

1 Corinthians 10

Good evening and thank you for joining us. would you turn in your bibles please to 1 Corinthians chapter 10?

For the last couple of weeks we've seen Paul's exhortation about loving others, even when it costs something of us personally. And this theme of others oriented living continues in chapter 10 this evening. Remember chapters 8-10 all deal with idols and the treatment of food sacrificed to idols.

Tonight, Paul takes the Christians of Corinth for a trip down memory lane, at how God's faithfulness had repeatedly saved the Hebrews. Yet just because the Hebrews started off strong, it didn't mean they finished well. They continuously made ungodly decisions that got in the way of their relationship with God.

The title of tonight's message is FOR GOD'S GLORY

Lets pray

I heard the story of an older couple who had been losing their memory. Their doctor advised them to start writing things down... One night the wife asked her husband to get her a bowl of ice cream with chocolate syrup. She said, "Make sure you write it down so you'll remember." He responded, "No need, I got it." She then asked him to add some whipped cream, but insisted, "You need to write it down." He told her, "No worries, I'll remember." Finally, she asked him for a cherry on top, and was adamant, "Write it down." He grunted, "Ice cream, chocolate syrup, whipped cream, and a cherry on top. I've got it right here." (Points to side of his noggin.)

After a while, he exits the kitchen with a piping hot plate of eggs and bacon. She sees the plate, shakes her head, and says, "I told you to write down the toast."

Well, in Chapter 10 Paul is concerned about memory loss among the Corinthian Christians. And he recounts the history of the ancient Hebrews to jog their memory of the need to remain faithful to God.

Now chapter 10 seems to kinda bounce around, but we'll see at the end how it all ties together...

1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea When the Hebrews left Egypt, God led them with a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. God guided the newly freed slaves' step by step.

SHOW PIC I always get goose bumps when I watch the Ten Commandments and Moses Heston raises his rod, and the waters of the Red Sea part before Israel's astonished eyes. I always wonder if the ground was muddy or was it dry? **CLOSE PIC**

3 all ate the same spiritual food, How do you feed a nation of 2m people on the move, through the desert? The Bible tells us for 40 years God supplied them with the original "wonder bread" or "manna." It was supernatural nutrition from God. In fact, look how manna is described in

Psalm 78:25 Men ate angels' food;

He sent them food to the full.

Manna was the first angel's food cake! And God has also given Christian's miracle bread to eat. Jesus is "the bread of life." **John 6 47 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me[fn] has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not**

die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. Twice during Israel’s wilderness wanderings God supernaturally supplied water for the thirsty Hebrews from a rock. The first time Moses was told to strike the rock. He did, and water gushed out.

The second time God said to "speak to the rock..." but Moses was mad. He was fed up with Israel's complaining, so in a moment of pent-up frustration, Moses misrepresented God. Instead of just speaking, Moses struck the rock a second time. And for his act of defiance God barred Moses from entering the Promised Land!

And as we read of Moses' mistake, we can sometimes think that perhaps God was being excessive? Did Moses’ punishment of not entering the promised land really fit his crime?

But when we read verse 4 here, we learn “that rock was Christ.” God wasn’t just interested in quenching the thirst of a few million Hebrews. God’s main objective was to paint a picture of the Messiah.

We know Jesus was struck once and for all - on the cross. His sacrifice satisfied all sin. But Moses in his anger struck the rock a second time, and distorted the picture that God was displaying of Jesus.

5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. The word “most” is a huge understatement. “Most” was all but two faithful spies - Caleb and Joshua. Millions of Israelis died in the desert because of their unbelief!

And this is Paul's point, Israel's experience teaches us that a good beginning doesn't assure a good ending.

As we'll see in our Sunday studies in 1 Samuel, it's not how we start that matters, it's how we finish.

6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."^[fn] Here Paul quotes Exodus 32:6. If you recall while Moses met with God on Mount Sinai, Israel had Aaron create an idol, you remember it was the golden calf. The ancient Israelites couldn't trust in the invisible God for forty days before they sought a substitute they could feel, see and touch.

