



Satan's Deadly Trap – Part 7
Various Scripture
GCSP – 10/31/2009

Let's pray.

Last week I had no peace concerning the message as I began to put everything down on paper. I typically read about the topic throughout the week and listen to sermons, if available, as well. Then on Saturday morning I pray over it one more time and start typing away on my keyboard as the Spirit gives me the words.

Typing the first page or so last week I was still not sure this was the sermon I should preach. I considered passing over that topic and moving on to the next in this series – or at the very least I considered combining two just to work through the material.

As I progressed the Spirit took control and turned it into something beyond my capacity to grasp.

This morning I did have the topic settled in my heart all week long – but of course the Spirit took me in a different direction as I sat down to type. I trust He now takes control of the delivery and the working of this message in your hearts.

Allow me to once again briefly review some of the important principles we have learned thus far before we move on.

This sermon series is based on **Luke 17:1a** where Jesus says, "**It is impossible that no offences should come**" (NKJV). We have seen that offences handled improperly will lead to betrayal, hatred, and deception. You will be in "**the snare of the devil**" and you will be "**held captive by him to do his will**" according to **2 Timothy 2:26**.

I showed you how un-relinquished offences are strongholds, or fortresses, in your mind; and that these strongholds are for Satan's use in your life.

We have looked at passages that taught us how to deal with the offences in our lives; and that we must love and bless and pray for those who have offended us.

We briefly looked at the life of Cain and how the progression of offence, betrayal, hatred, and deception was set into motion when Cain was offended by God. We saw how he developed a persecution complex, living under the belief that everyone is conspiring against him and thus became a vagrant and a wanderer.

Then we saw the difference between a mature Christian and an immature Christian and how only the mature Christian will handle offence properly. And we saw how God is setting you up for a blessing and for spiritual growth in your life every time an offence comes your way.

Last week we saw how Jesus is building His church on the revealed knowledge of His Word – the anointing as the Apostle John calls it in **1 John 2:27**; that abiding Word

within you; the “aha” moments when the Holy Spirit explodes the meaning of Scripture in your heart. We saw that these explosions, this anointing comes only to those who are genuinely hungry for God; those who are reading and studying and diligently looking to obey everything they learn.

We saw how faith and belief play into this whole issue of properly handling offences. Isaiah said, “**He who believes in it will not be disturbed.**” Peter said, “**We have believed and then we have come to know...**” You cannot come to know God apart from belief. You cannot come to know God’s Word apart from belief. You will never receive revealed knowledge, or the anointing, apart from belief.

And finally we saw that the primary problem with the church and with individual Christians is they simply do not believe! They may say they believe some parts of the Bible but only that which they are comfortable with – but God does not allow for partial belief.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Hebrews**.

Hebrews 12:25-29

The writer of Hebrews is in the midst of making a comparison when these words were written. He is contrasting God speaking on earth through Moses at Mount Sinai and God speaking from heaven on Mount Zion.

When Moses came down off of Mount Sinai he found the people were not ready to listen to God and so God shook the earth and many were swallowed up and died because of their indifference toward God. The context of when God speaks from Mount Zion is that of the end times when God will not only shake the earth but also the heavens; and those who are not prepared at that time will also perish due to their unbelief.

The connection, or jumping off point, I want to make to our topic of offence is found in **verses 26-27**. Let’s read those again and then we are going to once again look at a segment of Peter’s life to help us in our battle to overcome offence.

What are you trying to accomplish when you shake something? The dictionary definition of the word shake is: *To cause to move with quick vibrations; to move rapidly one way and the other; to agitate; to cause to shiver; to make totter or tremble; to move from firmness, weaken the stability of or threaten to overthrow.*

Let me list five purposes for shaking something – there may be more but I believe this is a good primary list:

1. To bring closer to its foundation
2. To remove what is dead
3. To harvest what is ripe
4. To awaken
5. To unify or mix together so it can no longer be separated

To bring closer to its foundation

When you shake something it causes everything to settle, bringing it closer to the bottom of the container or to its foundation.

To remove what is dead

Sometimes when you have a flower bunch or some other type of plant that is flexible and has some dead leaves or flowers, a good shaking will separate the dead from that which is still alive.

To harvest what is ripe

If you shake an apple tree at harvest time, the ripened fruit will easily fall from the branches.

To awaken

Sometimes if a person is in a sound sleep you need to shake them to rouse them awake.

To unify or mix together so it can no longer be separated

Some of the juices and teas I drink require a good shaking to mix the ingredients together before they are consumed. As long as I drink the juice or tea in a reasonable amount of time the ingredients will not separate. If left stagnant for a long period of time they will once again separate.

