When Thou Art Converted

Intro: In the shadow of the cross, Jesus told Peter Satan wanted him: Luke 22:31-32 “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.” Satan, at this time did not have Peter, but he wanted him. Jesus was concerned about Peter and concerned enough to pray for him, that his faith would not fail. Then He encouraged Peter when he was converted to strengthen the brethren. We can learn valuable lessons from this short passage.

I. IF SATAN DOES NOT HAVE US, HE WANTS US.

A. Satan has those in the world.
   1. John 8:44 “44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”
   2. He, of course, desires to keep all those he already has. He does not want to lose any.

B. Satan desires to get us, those who are saved.
   1. Those who are in Christ are the targets of his fiery darts; Eph. 6:10-17 “10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”
   2. 1 Pet. 5:8 “8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”
   3. We, thus, must be constantly on our guard.
      a. 2 Cor. 2:11 “11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”
      b. The admonitions to take heed.
         (1) 1 Cor. 10:12 “12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
         (2) Heb. 3:12 “12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”
      c. The admonitions to watch.
         (1) Mat. 26:41 “41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
            (a) Said to Peter.
            (b) Notice the context, and his fall (denying Christ three times) a short time later because he did not watch and pray.
         (2) 1 Cor. 16:13 “13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”
         (3) 1 Thes. 5:6 “6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”
         (4) 2 Tim. 4:5 “5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”
II. SATAN WANTS US FOR HIS PURPOSES.
A. We are either accomplishing God's purposes or Satan's purposes.
   1. Mat. 12:30 “30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
   2. Mat. 6:24 “24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
   3. Luke 9:50 “50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.”
B. When we sin, we come under the bondage of Satan.
   1. John 8:34 “34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.”
   2. Rom. 6:16 “16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”
   3. As such, Satan uses us as his pawns to accomplish his purpose.

III. JESUS PRAYED FOR PETER.
A. Jesus is concerned about our soul's welfare.
   1. He was concerned about Peter's welfare.
      a. He prayed for Peter; “I have prayed for thee” (Luke 22:32 “32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”).
      b. He expressed His concern to Peter.
   2. Jesus is concerned with everyone, not just Peter.
      a. The greatest demonstration of His concern is His death on the cross.
      b. Luke 19:10 “10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
      c. John 10:11 “11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”
      d. Rom. 5:8 “8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
      e. Heb. 2:9 “9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”
      f. Rev. 1:5 “5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”
   B. We should be concerned about others welfare.
   1. Notice the example of Paul
      a. Rom. 10:1 “1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”
      b. Paul also worked for their salvation.
   2. We should express this concern by praying for them.
      a. Mat. 9:36-38 “36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”
      b. 2 Thes. 3:1 “1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.”
3. We should likewise express our concern by working for their salvation.
   a. Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”
   b. 2 Tim. 2:2 “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

IV. OUR FAITH CAN FAIL.

A. Peter's faith did fail.
   1. Peter denied the Lord three times.
   2. Mat. 26:69-75 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.”

B. Our faith can fail.
   1. Some deny the possibility of apostasy.
   2. God tells us the possibility of our faith failing.
      a. 2 Cor. 11:3 “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”
      b. 2 Tim. 2:16-18 “But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”
      c. 2 Pet. 2:20-22 “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”
   3. God gives us warnings so our faith will not fail.
      a. Jesus warned Peter; Mat. 26:41 “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
      b. Heb. 3:12 “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”
      c. 1 Cor. 10:12 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
      d. 2 Pet. 1:9-10 “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:”
   4. God gives us examples of this happening.
      a. Gal. 5:4 “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”
      b. Acts 8:18-22 “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.”
neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

c. 2 Tim. 4:10 "10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia."

d. Rev. 2:4-5 (Ephesians) "4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

5. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament have been written to tell man how to remain in the faith.

V. ONE CAN CLAIM ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST AND YET BE IN NEED OF CONVERSION.

A. Those in the world often declare allegiance to God and Christ, but need converting.

1. Mat. 7:21-23 "21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

2. Rom. 2:13 "13 (For not the hearers of the law are justified, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

3. Tit. 1:16 "16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

4. We see some illustrations in the Bible.

a. Saul of Tarsus.

(1) Extremely religious man; Phi. 3:4-6 "4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

(2) Had a good conscience; Acts 23:1 "1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

(3) Was zealous toward God; Acts 22:3 "3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."

b. Ethiopian Eunuch; Acts 8.

(1) He had been to worship; Acts 8:27 "27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,"

(2) He was a Bible reading man; Acts 8:28 "28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet."

c. Pharisees.
B. Some in the church claim allegiance to Christ, but need converting.
1. Jam. 1:22 "22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."
2. There are many deceived going in the wrong direction.
   a. 'To the church in Sardis; Rev. 3:1 "1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."
   b. 'To the church at Laodicea; Rev. 3:17 "17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."
3. These need converting.
   a. Luke 22:32 "32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”
      (1) Peter would need to be converted.
      (2) Converted means to return, turn back, come back.
   b. Gal. 6:1 "1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."
   c. Jam. 5:19-20 "19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

VI. IF YOU A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH BUT UNFAITHFUL, INSTEAD OF STRENGTHENING THE BRETHREN, YOU ARE WEAKENING THEM.
A. One is either with God or with Satan.
1. Mat. 12:30 "30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
2. Luke 9:50 "50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.”
3. 2 Cor. 6:14-17 "14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”
B. Those who are not with God are using their influence for Satan.
1. Everyone has an influence upon others.
   a. Rom. 14:7 "7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.”
   b. 2 Cor. 3:2 "2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:”
2. There are far too many trying to ride the fence.
   a. Mat. 6:24 "24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
   b. Jam. 1:8 "8 An unstable man is unstable in all his ways.”
   c. Rev. 3:15-16 "15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”
3. They are hindrances to the cause of Christ.
   a. Mat. 12:30 "30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
b. We are to be an example of right
   (1) 1 Tim. 4:12 "12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
   (2) Only by being faithful to God can we be a source of strength to our brethren.

4. They cannot encourage us to do right without being a hypocrite.
   a. Rom. 2:1 “1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”
   b. Rom. 2:21 “21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?”
   c. The end of hypocrites; Mat. 24:51 “51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
   d. Examples:
      (1) Faithful attendance at services when they do not attend.
      (2) Do not take drugs when they smoke and/or drink.

VII. AFTER ONE IS CONVERTED HE SHOULD STRENGTHEN THE BRETHREN.
A. To be strengthen others, one must first be converted (get right) himself.
   1. Mat. 7:3-5 “3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.”
   2. You must first become a Christian.
      a. You must hear the gospel; Rom. 10:17 “17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
      b. You must believe; John 14:1 “1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”
      c. You must repent of your sins; Acts 17:30 “30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”
      d. You must confess Jesus as the Son of God; Rom. 10:10 “10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
      e. You must be baptized into Christ; Mark 16:16 “16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
   3. However, one must not be sinless to strengthen (help) the brethren.
B. We are then to strengthen (edify) our brethren.
   1. The is part of the work of the church.
      a. Mat. 28:20 “20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
      b. Eph. 4:11-16 “11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint
supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

2. When one goes astray; we have the responsibility to restore them.
   a. Gal. 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
   b. Jam. 5:19-20 “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”
   c. Do not wait on the preacher or the elders; you have the individual responsibility to restore the fallen.

Conclusion: Where are you spiritually? Does Satan have you already? Do you need to be converted because you are going in the wrong direction? Are you strengthening the church or are you weakening it by your life? The only way you can strengthen the church is by being a faithful Christian.