

Lent Wednesday #3 Devotional Message 2/27/2002–LOL, Westfield, Indiana

Title: “Simon, I have prayed for you”

Text: **Luke 22: 31-34**“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; ³²but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” ³³And he said to Him, “Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!”
³⁴And He said, “I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.”

Introduction: *Ills.: Unaware of Spiritual Danger*

Theme: In the moment of temptation, when we are at greatest risk of eternal harm, Jesus lays before us prayer as one of the more powerful resources at our disposal.

Pray for a realistic perspective

1. Often we live in denial of the eternal danger we live in
 - Jesus laid before Peter the “indictment” (technical term for “*sift*”) he was in
 - **Ills.: Young women in Peru convicted of terrorism**
 - “*Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*” 1 Peter 5:8
2. Holding a holy fear of Satan and abiding in a divine respect of God

Pray for faith

1. Not big faith or heroic faith but **FAITH**
 - We long to be hero—especially in the moment of greatest danger
 - The moment of greatest danger can become the moment of greatest embarrassment and a death trap
 - “*And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea’; and it would obey you.*” Luke 17: 5-6
2. Confidence in Jesus and not in self
 - “*For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.*” Phil 3: 3
 - **Ills.: Avoiding False Security**

Pray for a soft heart

1. True repentance is about “*turning*”
 - “*when once you have turned again . . .*” Vs. 32)
2. Greatest danger in temptation is not the **sin** but the **pride**
 - “*Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*” Prov. 16: 18
3. No sin is unforgivable when God gives us a soft heart
 - “*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.*” Ezekiel 36:26

Pray to be a quick learner

1. “*when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*” vs. 32
2. That we are not swamped by guilt
3. That we are not crusted over by self-righteousness
4. That we are humble enough to let God use us as a saving object lesson for another

Unaware of Spiritual Danger

When we lived in St. Petersburg, Florida, we would go to the beach. It was always hard to relax and have a good time with our children, though, because there were too many threats: jellyfish, stingrays, sharks, undertow. One time we had some relatives that came to St. Petersburg and brought their boat with them. We decided to go out to an island a couple of miles offshore called Egmont Key. We had a great time because we didn't think we had to worry about the normal threats. The water was blue, the sand was white. We swam with our children carefree in the Gulf of Mexico. A few days later we were telling some friends about our wonderful day. Being more familiar with the area, they informed us we had been swimming in one of the most shark-infested areas around! We were in danger, but completely oblivious to it. *Citation: Barry Merritt, Toledo, Ohio*

Avoiding False Security

The Hibernia oil platform in the North Atlantic is 189 miles (315 kilometers) east-southeast of St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. As a fixed structure, it sits in 88 yards (80 meters) of water fastened to the ocean floor. The total structure is 246 yards (224 meters) high from ocean floor to the top of the derricks. Unlike the fated *Ocean Ranger*, a platform that sank in 1982 with all aboard (84 men) lost at sea, the Hibernia's design incorporates a GBS (gravity based structure) which anchors it to the seabed. The structure does not move. It is an artificial island. The Hibernia was built as a stationary platform because it sits right in the middle of what scientists call "iceberg alley"—the icebergs that ply these waters can be as large as ocean liners. Sixteen concrete teeth surround the Hibernia. These teeth can distribute the force of an iceberg over the entire structure and into the seabed. The Hibernia is built to withstand a 1,000,000 ton iceberg (expected every 500 years), and designers claim it can actually withstand a 6,000,000 ton iceberg (expected once in 10,000 years) with repairable damage. Even with all these protection measures, Hibernia's designers take no chances. Radio operators plot and monitor all icebergs within 27 miles (45 kilometers). Any that come close are "lassoed" and towed away from the platform by powerful supply ships. Smaller ones are simply diverted using the ship's high-pressure water cannons or with propeller wash. As rugged and as strong as this platform is, and as prepared as it is for icebergs to strike it, Hibernia will never allow an iceberg even to come close. Procedures are in place to ensure that all the safety devices never get used. One thing seems obvious: The engineers of this oil platform are not guilty of the kind of false security that may have contributed to the sinking of the Titanic. Christians need to take spiritual threats just as seriously.