives.

1. A time of danger

• *Satan wishes to 'sift' the disciples*

1. **This time of change will be a time of danger.** Jesus says, 'Satan has asked to have all of you to sift you like wheat'^{□1}. The word 'you' is plural. Jesus is speaking especially to Peter but He is referring to all of the disciples. Satan wishes to 'sift' the disciples, to find out their weak points, to persuade them to sin, to encourage them to abandon their faith in their Saviour.

□1 22:31

2. Despite the greatness of the danger, Peter's faith will not fail

• *Jesus' intercession guarantees that we will continue to trust in Him*

2. **Despite the greatness of the danger, Peter's faith will not fail.** Jesus is interceding for Peter and Jesus gets His prayers answered^{□1}. We note that Jesus does not say, 'I have prayed for you that you will never be tempted', or '...that you will never fall'. Jesus' intercession guarantees the preservation of our faith. The true believer never entirely stops believing (although there may be many temporary failures). Despite what sin Peter might fall into, His Saviour preserves his faith. Jesus' intercession guarantees that we will continue to trust in our Saviour. Peter is very ignorant at this stage in his life, and entirely confident in himself^{□2}.

□1 22:32

□2 22:33-34

3. Jesus draws attention to His own faithfulness

• *Many changes in the disciples' life after Jesus' death and resurrection*

• *They will be sent to the nations*

• *God's provision – just as God was faithful before so He will be faithful again*

3. **Jesus draws attention to His own faithfulness.** There will be many changes in the disciples' life after Jesus' death and resurrection. At an earlier time in their lives, they had been sent to Israel. They were to look for support from the people to whom they ministered. They were told not to carry a purse or the provisions that they needed. Jesus promised that they would find their support through the people of Israel to whom they ministered. But now a change is about to come. They will no longer be ministering only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They are about to be sent to all nations. They will have to have a purse and they will have to carry some supplies with them. They will not be able to get their funds from the pagan nations to which they travel.

Jesus asks a question: did they lack anything when they were sent to Israel? No^{□1}! Nor will they lack anything in the future^{□2}. They surely have discovered God's faithfulness already. The crucifixion of Jesus will be the point at which His ministry to Israel ends and His ministry to the nations begins^{□3}. Under the old arrangements (no purse, no spare shirt, no staff provided by themselves), they had discovered that God was faithful and they lacked nothing. Under the new arrangements (carrying a purse, providing for themselves a sword, taking adequate resources), they will find God equally faithful. Changes are coming into their lives, but just as God was faithful before so He will be faithful to them again.

□1 22:35

□2 22:36

□3 22:37

4. The great changes that are about to come will lead them into fuller ministry

- Peter will deny Jesus
- But Peter will be restored
- Jesus knows Peter better than Peter knows himself
- Re-commissioned
- Preached to 3000 on the day of Pentecost

God's work in our lives

- He puts us through great changes
- To enable us to strengthen our brothers and sisters

4. **The great changes that are about to come into their lives will lead them into fuller ministry.** Jesus knows everything that is about to happen. He knows Peter will deny his master. He knows that he will curse and take oaths and say, 'I know not the man'. But Jesus also knows that Peter will be restored. *'I have prayed for you that your faith does not fail.'* Peter's faith is indestructible. Jesus knows that there will be a time when faith fails, and He know that Peter will recover. *'When you have turned around, strengthen your brothers and sisters.'* Peter has been the leader of the twelve apostles (second to Jesus), and he will continue to be the leader of the church in its early days. It will be Peter who preaches on the Day of Pentecost.

We know what happened. Peter did indeed fail badly on the day when Jesus was arrested. He had said, 'I will never deny you', but it turned out that he did not know himself as well as Jesus knew him.

But Peter went on believing despite what he had done in denying Jesus. One look from Jesus brought him immediately to great distress. Jesus was praying that his faith would not fail. We remember how he was re-commissioned after Jesus was raised from the dead. God worked all things together for good. Peter found out things about himself that he never knew. He found out more of the faithfulness of his Saviour. Fifty-two days after he was cursing and denying Jesus he was present on the Day of Pentecost. The one who had betrayed his Master began to preach and three thousand people came to faith in Jesus.

God works in our lives by putting us through great changes. The disciples went through different stages of God's salvation and it caused different stages in their own lives. People who move on with God get pushed by God from one stage to the next in their story of serving Him. We do not exactly have to go through changes in the history of salvation, in the way the disciples witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus and the giving of the Spirit, Jesus is only crucified once. He is only raised from the dead once. There were some things that were unique about the Day of Pentecost. Yet the principles remain the same. Satan desires to sift us when he has special opportunities. Jesus ever lives to make intercession. He puts us through varied experiences in which, one way or another, we are able to strengthen our brothers and sisters.



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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