The Master of the Wind

Luke 22:31-32 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.

The Threshing Floor
It is a frequently used biblical metaphor and it was a common sight in the Middle East.

- The Threshing Floor was key part of the agricultural process.
- Grain that was harvested would never be ready to market unless it first passed through the fleshing floor.
- It was at the threshing floor that the good was separated from the bad.
- The wheat was distinguished chaff on the threshing floor.

The process was simple.

- The cut stalks of grain were spread on the flat stone threshing floor and a heavy sled of board and stone was pulled over the wheat by a team of oxen.
- This process of threshing would separate the heads of grain from the stalks.
- However, when it was finished the threshing floor was littered with a chaotic mixture of grain chaff,
- some good, valuable and usable grain and some worthless waste that simply served to diminish the value of the whole harvest.

It was the second step in the process that helped separate the valuable from the worthless.

- The harvester would stand on the threshing floor with a shovel and begin to toss the broken, bruised stalks of wheat into the air.
- And as it rose into the air the wind that blew across the threshing floor would catch the lighter chaff, the stalks and leaves and blow them to the side while the heavier grain would fall back to the earth at the feet of the harvester.

The process required wind, and threshing floors were established were the breeze was most likely to blow.

- In places like large open fields, or the tops of hills or the windswept sides of mountains quickly became threshing floors and were used for that purpose by generation after generation.
- They became highly valuable places, they were well known and were often used as meeting places or landmarks because everyone knew where the threshing floor was.
- Because of the process of separation that was accomplished on the threshing floor, it quickly became a frequently used biblical symbol.
- God seems to be drawn to the threshing floor.
- As a matter of fact, you may not be aware of this, but when God tested
Abraham’s faith, he told him to take the boy and all the fixings for a sacrifice and set out on a journey to a mountain that God would reveal to him.

- God led Abraham on a three-day trek to a Mountain named Moriah.
- And there, on the heights of Mount Moriah, at wind swept flat place on the side of that mountain, Abraham built an altar unto God upon which to offer his promised son.
- And it was the hand of God that intervened and spared the life of Isaac but not until the faith of Abraham had been tested!

That same windswept flat, where the wind of a severe trial and test blew through Abraham’s life, would later be used as a threshing floor for successive generations

- and would remain so until David committed the grievous error of placing his trust in the number of his armies and god sent a terrible plague into the land.
- As David realized his wrong and sought a place of repentance the prophet of God would instruct him to go to that same wind swept flat and build an altar unto God.
- On that day David purchased Ornan’s threshing floor and sacrificed the oxen that had been used for the threshing unto the Lord.
- In that act, he stopped the plague and spared the nation.
- But he also learned a valuable lesson, the source of his strength was not the size of his armies or the number of his chariots, the source of his strength was God.
- That fundamental truth was reinforced on the threshing floor.
- One day, a few years later, Solomon would follow in his father’s footsteps and lay the foundations of the house of God upon the threshing floor that David purchased from Ornan.
- The exquisite glory of Solomon’s Temple would be built in that same windswept flat on the heights of Mount Moriah that had long been established as God’s threshing floor.

So, it comes as no surprise tonight then, that Jesus employed the metaphor of a threshing floor when he began to warn Peter of the danger that lay before him in our text.

- I believe that there is a significant lesson to be learned from the threshing floor that is applicable to the life of every believer.
- We jump into the text with the startling and discouraging revelation, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat…”
- Satan desires you.
- The original language says it a little plainer, a more direct translation would say that Satan has asked, and obtained by asking, that he may sift you as wheat.
- It has already happened.
- Just like he came to God and inquired about Job and just like he obtained permission from God to test and tempt Job.
• Peter, Satan has you in his sights and He has already determined to test you.  
• He has asked and obtained permission to take you to the threshing floor – to sift you as wheat!

Satan has desired to tempt you.  
• He has set out to prove that you are chaff and not wheat.  
• He believes that when the wind blows in your life, he believes that when the harsh wind of the threshing floor assails you, that you will be blown to the side like the chaff.  
• He has determined to turn his attention upon you and to prove that you are a failure, that you are a fake.  
• He thinks that he has you figured out.  
• He thinks that he has keyed in on your weakness, and he believes that, after the storm, you are going to join the ranks of those who have shipwrecked their faith.  
• So he has asked, he has begged and he has been granted the opportunity to place you on the threshing floor and loose the wind into your life!

