

Luke 22:24-38

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[0 : 00] I want to backtrack a little bit from where we were, where we finished off last Sunday night. And I want us to look again at verses 24 to 30, but particularly 24 to 38.

And really just step back a little bit from the passage. Because to think about what is going on in Luke 22, it's such a rich passage, isn't it?

There's so many ways of looking at Luke chapter 22. And there are clues that Luke has put into his narrative. We have the whole of the gospel, don't we?

We have the whole of the gospel so we know where Jesus is going. And we watch Luke 22 as observers, how these disciples, they are mystified as they follow the Saviour.

And one big clue to Luke's gospel, which you're probably fed up of me going on about, is Luke chapter 9 verse 51. Where we're told that Jesus is going to the cross. He sets his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.

[1 : 04] And we've noticed that that really is the clue to everything that happens from 9 verse 51 right to this chapter. Right until he arrives in this week of his passion.

But ages ago, there was another clue, and you probably can't remember me telling you about it. To the narrative. It was so long ago. There's something else in chapter 4 that is a major clue to understanding the gospel.

And if I'm honest, I think I've missed it in lots of ways. So you remember how after the temptations of the Lord Jesus, when Jesus conquered the evil one, and sent him back with his tail between his legs, he withstood all the temptations.

We're told in Luke chapter 4 and verse 13. If you just turn there, chapter 4 and verse 13. And when the devil had ended every temptation, it's a remarkable verse, he departed from him until an opportune time.

It's not that the devil is absent from Luke's gospel. We've seen, haven't we, as we've gone through it, dark and demonic powers at work in Luke's gospel. And Jesus has gloriously overcome them.

[2 : 12] But what Luke tells us, is that in that confrontation, Jesus seems to exhaust all of Satan's firepower. All of Satan's ammunition that has been fired in Luke 4.

And Jesus withstands that. Jesus is the last man standing. And as it were, for the first time in history, Satan has to slink away out of the presence of a human being.

And Luke is saying to us, from Luke chapter 4 verse 13, As you read my gospel, dear Theophilus, and all you other readers, keep your eye on the drama. Keep your eye open for the opportune time. Because Satan will return. And Satan again will come into the spotlight. And the centre stage of the drama in Jesus' ministry. And here he is in Luke 22. And it's fascinating when you view it from that angle.

Luke now gives us really obvious clues. That this is the opportune time. So do you notice chapter 22 and verse 3? Satan entered into Judas, called Iscariot.

[3 : 21] You see it in verse 22. The Son of Man goes as it has been determined. But woe to that man by whom he is betrayed.

So Satan has won over Judas Iscariot. But now in these verses, verse 31, he comes into the spotlight, doesn't he? Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you.

And then in verse 53. When I was with you after day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness.

He's speaking of those who've come to arrest him. This is your hour and the power of darkness. So Luke could hardly be clearer, can he? That now the opportune time has arrived.

And the evil one's attention is focused on the Lord Jesus. And clearly, now as we see this, we see that his tactics have changed, haven't they?

[4 : 27] So do you remember Luke 4? Right at the beginning of the narrative of the gospel, he wants to prevent Jesus from going to the cross, doesn't he? But at the end of the narrative, he wants to pressurise Jesus to go to the cross.

At the start, he wants to keep him away from the cross. But at the end of the gospel, he wants to push him to the cross. Not as an act of Jesus' obedience to his heavenly father. But because Jesus has been overtaken by evil forces.

And now in the gospels, there is this all-out assault on the Lord Jesus. And the two great protagonists of the Bible stand face to face.

Jesus, God's king. And Satan, God's enemy. Who is described as the prince of this world. And of course, we know this is part of the bigger picture of the Bible, isn't it?

So in Genesis chapter 3, God has given a promise. And the rest of the story of the Bible is this ongoing conflict. Between the seed of the serpent.

[5 : 34] And the seed of the woman. And that conflict would come to its climax. With one particular seed of the woman. The Lord Jesus Christ.

The child of the promise. Who would face down the serpent himself. And the serpent would crush the saviour's heel. While the saviour would marvelously crush the serpent's head.

And so it's very, very clear, isn't it? Luke chapter 22. Satan hates everything Jesus loves. Satan hates everything Jesus loves.

And Satan seeks to destroy the purposes of Jesus. By destroying the people Jesus loves. Can you see that? And what he does in this passage is really obvious.

In really obvious ways. And it's important to understand that. Because the Bible teaches you that the devil has very, very limited strategies. To pull down Christians.

