

HELEN SANDERS

5-27-2022

## SIFTING AND SHIFTING

In the past two years there has been a great deal of sifting and shifting taking place in the world and in the church. It is happening to individuals but also businesses and entire churches.

The night before Jesus was crucified Jesus told the disciples what was going to happen, but they did not want to hear it. All four of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tell the story of Peter. They tell how he said he would never deny Jesus. It tells how Jesus told Peter that he would deny him three times before the cock would crow.

Luke gives another slant to the story. In Luke 22:31 Jesus said, ***“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired 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.”***

Jesus said he had already prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail, but he knew it would fail. He would be sifted by Satan to deny the Lord. How horrible Peter must have felt when the cock began to crow. Yet, he remembered Jesus' words that after he was converted to strengthen the brethren. The word converted is not salvation. It means to turn around or come to oneself.

The sifting and shifting that many are going through is a refining process to let the things in our lives that are not pleasing to God to come to the surface, just like Peter. He had a desire to serve Jesus with his whole life, but when it came down to possibly “dying” with Jesus he failed the test.

The sifting and shifting that are taking place will make us stronger so we do not fail. When we see ourselves being tested to the limit we must remember that Jesus has been praying for us too. Yes, it is necessary to go through this refining process. Like Peter, who was prideful in saying he would never deny Christ, and was put to that test almost immediately, we too will be sifted for words and actions we have said and done.

Often it is not just our actions that need the refining. It is our reactions to situations we are placed in. When we no longer react but walk in love regardless of what is taking place in our lives, then we are refined. Peter went through the refining and became a pillar in the church.

When there is nothing in our lives that matters other than our relationship with God, then we can be assured that the refining process was a success. Instead of fighting the sifting and shifting, we must yield to it so that we are refined into God's image. The longer we fight the sifting and shifting the longer it will take for us to be refined.

.