Keep those thoughts in your mind as we work through things this evening.

1. To bring closer to its foundation
2. To remove what is dead
3. To harvest what is ripe
4. To awaken
5. To unify or mix together so it can no longer be separated

Also remember what the writer of Hebrews said: **"This expression, 'Yet once more,' denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (12:27).**

Now, the connection I want to make is this: When you are offended you are being shaken. If you are abiding in Jesus as we saw last week, meaning if you have taken hold of the revealed knowledge of God or the anointing, as John calls it, then you will remain. You will be brought closer to the foundation, the rock, the base upon which Jesus is building His church. You will let go of all that is dead in your life. You will experience a harvest of fruit. You will be awakened to God's activity and God's blessing in your life. And you will be unified with God never to be separated.

Do you see the connection? Do you see how this prophecy in the Book of Hebrews has application for you in regards to handling offence?

Now how many of you know a good shaking can be painful?

Elisabeth Elliot once said, *"I am not a theologian or a scholar, but I am very aware of the fact that pain is necessary in all of us. In my own life, I think I can honestly say that*

out of the deepest pain has come the strongest conviction of the presence of God and the love of God."

John Bevere says, "Trials in this life will expose what is in your heart – whether the offence is toward God or others. Tests either make you bitter toward God and your peers or stronger. If you pass the test, your roots will shoot down deeper, stabilizing you and your future, if you fail, you become offended, which can lead to defilement with bitterness."

The shakings in your life can become blessings that only prove you cannot be shaken or they can become offences, proving you are not as grounded as you should be just yet. Avoiding crossing the line into offence and allowing God to sustain you with His abiding Word will cause your roots to sink in farther, giving you even more stability for the shakings to come – and hopefully you know at least this much by now, they will come.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **Luke**.

Luke 22:14-24

Let me repeat those last two verses.

Now get this; Jesus is having His last meal together with those who have not left Him. If you read this account in John's Gospel you will see that Jesus has also just displayed true love and servanthood by washing the disciple's feet prior to the meal. He has now revealed to them that He is going to be betrayed by one of them and that He must suffer, and if they listened carefully enough, He was going to die.

Upon hearing all of this, the disciple's initially are shocked and briefly discuss which one of them could possibly betray Jesus; but the conversation quickly degenerates into a discussion about which one of them is the greatest.

Follow me on this – Jesus says, "Guys, the time has come that I must suffer greatly and die, and one of you are going to betray me into the hands of My executioners." The disciples say, "Well who could it be; it certainly couldn't be me because I have always defended You Lord." And one by one they all begin to list their loyalty and the qualities and accomplishments that show they couldn't possibly be the one; they are much too loyal and great to betray the Lord.

And can't you imagine Peter jumping into this fray: "Now wait a minute guys, now come on. Remember back when we were in that boat? You guys were all huddled together in the corner and I stepped out of the boat and walked on water! Now talk to me here. I'm the one who witnessed Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus up on the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus just told me in front of all of you that God has revealed His Word to me – come on now! Jesus said to me that on this revelation of God's Word, on this rock, which by the way is what my name means, the name Jesus gave me, that He was going to build His church. Talk to me now – it can't possibly be me, I am the greatest!"

Do you see the picture being painted here? Jesus reveals that He is going to suffer and die, and the disciples are jockeying for position and power.

A shaking is coming.

Luke 22:25-27

Now we don't know how the conversation between the disciples went exactly, but as we will see in a moment the account implies that Peter must have been spouting off pretty good. Jesus reminds them of the foot washing that took place just before they ate and the example He was trying to set, which all of them apparently missed completely.

Even though Peter had indeed received the revealed knowledge of God's Word, he wasn't yet walking in the character and humility of Jesus. He was building his life on past victories and pride.

Hold your place in **Luke** and turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **1 Corinthians**.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

When we build a foundation on Jesus Christ and on His character and His Word, we are in essence using the gold, silver, and precious stone. When we use our accomplishments and our past victories and our pride, we are using wood, hay, and straw. When the fiery trials of life come; when the opportunity for offence come, only that which was built on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ and His revealed Word in your life will remain.

Peter, even though he has had God reveal His Word; His knowledge to him, is reverting back to his old nature and building his foundation on pride in his accomplishments, not on Jesus and His revealed Word.

Turn back to our passage in **Luke** now.

Luke 22:31

The first thing I want you to notice is that Jesus calls Peter by his old name, Simon. Almost invariably through the Gospel accounts, whenever Simon Peter is being obedient to the revealed Word of God, Jesus calls him Peter. When he falls back into his unregenerate ways, Jesus calls him Simon. How Peter must have cringed whenever Jesus called him Simon; must have been like a dagger piercing his heart.

