

CHRIST ... who prayed for Peter
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(LUKE 22: 31-34)

The atmosphere in the upper room was tense. Incredulity had given place to indignation, and Peter's eyes were expressing the rising feelings of his heart. The other disciples were listening, and Peter resented this statement of his Lord. It was preposterous that he should suggest such a thing. Had he no confidence in His followers? Peter's eyes swept around the little gathering. Almost imperceptibly his chin was pushed out, and his hands became fists. "Lord, what are you saying?" "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." Peter's eyes became pinpoints of anger; his lips pursed, then, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." His statement was an outburst and a challenge. The other disciples might be unreliable, but he would never disown his Lord. And Jesus quietly answered, "Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me"; . . . But I have prayed for thee.

The Vision of His Prayer

The Lord Jesus was never taken by surprise. and consequently was never rash in words nor actions. Every major decision in His ministry was preceded by a period of communion, when God gave the guidance so necessary to Christ's inspired ministry. Probably, during one of these times of prayer, the conviction deepened that all was not well with Simon. It became so clear to Him. Peter would slip into the shadows; his hold upon eternal realities would weaken; his future would be in jeopardy! Then the Lord's face revealed the holy determination in his heart. His lips moved and He prayed, and that unrecorded prayer proved to be Peter's lifeline when the coming storm swirled around his soul.

The Virtue of His Prayer

It is noteworthy that the Lord never mentioned the matter to His self-confident disciple until the secret battle had been fought and won. Perhaps other people acquainted with identical knowledge would have uttered loud and persistent condemnations of the unreliable Simon. Within seconds a fiery argument could have filled the little sanctuary with strife. So often, one hasty word has been a match to start a devastating, fire, and before the conflagration had been extinguished, blackened scars have appeared on the souls of men and women. This never happened with the Lord Jesus, for His times of prayer were constant safeguards against the activities of evil.

The Value of His Prayer

"When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The Lord Jesus not only saw the approaching tragedy, He looked beyond, to see the new Peter resplendent in the power of a new life. Christ was perfectly certain that His prayer would be answered. He had wrestled in the secret place, and the issue was no longer in doubt. Probably He had no wish to prevent the arrival of the testing time. Rather, he preferred that Peter should undergo the trial, for the disciple would emerge a better and a stronger man. -Thus the Lord prayed. We are persuaded that since the ultimate triumph was won in prayer, it was not possible for Simon Peter to be lost. Each time waves

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of remorse and guilt threatened to sweep the despairing man
to oblivion, the strong arms of redeeming love brought him
closer to safety.

The Victory of His Prayer

It was all over! A sickening silence had fallen upon the
people around the fire ; their questionings had ceased. Yet
within the mind of a haunted man, a deafening clamor had broken
loose. The searing sword of conscience was playing havoc with
his peace of mind. Sweeping aside the onlookers, Peter plunged
into the night-he had failed, he had disowned
his Lord, he was a disgrace! And within the court-house, the
Lord was calm. There was no need to worry, for already poor
tormented Peter was safe in the arms of a Father's kindness.
Later, when the Lord looked down from heaven 'to see a new
man telling forth the word of life on the day of Pentecost,
surely His great heart throbbed with thanksgiving ; He was
so glad He had prayed for Peter. The denial had become
a stepping stone to unprecedented triumphs. And because
the Lord loves to do things of this nature, He prays for all
His followers. There are times when He says, " Father,
remember Ivor Powell. Things are becoming difficult and
dangerous in his experience." Reader, there are times when
He prays for you. I'm thrilled-are you?

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