8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; In Numbers 22-25, we see the events of this shocking account. The Moabite king hired an occultist, a middle eastern soothsayer, named Balaam, to curse the Israelites. But God commanded Balaam not to issue his curse. Balaam ultimately couldn't curse the Hebrews.

But Balaam was greedy and found a work-around. He told the Moabites that although God wouldn't let him curse Israel, all the king had to do was to send seductive women into the camp, tempt the Israelites with illicit sex, and the worship of idols would then follow. Balaam knew the Hebrews would succumb to their lusts, and God would judge them Himself. Which is exactly what happened...

9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; Numbers 21 describes the incident where, in response to the complaining of the people, God sent fiery serpents among the people. Again, their complaining hearts

revealed them to be self-focused and more concerned with their own desires than God's glory.

And this was the same issue causing trouble with the Corinthian Christians, who wouldn't yield their right to eat meat sacrificed to idols for the sake of another brother.

10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all^[fn] these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Paul's telling the Corinthians to stand up and take notice, there were many things they could learn from the bad example of Israel. All these examples of Israel's failings came about because Israel succumbed to temptation.

And now we get 2 of the most important verses in the Bible regarding the resistance of temptation. Verses 12 and 13 teach us how to handle a temptation situation:

Verse 12-helps us to avoid it

Verse 13, tells us how to survive it

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

The Christians in Corinth seemed to have a sense of arrogance about themselves. Apparently they felt immune to temptation.

Remember, this church was privileged and prosperous. God had blessed them in abundance. The church in Corinth had grown overnight - miracles occurred on a regular basis - the Spirit of God was at work in visible and tangible ways.

Like Israel of old, the Corinthian believers felt like God's special people. That's why Paul uses Israel as an example to them!

After miraculously delivering the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, God's intent was to lead His people directly to the Promised Land. But as we just read in verses 6–12, lust, idolatry, immorality, and murmuring kept every Hebrew but Joshua and Caleb from ever reaching the land He had for them.

So, too, the Lord has graciously delivered us from the bondage of sin. It's God's desire that we live a Spirit-filled, fruitful life here on earth. But the same sins that barred the Israelites from the Promised Land will prevent us from living the abundant life God has for us.

We know from our studies that ancient Israel had grown self-sufficient and proud - and that's what led to their disastrous downfall. And verse 12 reminds us that ironically, we're never closer to temptation than when we think we're the farthest from it.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction,

And a haughty spirit before a fall.

The best way to avoid sin is to remember we're vulnerable.

If you recall, when the devil finished tempting Jesus, **Luke 4:13**
Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time

The enemy was never successful in trapping Jesus, but he was persistent. No sooner had Jesus defeated the devil, that Satan began scouting for another opportunity to reload and take another shot.

This is why temptation so often comes on the heels of a spiritual highpoint. Have you ever noticed after seeing a mighty move of God, or when we're feeling the most spiritual - suddenly an evil thought comes out of nowhere, or something happens that fans

the flame of a dormant lust. Satan knows we're weakest when we think we're strongest

We're gonna camp out on verse 13 for a bit...

13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Verse 13 tells us that when we're face to face with temptation, we need to **SHOW PIC** remember four truths...

First, we are not alone.

Second, God is faithful.

Third, the temptation will be bearable.

Fourth, there is always a way out.

CLOSE PIC

First, God wants us to know that we're not alone in our struggle with temptation. "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man..." Whatever battle with temptation we find ourselves in, we can take comfort that it has been fought before! In fact, the same battles you face with temptation are probably being fought right now by someone else sitting in this room.

It's wisely been said, "Temptation is the price for being human." All of us face temptation!

Even if I'm not struggling with the same type of temptation you may be facing, you can be sure I'm struggling with a temptation just as dangerous.