But Jesus doesn’t stop there:  
• He goes on to say, “32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not...”  
• Notice what Jesus didn’t say.  
• He didn’t say, “I have praed that you will be spared from the threshing floor.”  
• He didn’t say, “I have prayed that the wind wouldn’t ravage your life.”  
• No, my friend, what He said was, I’ve prayed that when you’re on the threshing floor and the wind of trial and tragedy tears at your soul, that your faith will not fail!  
• I have prayed that, when the wind blows fierce, when failure haunts you and defeat comes to claim you, that your faith in me will be enough to see you through!

I don’t know if you’ve noticed this or not, but trials and tests, are just a normal part of life.  
• Every man is tempted when he is drawn out of his own desires, the scripture says, and enticed.  
• All of us find ourselves, over and over again, in places where our faith is tested, in places where we are tempted to just throw in the towel and walk away.  
• If you attempt to live for God for any length of time at all you will find yourself in places and times where everything that you is challenged  
• and in a moment of weakness you will be tempted to throw it all away and return to the life that you have left behind.  

The threshing floor is where that sifting takes place.  
• The winds of trial, temptations and circumstance blow forcefully across the threshing floor and drive the chaff from the wheat, separating the good from the bad.
• And Jesus announces to Peter that he’s headed for the threshing floor because Satan has desired to prove that Peter was just chaff, that his faith was a fragile weak thing that would be blown away in the coming trial.
• But God in his infinite wisdom refused to shelter Peter from the wind of the threshing floor,
  o knowing that the same wind that Satan believed would destroy him would instead establish Peter in his faith.

I believe, tonight, that the threshing floor serves to illustrate the difference in the way that Satan and God view the same set of circumstances.
• What Satan views as a temptation, God views as a test and the difference is the viewpoint.
• Satan, through the fire of temptation strives to bring out the evil and carnality that is implicitly ingrained in your fleshly nature.
• While God, in the same set of circumstances, strives to establish you in your faith.
• The same wind that blows away the chaff, also reveals the wheat.
• The same trial that proves what is wood, hay and stubble, also serves to reveal that which is gold & silver, tried as by fire!

The same wind serves both purposes, it blows away the chaff and establishes the wheat.
• And Satan desired to place Peter on the threshing floor because he believed that the wind would destroy Peter.
• But Jesus prayed that His faith would stand!
• Not that he would be spared the trial but that he would emerge from the trial stronger than when he went in.
• Not that he would be spared the wind but that the wind would serve to establish him in his faith!

I want to point something out to you tonight:
• God doesn’t stamp out evil in our lives.
• He doesn’t hold back the storms or the trials and the temptations.
• Instead he uses them to serve his eternal purpose!
• He works through the trying times, taking that which was intended for evil and turning it into good.
• He takes that which was intended to destroy it and instead harnesses it for his purpose and for our good.
• It’s a theme that is echoed throughout the scriptures.
• Out of terrible tragedy there emerges tremendous triumph.
• Out of seemingly horrible defeat there arises incredible victory.
• God takes betrayal and turns it into blessing, He takes debilitating sickness and renders it into incredible healing, He takes death and turns it into a testimony –
  o Over and over and over again, out of the eater comes meat.
O Out of the strong comes sweetness.
O Out of the bitter flows the refreshing.

Child of God, you need to recognize this, God isn’t afraid of the threshing floor because he’s the master of the wind!

- The same wind that serves to blow away the chaff, also serves to reveal the grain.
- The same wind that brings out the bad also serves to establish the good.
- The same wind that was intended to be a curse, under the guidance of the master of the wind, becomes a blessing!
- He works all things together for GOOD!

This is why James can say (James 1:2-3, 12)

- “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience... Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”
- What he is saying is don’t be dismayed when tests and challenges come at you from all sides.
- Because the same wind that seeks to strike you down brings your faith to center stage.
- And if, in that moment when everything is questioned, in that moment when your faith is challenged,
  - if you can find the strength to stand firm in your faith,
  - the threshing floor is only going to bless you because the master of the wind will cause it to strengthen and establish you instead of destroying you.

It is an eternal truth that it rains on the just and the unjust alike.

- It is an unavoidable fact that time and circumstance happens to every man. Trouble, tragedy and trial will visit you at times and places in your life.
- But you must grasp this simple understanding.
- Satan may seek to destroy you and winds may blow through your life that originate with evil intentions.
- But God, alone, is the master of the wind.
- And regardless of the intentions of Hell, the wind serves him and him alone!
- This is why Peter can say (1 Peter 4:12-13)
  - “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

- That’s the attitude of someone who knows, the winds may blow in my life, the threshing floor may scour my soul,
but if I stand firm in the faith, the glory of God will be revealed, not in spite of the wind but because of the wind!