[6 : 42] And very limited strategies to express his hatred of Christians. And he keeps on using them. Again and again and again. And he's so successful. So you read through the rest of the New Testament.

And you read through some church history. And you'll find that the devil keeps using the same tactics. And why should he change? Why should he change when they're so successful?

Why should he change when he can express all his hatred. Of that which the Lord Jesus loves most. And for which he's shared his most precious blood. The church.

And there's this little church, isn't it? We saw it last Sunday night. Gathered around the Lord's table. Sitting at the Passover. Around him. This little church family. And Satan is intent.

On destroying it. And destroying Jesus' fruitfulness. By destroying those whom Jesus loves. So what are the strategies?

[7 : 40] What are the tactics? And they're very obvious. The first tactic is this. Dividing the disciples. In order to destroy the fellowship. Dividing the disciples.

In order to destroy the fellowship. Around Jesus. It is an almost incredible scene, isn't it? Jesus has talked about giving his body.

About shedding his blood for our salvation and blessing. And he's spoken about the terrible reality. That he is going to be betrayed by one of his own disciples. He's changing the Passover.

He's fulfilling the Passover. He is the Passover lamb. Do you remember we saw that? The lamb is not on the table because he's at the table. Well, he is the Passover. And he's changing it to the Lord's Supper.

And so we have the Lord's Supper this morning. And after the service we share in the Lord's Supper. And we overhear three of the elders at the table where there's the digestive biscuits.

[8 : 41] And one of them says to the other, it's me first. No, it's me first. Graham pushes Paul Miners out of the way. And said, I'm the oldest elder. It's me first.

It's me first. Isn't it ridiculous? Wouldn't it be astonishing? That's exactly what happens. Verse 24. A dispute arose among them.

As to who was to be regarded as the greatest. And again, that's not the first time it's happened in Luke's cross, is it? We've seen that before. When did it happen the last time? The last time it happened was when he announced that he was going to the cross.

And a dispute arose among them. As to who was going to be first. And actually these things happen when you're in a crisis, don't they? There's a crisis here.

Relations get strained in a crisis. And that is certainly happening here. And the devil has found this kind of little bit of space. This landing ground. He's found a way to divide the disciples from one

another.

[9 : 41] And bring great discouragement to the Lord Jesus. I think it's true for many of us, isn't it? Many of us think that the devil, we assume that the devil gives people compassionate leave.

We know that the devil will attack us when things are going really well for us as a church family. If more people were coming, and more people were coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we felt things were going really wonderfully well, in a sense, we could understand that. Satan would want to get in amongst that, wouldn't he? And divide and destroy. And attack. Of course he does.

But he wouldn't hit us when we're down, would he? He wouldn't hit us when we're weak. He wouldn't hit us when we're poor and vulnerable. And you've got to believe that is the time he will hit you.

He is not a friend. He is not a friend of those whom Jesus loves. And because he hates those whom Jesus loves, whether it be times of blessing or times of struggle, times of quiet, times of advance.

[10 : 47] He will persistently seek to divide disciples of the Lord Jesus from one another. And he's been doing it since the Garden of Eden. And Satan spoiled the very best thing that God had given to the man and woman, which was their commitment to one another.

And he spoiled their family. And that is really a word to the wise, isn't it? To those of us who are the family of the Lord Jesus Christ. It always happens in the same way.

Do you notice? The only thing that keeps us together is the Lord Jesus Christ. As I look out this morning, it's not because we've got very much else in common, is it?

Look around you. Some of us have things in common. Others have nothing in common. Or very little in common. And we will not last as a church family.

If all that holds us together is what we've got in common, we will not last. Because it would be so easy for Satan to divide us, wouldn't it? I don't like that. Well, I don't like that.

[11 : 59] Me first. My way. Not your way. We're not as obvious as that, are we? But very subtly we do it. I know best. Do you see what he was doing?

And this is the point. It is unbelievable from one point of view. And yet, it is exactly what happens to us. It's so simple, isn't it? We take our eyes off the Lord Jesus.

Who gave his lifeblood for us. And Satan diverts our eyes so that we look at each other to demean rather than to serve. To say me first.

Rather than you first. And on that weakness, which is prevalent in my heart and in your heart, Satan pounces. Now, we see this in normal families, don't we?

Mum and Dad start on summer holidays. They decide to give their children the best day that they can possibly give them. So they take them to Legoland. And they take the family to Legoland.

