



## THE VOICE OF EVANGELISM INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

EVANGELIST / PASTOR DAVID W. LANKFORD

P.O. Box 502 Casar, NC 28020 Phone #704-538-8060 [www.thevoiceofevangelism.com](http://www.thevoiceofevangelism.com)

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**SIFTING TIME**

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We want to take our Scripture text today from **Luke 22:31-34**, ***"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, strengthened thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."*** Some weeks ago while sitting at my desk and answering a dear sister's letter, I suddenly heard in my spirit the word sifting. Needless to say, that word disturbs every Christian. When you study the word desired here in the Greek, it simply means that Satan had exceedingly demanded that Christ give him Peter's soul. Without a doubt, Christ and Satan had been discussing Peter just as Elohim was discussing Job with Satan when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord found in Job chapter 1. Satan is forever making demands concerning the children of God. When you read the word sift here it can be very disturbing. The word sift #4617 in the Greek means; *to riddle, pierce or to perforate as in punching holes*. Do not ever question or remotely doubt that Satan himself has a will for your life and that will is destruction. Satan is forever approaching the throne of God that he might find cause for God to allow him to sift us some

way through false accusation. The Scriptures declare in **Revelation 12:10**, ***"For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."*** The word accuser is someone who seeks to erode away at one's testimony and character. Never underestimate Satan's attack when attempting to erode the truth concerning your spirituality. The apostle Peter wrote his epistles through the unction and anointing of the Holy Ghost, but he was also able to write with empirical knowledge. Let us look closely at **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8**, ***"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."*** Peter knew all too well how Satan seeks to devour each of us. When the apostle Peter declares Satan to be your adversary, he is emphasizing that Satan is your opponent in opposing you greatly all the while falsely accusing you. Sometimes our heavenly Father suffers or allows us to be sifted that we may become a better vessel. Like most of us Peter was not who he thought he was! Peter thought he was ready to go to prison or to even die for the Lord Jesus Christ, but in the darkest hour of his life he denied Christ as Lord and Savior. Sifting will make you aware of who you really are. I find it amazing how we see ourselves and how differently Jesus sees us. Remember how emphatic Peter said he was when it came to imprisonment or to die for Christ sake. However, when the sifting time came he was not ready

as he said. Notice how the church at Laodicea saw themselves and how the Lord saw them. Reading from **Revelation 3:17**, ***"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."*** What a powerful dichotomy in how we can sometimes view ourselves but how we are truly seen in the eyes of our Lord? Many times I witnessed as my grandmother would put flour in a sieve and sift the flour for making biscuits. She would do that to separate the clumps and packed flour. In traditional sifting, the act was for separating grain from the chaff. A synonymous word for sifting is winnowing. We may not like to willfully admit it, but we all have a measure of chaff within our lives. Once the Father allows the sifting process within our lives He then burns up the chaff with unquenchable fire. John the Baptist had full understanding of this process when he said in **Matthew 3:11-12**, ***"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is the is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*** Chaff is worthless! Chaff is the seed covering, and sifting

removes any other debris while separating the seed at the threshing floor. Now the word thresh is not found in our Scripture text but look with me at **Jeremiah 51:33, "For thus saith the Lord of host, the God of Israel; the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come."** A threshing floor is a smooth place but yet a place of beating. Of course the purpose for the beating is to separate the grain from the chaff. Today you may find yourself in a smooth, peaceful and placid state of mind and suddenly the threshing begins. The apostle Paul lived under this type of sifting constantly because of the abundance of the revelations that God had given him. Reading **from 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:7, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through, the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."** Now the word *buffet* #2852 in the Greek means to, chastise for the purpose of afflicting and to punish by the rapping of the fist. I'm sure by now having read this you may possibly find yourself somewhat discouraged in your place of sifting. We find an astonishing question here in **Jeremiah 23:28, "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.** There is no comparison when it comes to the chaff and the wheat when placed on the Lord's scales or balances. The chaff when thrown up into the air is then blown away by the wind which is a type of the Holy Ghost to take away the worthless debris out of our lives. The psalmist David the mighty warrior understood this separating found here in **Psalms 1:4, "The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff**

**which the wind driveth away."** After the sifting is finished, all that remains is the wheat which is always symbolic of the Word of God. According to John the Baptist once the sifting process has been finished Christ then gathers the wheat into the garner. A garner is a type of repository which represents the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why the sifting process must take place to remain a part of the body of Christ. I am firmly convinced in the coming days many individuals will be sifted, along with many ministries, and our government will go to the threshing floor as well. Somehow I sense Robert Mueller will find fault within the Democratic Party to vindicate himself in the eyes of those who doubt him, but in the process God will sift everyone. God is able to put things into men's hearts to fulfill his will, plan, and purpose. Now once the sifting and the winnowing have transpired all that is left is the wheat. As I said the wheat is a type of the Word of God: the bread of life. Jesus declared in **John 6:48-51, "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."** This sifting process allows the children of God to fully and completely understand who we are in Christ. Paul the apostle declared emphatically in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am."** Without this winnowing process we cannot fully understand the will of God for our lives. When the sifting time comes, be still and know that the Lord God of Abraham is in divine control of everything. It is a

sign of God's love and affection towards you when He allows this process to take place. In closing let me share a verse from **Isaiah 48:10, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."** The word chosen here in the Hebrew is *Bachar* #977 and it means to prove, to try, to choose, to distinguish, to love, and to be pleasing. It is someone who has been chosen by God because that person has been made excellent and acceptable after having been tested. Its intent is to bring forth the very best. This is not about rejection, but about choosing the very best from God's perspective. Reading **Psalms 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God."** One other verse found in **Luke 21:19, "In your patience possess ye your souls."** You may not be ready to be still or to be patient, but these are God's requirements. While in school, when we were about to take a test the teacher would always forewarn us: I will not be speaking to you neither will I answer any of your questions during the test. She was absolutely silent during the test. God will often times be silent during your test. You can raise your hands and wave your hands, but the teacher shakes her head and says NO! She is in your presence but she is totally quiet. The Lord will be nigh you, but He will be quiet as well. Remain unmovable and enduring because in the end you shall come forth as gold. Thank you for your unwavering love and support for the ministry.

Serving With You All,

Pastor/Evangelist David Lankford