

David Wilkerson:

When Peter was sifted he failed miserably—but not in his faith. You may be thinking, “How can that be? This man denied knowing Jesus three different times.”

But you see, if Peter had failed, then Jesus’ praying would have been to no avail. I know Peter’s faith did not fail because just as he swore and it looked as if the Lord had lost a friend and an anointed disciple, Peter looked into the eyes of Jesus—and melted. He remembered how the Lord had said, “You will deny me three times,” and “Peter went out and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:61–62). Wept bitterly in the Greek actually means he cried “a piercing, violent cry.” I picture Peter walking toward the Judean hills, falling on his face with hands outstretched, crying, “O Father, he was so right. I did not listen. He warned me that Satan would try to destroy my faith. I’m not ready! Die for Jesus? Why, I couldn’t even stand up to a maid. Forgive me, O Lord—I love him. To whom else shall I go?”

I can see Peter standing up with the Spirit of God flowing through him, his hands raised to the sky, shouting, “Satan, be gone! I failed him, but I still love him. He promised—in fact, he prophesied—that I would come back and be a strength to others, a rock. I’m going back to my brothers and sisters!” Indeed, Peter was the first disciple to reach the tomb when they were told Jesus had risen. He was with other disciples when Jesus later appeared in their midst. He was there worshipping when Jesus was translated to glory. And it was Peter who stood as God’s spokesman on the day of Pentecost—and what a sermon he preached!

A flood of new converts is coming back to the Lord today, Jews and Gentiles alike, and many backsliders as well. Where will they find strength in the troubled times ahead? From the returning, sifted saints, who can say with authority, “Don’t trust yourself. Take heed when you think you stand, lest you fall” (see 1 Corinthians 10:12).

Do you sense a seductive pull of temptation in your life? Does some kind of deep trouble brew in your heart? Then hear the words of Jesus and realize that Satan may have been given permission to sift you. Don’t take it lightly. You don’t have to fail as Peter did; in fact, we are to read his story and be warned by it. But even if you have failed, you can look into the face of Jesus as Peter did and remember he is praying for you. Repent, return and then share your experience with others who are being sifted.