And to a certain extent isn't that the way it is with us? I knew when my mom or dad called me by my full name I was not behaving as I should. I didn't like being called in that way.

Pride in Peter's life opened the door for Satan to come. A sifting, or a shaking was about to take place. The word translated sift has primarily the same meaning as the word shake. Pride attracts Satan like love attracts the Holy Spirit.

It is very important that you notice a principle here. As a genuine child of God, Satan cannot touch your life without:

- Receiving your permission to do so (I'll explain in a moment)
- Getting you to fall into an area of sin, primarily linked to pride
- Asking and receiving permission from God
- Establishing a stronghold of sin in your life

When we fall into a pattern of sin in our life (establishing a stronghold) we are rejecting God's truth and accepting Satan's lies – this is what I mean by you giving Satan permission to come into your life. One sin, or the occasional sins we fall into and quickly confess according to **1 John 1:9** will not open the door for Satan. It is the extended patterns of sin and the unconfessed, un-repented of sins that open the door.

Now if Jesus had the mentality that many in the church have today, the next verse would say: Jesus gathered the other disciples together and had a prayer meeting to bind the devil from attacking Peter. But that's not what Jesus did.

Luke 22:32

Instead of binding Satan, Jesus prays for Peter that after this sifting or shaking that Peter is about to experience, he would return, or in Paul's words in **2 Timothy 2:26**, come to his senses and escape the snare of Satan. Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not be destroyed in the process of this shaking, but that through this time of testing he would emerge as a stronger and more mature disciple, tried and refined and built up for the ministry God had in store.

And I don't want to pass over this without making mention of what I believe to be a common misunderstanding of this verse. Because of the fact that the KJV translates this as "**when thou art converted**" instead of "**once you have turned again**" (NASB) or "**when you have returned to Me**" (NKJV), some assert that Peter loses his salvation when he denies Christ and Jesus is praying about when Peter repents and gets saved once again. The wording in the Greek is not the same as the wording for saving repentance. This verse is simply referring to Peter's temporary backslidden condition, which is already here because of his pride, and his subsequent repentance as we see in **1 John 1:9** as already referred to.

And the Greek word translated as "**you**" in this phrase is plural, meaning that Jesus is speaking to all of the disciples not just Peter; because all of them in one way or another walk away from Christ temporarily, with the possible exception of John who we find at the foot of the Cross. More than likely it is just that John returns more quickly than the others – and it is the same John that writes **1 John 1:9** that we are talking about.

Anyway, back to our current line of thinking on this passage. For the genuine believer, any thought process or heart attitude that is based in pride will be purged in one way or another. As a result of the tremendous shaking Peter is about to experience, all of his self-confidence will be gone, and all that will remain is God's sure foundation. Peter will be awakened to his true condition, the dead will be removed and the ripe fruit harvested, which will bring him closer to his true foundation. He will no longer be separated from the Lord but will be forever unified with Him – the five purposes we saw earlier for shaking.

Luke 22:33-34

Peter is offended. How in the world could Jesus be saying these things about him?

Some think it is the major life issues that cause the sifting and shaking but quite honestly it is typically the much smaller things. You know the account; it wasn't a menacing army of soldiers that caused Peter to deny the Lord but a single servant girl.

And after denying Jesus for the third time to this girl, the rooster crowed and Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Peter was shaken; his pride and self-confidence were gone. Peter thought his life was over in essence. How could he ever be used of God again?

And isn't this typical for you and me? We almost always view everything with short-term glasses. We are in essence slaves of the moment; only seeing the immediate impact, the current pain and disappointment. This is a distorted view. While we dwell on the urgency of the moment, God looks on the eternal aspect of what we are going through.

If we only look at the immediate and temporal aspect of our limited scope, two things can happen:

1. In the midst of our times of sifting and shaking, we will be easy prey for offence
2. We will easily be deceived by the enemy

Satan will grease the skids for us to do something that seems right in the heat of the moment, like retaliation and evil for evil or insult for insult, as Peter calls it in the passage we looked at a few weeks ago. We will fall for the lie to take the matter into our own hands because God certainly isn't taking care of us.

It's the same lie perpetrated in the Garden of Eden. The serpent convinces Eve that God is holding back and not truly caring for her. Instead of having her focus on the abundance of the garden that was available to her, Satan narrows her focus to the one thing God had forbidden and deceives her into believing the lie that God wasn't looking out for her best interests.

Beloved, grasp this final truth: God will never do anything to harm you or destroy you, and whatever He does or does not do in your life is in your best interest.

If you truly believe that, can you properly handle any potential offence that comes your way? Can you prepare yourself for blessing and growth instead of deception and bitterness?

Let's pray.