

# A Season for Sifting



By

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Luke 22:31–32 (KJV 1900): 31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Life makes room for every conceivable experience. The writer of Ecclesiastes states this irrefutable truth, “*To everything there is a season...*” This universal truth is the one reality that all human kind agrees on. “Ecclesiastes 3:2–8

(KJV 1900): 2 *A time to be born, and a time to die;*

*A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*

*3 A time to kill, and a time to heal;*

*A time to break down, and a time to build up;*

*4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh;*

*A time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

*5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;*

*A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*

*6 A time to get, and a time to lose;*

*A time to keep, and a time to cast away;*

*7 A time to rend, and a time to sew;*

*A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

*8 A time to love, and a time to hate;*

*A time of war, and a time of peace.*

Live long enough and each of these seasons will visit you in one way, shape, form, or fashion. Many of these seasons will come around again and again. Notice, if you will, how these seasons operate. They go from one extreme to the other: From birth to death, from weeping to rejoicing, from love to hate and from war to peace. No stones remain unturned. So it is and so it shall be. There is no getting around the dichotomies of life and even though we would wish that only the good things in life would come our way, I have to tell you that as bright as the sun may shine today, get out your umbrellas, for tomorrow it is going to rain.

Sometimes these seasons come when we least expect them. They come at the most inopportune times. Such is the case as recorded in our scripture passage for today. Jesus is preparing His disciples for his pending suffering. The dynamics of this setting unfolds in a strange and unsettling way. This is the time of celebration. It is the observance of the Jewish Passover. It is the time for remembering how God had spared their lives from the death angel while the children of Israel were still in bondage, but subsequently brought them out. In deed it was a

time for rejoicing over the goodness of God. Yet in the midst of this high time, this season of joy, Jesus drops a bomb on their spirits. He cast a dark cloud over their bright occasion. What news Jesus tells them, He tells them at a time when they would least expect such news. Of course the disciples don't want to hear anything about Jesus leaving them and to ear from His own lips that one of them is a betrayer, causes a major stir amongst them. Even stranger still, some of the disciples see this as an opportunity to jockey for positions of importance in Christs' new kingdom, which causes jealousy and anger within the group. And just when you would think things couldn't get any worse, Jesus singles out Peter and tells him he is about to get sifted! **“Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:”** Notice that Jesus does not call him Peter “The Rock”, But Simon his given name before his discipleship call. Simon, the weaker name, the name of the unconverted, the one who has not yet made his transformation. Simon! Simon do you remember when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan came along as an uninvited guest? Job 1:6–12 (KJV 1900): *“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came*

*also among them. 7 And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? 9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. 11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. 12 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.”* You remember all of the trials that the devil put Job through? Well, Simon, the devil is up to his old tricks again and this time he has set his sights on you. This is your **Season for Sifting!**

Now I realize that in this day and time the term “sifting” may sound foreign because sifters are not as common as they were when I was growing up. Sifters were used to separate the trash from the wheat flower. The trash was usually larger than the

grains of wheat so that the wheat grains would pass through the sifting mesh leaving only the trash behind to be thrown out. Well, like Simon we are in the midst of **A Season for Sifting** and the devil, like a roaring lion, is walking about seeking whom he may devour. He, by means of this corona virus, is sifting us. We must remain sober and vigilant or like so many who have gone before us, we too will be sifted. This is not about who is a saint vs who is a sinner, This sifting doesn't care who it takes. The one thing that Simon had going for him was Jesus. Jesus told him that He was praying for Simon. Well my brothers and my sisters Jesus is praying for us! Just as Simon's **Season for Sifting** came, ours has also come, but Jesus is praying for us too. He is praying that our faith will not fail us and when we have come through this season, when we have been tried by fire, when the storm clouds have ceased, we like Simon after he was converted, will be able to strengthen our brethren! Our testimony will be "even in this **Season of Sifting**, while it may abound, God's Grace will much more abound!"