[13 : 01] Get on the stuffy train to Legoland. And you get out. And there's one child. There's always one child, isn't there? There's one child out of the family who refuses to play ball.

Who doesn't want to be there. Who doesn't want to go on that ride. Who doesn't want sandwiches. Doesn't want this and doesn't want that. Now, what's the day like? With that one child playing up. Not playing ball. What's it like? It's a disaster, isn't it? Poor Dad comes home and he says, that's the last time we're ever going to try anything like that again. It just takes one. It just takes one to divert his or her eyes from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And say me first. To draw it out of the rest of us. And suddenly we take our eyes off the Lord Jesus. And we're not saying you first. We're saying me first.

The only reality that unites us. Is the Lord Jesus Christ. May God help us. May God help us to have that shield around our church family.

[14 : 04] That we will stand firm against the devil. By keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. Who did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. But made himself nothing.

Becoming a servant. And so as we look to Jesus. What happens? Whenever our eyes look on someone else. We mentally say, Lord Jesus.

I'm going to put him first. Him? Yes, him. Her first? Yes, her. And so Satan comes, doesn't he? He comes to divide the disciples whom Jesus has been uniting.

And he says to Jesus. A real spitefulness and nastiness against Jesus. To say to the saviour. And you thought that you were saving this bunch. Look at them. All it does, Jesus.

It takes me to saunter into the room. And all your work is for nothing. How he hates the saviour. And how he hates those whom Jesus loves.

[15:06] And so he seeks to divide the disciples. The second thing he does is not only divide the disciples. But there's the sifting of the disciples. Isn't there? Can you see that in verse 31? Look at verse 31.

Simon, Simon. Behold, Satan demanded to have you. That he might sift you. Like, wait. And ESV is good on this point. Look at the footnote. The little one. If you've got good eyes. You can look at the one.

Alright? You probably need most of you. Someone to help you with it. But it says there, doesn't it? In chapter 31, there's a little three. The Greek word for you in verse 21. Twice in this word.

Verse is plural. In verse 32. All four instances are singular. That's how I've underlined that. It's a very, very helpful thing. Verse 31.

The word is plural. And that's very important. Because what Jesus is saying to all the disciples. Is that Satan has demanded to have all of you. To sift you like wheat.

[16:06] He's going to put you through the mill if you follow the Lord Jesus. And of course. This reminds us, isn't it? It's so reminiscent of Job. Satan appears before the throne in heaven.

Again, a great mystery. That can't happen today. He's been cast out of heaven. But Satan appears before the throne of God. And he says to God, look at Job. Look at him. He just serves you.

He only serves you because of what he's got. He only serves you because of the good life. And God says, well show me. And Job is put through the mill. And he is sifted like wheat.

And you see what Jesus is saying here. Satan not only longs to bring division. But Satan is going to sift the disciples. And he's got a particular target.

This one disciple. Whom Jesus loved clearly. Look at verse 31, 32. Simon, Simon, behold Satan, demanded to have you.

[17:03] That he might sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon. In particular. I've prayed for you, singular. That your faith may not fail.

And when you've turned, again, strengthen your brothers. Peter's exactly that line in Hamlet, doesn't it? Lord, verse 33. I'm ready to go with you both to prison and to death.

The lady does profess too much, we think. I'll never fail you. I'll never let you down. I'll go with you to death.

If necessary. I'll go to prison with you. And how often we speak back to Jesus. Without actually hearing what he's saying to us.

That could never happen to me. It could never happen to me. See the problem with Simon Peter here. It's not that he doesn't know Jesus as well as he needs to.

[18:00] But he doesn't know himself as well as he needs to. Oh Peter, verse 34. Oh Peter, I tell you Peter. The cop will not crow this day until you deny me three times that you know me.

And that promise of Jesus came true. But I think we need to sense how it came true.

You can imagine you're in the situation in Ealing. You're in a pub in Ealing. And you're in a pub. And I'm in the pub. And I go to order food at the pub. But the waitress is really rude.

And in the end the waitress comes back to me. Jesus, the kitchen is shut. You haven't talked to me yet. I don't realise you're there. And I get really angry with the waitress. And I'm raging at the fact that the kitchen is shut.

And I sort of swear. The waitress says, hang on a minute. I went to the International Cafe once. Not that I ever go to that. And they say that you're one of the ministers of the International Presbyterian Church.

[19:02] And you hear a series of expletives coming out of my mouth. And you hear me say, I have nothing to do with the IPC.

