

The Double Call of God (6)

‘Simon, Simon’

Luke 22 v 31, 32 “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’”

Reading: Luke 22 v 14,15, 19 – 34

The double call that came to Simon Peter was v14 ‘*when the hour was come*’ and v15 ‘*before I suffer*’. It was the night in which he was betrayed, the evening before the cross that the Lord spoke to Simon.

Occasions when the Lord Spoke to Simon Peter

1. In Luke 5 the Lord said ‘*Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men*’. It was a call to discipleship, it was a purpose for living and they ‘*forsook all and followed him*’. The background to this statement was the miraculous catch of fish that followed Peter’s reply ‘*Master we have toiled all night and caught nothing, but at thy word I will let down the net.*’ It seemed pointless, *but at thy word* – and obedience to the word of God brought blessing. When Simon Peter saw the power of the Lord he was astonished, he recognised his holiness and confessed ‘*I am a sinful man O lord.*’

The commandment of the Lord to us today is ‘*Preach the word*’; it is a call to be ‘*fishers of men*’. In our service we must be obedient and remember that ‘*with God all things are possible*’. We are called to discipleship and have been given a purpose for living. If we are to be used of God we must learn to follow and follow to learn.

2. In Luke 6 ‘*he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles (sent ones)*’. Those who had followed him were now sent forth to serve. Simon Peter heard the call of the Lord and responded. If we are to be used by God, to be sent forth to serve, we must first learn to follow as a disciple, follow him to learn.
3. In Luke 9 ‘*He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.*’ A very important question for us all to consider. As Christians we would all respond ‘*The Christ of God*’, but if we consider another question the Lord asked Peter, ‘*Lovest thou me?*’ what would be our response? Peter had learned that this was the omniscient one and replied, ‘*Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee*’. What would we reply? 2 Cor 5 ‘*For the love of Christ constraineth us*’ or would we be like the Church at Ephesus Rev 2 ‘*I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love?*’
4. Further down Luke 9 Simon Peter was to learn more about ‘*The Christ of God*’. He was to learn that in all things he must have the pre eminence. The scene was the mount of transfiguration where the disciples ‘*were eyewitnesses of his majesty*’. As Peter observed he would make 3 tabernacles ‘*one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias*’ and Luke adds ‘*not knowing what he said*’. Peter put the Lord on a level with these great men of God and the voice of God was heard ‘*This is my beloved Son: hear him*’.

The Night in Which he was Betrayed

The double call came to Peter on the night v15 ‘*before I suffer*’. On his last evening before the cross he sat down with the twelve apostles.

- v 19, 20 - Remembrance - *'this do in remembrance of me'*
 v 21 – 23 - Betrayer - *'the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me'*
 v 24 – 30 - Greatest - *'which of them should be accounted the greatest'*

1. Remembrance – Why do we meet on a Sunday morning to partake of bread and wine? The reason is because the Lord said *'this do in remembrance of me'*. The apostle Paul put it like this *'The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread'*. He took bread and brake it, *'my body which is given for you'*; he took the cup and said *'the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.'* He gave the instruction *'this do in remembrance of me'*. As we break the bread and partake of the cup we remember his body given for us and his blood shed for us and *'we shew the Lord's death till he come.'*
2. Betrayer – All that were gathered with him that night were not true v 21 *'the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.'* At the beginning of the chapter we read how Satan entered into Judas and how Judas had promised to betray the Lord. By the end of the chapter the evil deed was done v 48 *'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?'* On this night, *'when the hour was come'*, the enemy was busy. He had snared Judas and he desired the other disciples (see v 31). The enemy is always busy, always looking for opportunity 1 Peter 5 v 8 *'Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.'*
3. Greatest – On a night like this there was strife among the disciples, *'which of them should be accounted the greatest.'* The Lord teaches that a Christian outlook is different from the world v 26 *'But ye shall not be so'*. The Lord shows, by example (see e.g. John 13), that he that is greatest should be marked by service. Having given a word of correction, the Lord then gives a word of encouragement. He tells of a coming day when the disciples, despite their failure, will rule with him.

The Double Call of God – 'Simon, Simon'

In this double call of the Lord he foretells the denial of Peter. This denial would take place v 34 *'before the cock crow'*. In Luke 5 when called by the Lord disciples *'forsook all, and followed him'*. However, on this night Mark records *'and they all forsook him and fled'*. The weakness of the flesh!

v 31 *'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you'*. Satan had entered into Judas, but was not satisfied, he desired the other disciples also. Although Simon Peter is addressed the *'you'* is plural, including all the disciples. This is ever the desire of Satan. The word translated *'desired'* in this verse has also been translated *'begged earnestly for'* and *'demanded'*. How good to know that God is over all and that the actions of the enemy are controlled and limited by a loving God 1 Cor 10 v 13 *'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able'*. It was the desire of Satan to *'sift them as wheat'* – as wheat is winnowed to separate it from chaff.

v 32 The Lord Jesus then speaks directly to Peter, who was to face a special trial *'But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not'*. It is encouraging to remember that still today, at the Father's right hand, the Lord intercedes for his people. He sees the coming storms we face and *'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not'*. The Lord then looks beyond the trial and says *'when thou art converted (when thou art turned back) strengthen (establish) thy brethren.'* Although Simon Peter was to fail, on his recovery there was a work to do for the Lord.

v 33 – Peter declares to prison, to death I will follow thee, and he meant it. It was his desire *'with thee... to death'* and in the garden he drew a sword to defend his Lord. Peter's affections were right, but he knew not his own heart or the severity of the test he would face. Alone, in the night, at the fire of the enemy his courage failed. It was not his love, nor was it his faith, but it was his courage that failed. Do we feel like this at times? Great desire on a Sunday with fellow believers, but alone on a Monday morning...? The Lord Jesus said on this night, as recorded by Mark *'The Spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak'*.

28.03.2004