- He’s the master of the wind!

In another passage, 1 Peter 1:6-8 In another passage Peter says,

- "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"
- That’s the confidence of a believer, in the middle of some storm or fiery trial that has learned a simple lesson, I serve the master of the wind!
- It can blow in my life, but it won’t destroy me!
- It can come screaming through everything that I hold dear but If I stand my ground and keep the faith,
  - I’m going to outlast the wind and that which was meant to destroy me will, instead, strengthen me.
- And, when the storm passes, and the wind dies down, all that remains is praise and honor and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ in my life!

The refiner’s fire burns away the dross and refines and purifies the silver.

- In the fiery furnace, impurities melt away.
- Under the high velocity of the wind, the things we don’t need in our lives are blown away.
- It is in the fire of temptation that the impurities that plague our character and would eventually cause us to completely fail God are revealed to us.
- It is in the crucible of pain, tears, and seemingly irreversible failures that the weak places in our lives are revealed and the bad that has plagued the good is exposed within us.
- God told Israel, thru Isaiah, that he has chosen the fiery furnace of affliction to refine his people.
- The refiners fire burns hot, but it is not an unregulated heat.
- It burns hot enough to consume that which is impure but not hot enough to ruin that which is being purified!
- Because the fire, like the wind, serves the refiner of the silver!
- And God is going to bring you into some places where the fiery trial will test you and seeming defeat will strike at you but mark my word, he wont put more on you than you can bear.
- The fire may be hot, the wind may be strong, but it will never be more than you can handle with his help!
- Because He’s the master of the wind!

Isaiah 43:2 “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”
• It didn’t say IF you walk through fire, it said WHEN.
• When you walk through fire, you have this simple promise, it will be hot enough to refine you but never hot enough to consume you!
• When you find yourself on the threshing floor you can rest assured that the wind will be enough to make you aware of the weakness in your life but it will never be enough to destroy you if you keep your faith in the master of the wind!
• That’s why Job can say, in the midst of his affliction (Job 23:10) “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

WHEN Thou Art Converted

• I want to revisit our text again for just a moment as we come to a close:

Luke 22:31-32 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

• Simon has some issues that need to be revealed in his life.
• In the same hour that this statement is made, Peter has attempted to promote himself to the foremost place among the disciples, arguing that he should be considered first among their number.
• Shortly thereafter he vehemently resisted Jesus’ efforts to wash his feet.
• Then, a moment before this statement made the audacious claim that he would follow the Lord to any lengths, even to his own death.
• The problem was not the fervency of Peter’s desire to be a disciple and follower of Jesus.
• The problem was his approach to accomplishing that task. Peter was fixated on himself.
• This strong gruff fisherman who had probably never met a physical task that he couldn’t overcome had determined, in and of himself, that he would stand for the Lord by the power of his own strength.
• You see, Peter’s problem was the source of his resolution.
• He has resolved, by his own power, that he will serve the Lord.
• But he’s about to learn a valuable lesson.
• The wind of the threshing floor is about to blow through his life and when it is finished all reliance on self is going to be shattered.
• In the most vital moment, when his faith mattered the most, when his master was hanging in the balance Peter’s self reliance would fail him and he would
curse as he denied the Lord three times before running into the darkness awash in tears of defeat!

• But the same threshing floor that served to reveal his weakness and bring him to his knees also served to strengthen his His faith!
• After the dust settles and the wind dies down and Peter emerges from the threshing floor he does so with a certain assurity that his strength is not in his flesh.
• The Peter that stands on the balcony of Pentecost is not the same brash Peter that wielded his sword in the garden!
• All because of the wind of the threshing floor.
• Peter becomes the voice of the twelve, he becomes the established rock of the faithful, it’s his voice that preaches the salvation message in Acts 2 and God employs Him to carry the gospel to the gentiles.
• And he does it all with a right spirit and a faith that refuses to falter all because of the vital lessons he learned about himself in the threshing floor of his life.

CLOSE

So when Jesus looks at him that night and speaks those fateful words he goes on to say, “32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

• Not IF but WHEN
  o When thou art converted
  o When you come thru this
  o When you get on the other side of the threshing floor
    ▪ STRENGTHEN YOU BRETHREN!
    ▪ The threshing floor isn’t just for your benefit!
    ▪ Others are going to face the same thing!
    ▪ Your testimony is going to be an encouragement to them!
    ▪ Strengthen your brethren!