I know nothing about the IPC. And it's worse than that. You hear me shout in the bar. And I have nothing to do whatsoever with that blank, blank, blank Jesus of Nazareth.

Imagine the shock. And so you know what happens? Here is this disciple whom Jesus said, blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah. Simon had said, you are the Christ.

Son of the living God. Jesus says, flesh and blood has not revealed that to you. But my Father in heaven has revealed it to you. And on this rock I will build my church. And that plan is that Peter, he will be the one on the day of Pentecost.

He will open the key of the kingdom of heaven so that thousands of people, so people like you and me, Peter will open the door to the Gentile world to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

[20 : 08] So you understand this. Because Jesus promised to use Peter in a particular way, he is going to be the leader of the pack. But all hell is going to be let loose against him.

To sift him. To destroy him. In order to destroy Jesus' promises. And purposes. We thank God and we thank God this morning that few of us have known this in such a dramatic way.

And yet some of us, many of us this morning, probably all of us, have grieved ourselves and the Lord Jesus Christ. Deeply by our sins.

And what do you do this morning? What do you do in those circumstances? As you come to the table so aware of your failure and your sin. And you discover the evil one coming, as you said to Simon Peter, and saying to Simon Peter in his brokenness and weakness, how can you possibly belong to the Lord Jesus?

When this has been your life. And some of us have those things in our past, don't we? Some of us have things in our past that we would like to shut off completely.

[21 : 28] From all time and for all eternity. What are you to do? Well let me say this, it's not going to help you at all, is it? To say to Satan, well I'm a member of IPC, or I go to church. It's not going to help you to say, well look at the things I do for the Lord.

Because he will persist in pointing out your shame, and your sin, and your guilt. What do you do? Well we sang about it, we sang it last week, didn't we? Before the throne of God above.

When Satan tempts me to despair, and he tells me of the guilt within, what am I going to do to him? What am I going to say to him? It's common.

It's a common experience in the Christian life. If you've never had these doubts, and these struggles, these pangs of guilt, you may know very, very little indeed of true Christian experience.

What are you going to say to him?

What is Peter going to say to him? He's going to say to Satan, Jesus said, he prays for me, that my faith will not fail, and that he would restore me.

[22 : 38] Upward I look, and see him there, who made an end of all my sin. And that now I have a future in his service, and in his kingdom, and most of all in his life.

Do you remember how Paul puts it in Romans 8, doesn't he? He puts it so famously, who is he that is going to condemn us? The devil? The devil, stir up the embers of your guilty conscience. You are condemned.

You are condemned. You are condemned. And our response with the Apostle Paul, is to say, who can condemn us? Christ Jesus, who died for us, and is risen again from the dead, and is even now at the right hand, the throne of the Most High, and he intercedes for us.

That is our security. That it is he who loves us. And it is he who intercedes for us. And his intercession cannot fail.

And that it is he who crushed the head of the serpent, in his death and resurrection. And Paul says to the Romans, and you, he says, you will also crush Satan's head on your feet.

[23 : 49] It's so marvellous, isn't it, to know that Jesus is stronger than Satan. That when Satan comes with the tactic of dividing, we look to Jesus and we are preserved.

And Jesus comes with the tactic of sifting, and the Lord Jesus intercedes. Third thing, is blinding. The devil comes and he blinds.

Jesus says, doesn't he, in verses 35-38, this is Christ's situation. This is red alert.

Do you remember how I said to you, ages ago, disciples, don't bother taking out any equipment, because what you're carrying will be enough of you. You'll be fine. I'll provide you in every way, for every way. But now it's different.

This is now the time of crisis. And Satan is bringing all his artillery to bear. The temperature is rising. I'm going to be arrested, crucified. And this is a time for all the equipment you can find.

[24 : 52] And it's clear that he's speaking metaphorically. He's saying to them, if you don't have a sword, sell you a shirt and buy you one. It's a metaphor. If you sell you a cloak in those days, you go around with nothing on.

He's saying, isn't he, this situation is reaching its climax. And then a couple of them say, don't they, don't you love it? They say, oh look Lord, here are a couple of swords I found.

Here's a couple of swords. Here we are. This is what we're looking for boys. It's incredible, isn't it? They've not even begun to understand what he's saying to them.

He's been talking to them about, there's going to be a battle, and a physical battle. A geographical battle. It's not a physical battle. He's saying to them, it's going to be a spiritual battle.

It's not going to be a kind of battle zone or a certain area. It's a spiritual battle against principalities and powers. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood. And so often we think, don't we, if only we can wrestle the flesh and blood to the floor.

[26 : 01] If only we can get organized as the church, and get everyone doing what we can all do and fulfilling our potential, then the gospel will advance. But it won't.

Because the ultimate enemy is not disorganization. And the ultimate enemy is not that you're not fulfilling your full potential and we're not all fulfilling our full potential. The ultimate enemy is principalities and powers in the heavenly realms.

And they're holding up a couple of swords. Did your teachers used to say to me, my teachers used to say to me, Levy, Levy, Levy. Have you been with me so long and you haven't begun to get it at all?

Do you see how, how, how painful this is for the Lord Jesus? I hope you, I hope you realise that the Lord Jesus is a human being. Don't think that he's not human, do you?

You don't think that he's, because he's fully God and he, he's God or very God that he's somehow protected from, from the pain and the agony of this. This is what, what Luke is telling you.

[27 : 11] He's saying the very people that he loved the most and the very people that loved him the most, they are blind. And they're so blind.

Do you see what the devil is saying to Jesus? The devil is saying to Jesus, you, you, you don't, you don't want to die for this lot, do you?

You don't, you don't want to die for these. And the amazing thing is he does. Because he loves them. And the devil comes this morning.

Do you want to die for people like you? Like us? The Lord Jesus says, yes I do. Because he loves them.

This lot are not worth dying for. You've poured yourself into them for three years. They're not worth loving. But Jesus is saying, I will love them to the very end. I will save them to the very end.

[28 : 19] So yes, Lewis said to Neiman, when we come, that's the devil, when we come to Satan, we make two great mistakes. Either we don't believe in him, or we think he's a funny little red figure in red trousers.

Have you watched the Tour de France? There is on the mountain stages there's a man all in red who runs alongside the devil as the devil shouting at the riders. Ha ha ha, isn't it funny?

He's there every year. And we have no sense about how dangerous he is. Or how the Christian church that is littered by division and congregations littered by division.

And how the saints of God have been driven almost to despair because of the way that the devil keeps coming to them and saying, sinner, sinner, sinner. There's no hope for you. It struck me this week to know the Holy Spirit comes to you and he says you're a sinner too.

Isn't that interesting? The Holy Spirit comes to you and he says you're a sinner to bring you to the Saviour. not to drive you to despair.

[29 : 25] And that is what the devil wants to do. And this is the kind of disciple for whom the Lord Jesus was willing in his love to shed his precious blood. It is our only hope. There is no way for us as a church family to withstand these dark spiritual powers that this passage is about his ability to divide those whom Jesus loves.

His ability to accuse those whom Jesus loves. His ability to blind those whom Jesus loves. And the marvellous thing is this, isn't it? Jesus is able to unite us. And Jesus is able to pardon us.

And Jesus is able to open our eyes so that our gaze is fixed entirely upon him who crushed the head of Satan. and will by his grace crush Satan under your feet also soon.

Do you ever think that he is making intercession for you? It's unbelievable, isn't it? My sin and my failure. All the ways I've disappointed him and he intercedes for me.

So that by his grace we know we are his family. Together we may stand secure. May it be that the unity of our church may never be damaged.

[30 : 46] May the assurance that we enjoy as individual believers never be wholly darkened. May the struggles that we have as Christians to believe all that the Lord Jesus purposes in our lives may we win that struggle.

May that never become blindness. because Jesus unites us and Jesus forgives us and Jesus opens the eyes of the blind.

Jesus unites Jesus forgives Jesus opens the eyes of the blind. Heavenly Father you are such a wonderful saviour.

We praise you that in the midst of these dark verses we get a glimpse of the spiritual reality in which we live. We thank you that by the power of your Holy Spirit that we may be kept together that we may be protected from accusations and that more and more our eyes would behold how wonderful things that the Lord Jesus teaches us.

Preserve us help us we pray help us to serve one another with this love and joy. Help us now as we come to the table to have hearts that are full of thankfulness that are full of joy that Jesus Christ has loved us and given himself for us and give us faith in abundance we ask in Jesus name.

[32 : 28] Amen. I'm going to sing as we approach the table Lord I was blind I could not see Lord I was deaf I could not hear Lord I was dumb I could not speak Lord I was dead I could not move and for many you might think it's a bit miserable isn't it but it is the wonderful truth that though we were blind now we see though we were deaf now we hear and though we were dumb we could not speak and though we were dead we're now alive in Christ Jesus.

Let's stand and sing. Amen.