SHOW PIC My family loves going to the beach. We've made a lot of wonderful memories there over the years. You likely know-the

crashing waves, the water sparkling like it's covered in diamonds. It's majestic! **CLOSE PIC**

But if you hold up your smartphone close to your face, you never see the water or the sand. They vanish from sight.

The beauty of nature is right in front of you, but you can't see their beauty or admire their strength, because your point of view has been impeded. It's amazing how something so little can blind us from seeing the obvious.

And this is often what happens when we're being tempted. We're not alone, there are waves of assistance available to us: experience from others who've been there, or prayers from fellow strugglers, or wisdom from people who empathize. But often we don't see these resources because we're blinded by guilt or pride.

When we're struggling with temptation we often feel like no one can relate to us.

We figure everyone would be shocked if they knew what we were fighting. "Surely, other Christians don't have these problems!" But the truth is, as verse 13 **"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man**

Now's a good time to remind ourselves that it is NOT a sin to be tempted. **Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

Martin Luther used to say, "Evil thoughts are like birds. You can't stop them from flying over your head, but you can stop them from nesting in your hair.

The second thing we learn about facing temptation is that God is faithful. Verse 13 tells us **"But God is faithful."** When you're being

tempted - even if no one knows about it - even if you feel alone - you're not! God is with you, and He is faithful!

Remember Jesus knows what it's like to be in our shoes!

Hebrews 2: 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Sometimes, we get so overwhelmed by the temptation at hand we figure that God doesn't understand. But not so, Jesus was tempted "in all points... as we are."

Everything we go through, He's been through! We have a friend in Jesus we can turn to who knows what's it like.

The 3rd thing we learn from verse 13 is that God makes sure that the temptation is bearable. Paul tells us that the Lord "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able." God sees to it that we don't face any more temptation than we can handle.

God promises to keep you and me from reaching our breaking point!

When we study the OT book of Job, you'll recall that God allowed Satan to push Job to the brink, but there were limits. Satan could attack Job's wealth and health, but he had to spare Job's life.

In Luke 22:31-32, And the Lord said, [fn] "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

Jesus prayed for Peter and limited the temptation. His faith would not completely fail.

God keeps temptation within the range of our resistance by limiting the temptation. My dad was welder, and I remember he built my brother a go-cart made of solid steel, and had a big old motor on the back of it. But my dad regulated, or restricted the throttle to reduce its speed. He wanted to make sure my brother could handle that go-cart.

This is how God helps us with temptation. He installs a governor. He regulates the temptation from revving up too fast and overcoming His kids.

Finally, we learn in verse 13 when we're facing temptation that God always provides us a way out. Look at the end of verse 13 **"But with the temptation (God) will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."** God promises to provide an exit.

Perhaps, the way out of the temptation is a verse that comes to mind at just the right moment... Or a phone call from a Christian friend... Or God engineers it where you miss your ride so you don't end up at the wrong place at the wrong time... Maybe it's a reminder of some advice you got a long time ago - or a prick at your conscience. At times, the escape is the still, small whisper of the Holy Spirit nudging you away from a potential danger. Either way, God provides a way of escape from the sin.

So again, 4 truths about temptation

SHOW PIC

First, we are not alone.

Second, God is faithful.

Third, the temptation will be bearable.

Fourth, there is always a way out.

CLOSE PIC

Notice the conclusion Paul draws from verse 13. In verse 14, he tells us,

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. Now remember, this whole section Paul is specifically referring to the idolatry at the pagan temples. He's telling them not to endure the temptation, rather to flee from it.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. Since the Corinthian Christians tended to pride themselves on their "wisdom," Paul challenges them – if they are truly wise – to carefully consider what he says here.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

Now next week we'll study communion in depth. Communion is a way for believers to outwardly show their love for and fellowship with Christ, to remember the atoning sacrifice that Jesus made for us, and to look forward to the time when He will partake with us in the kingdom. Communion is a special occasion for us to interact with God.

18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar

In the thinking of that part of the ancient world, to eat at the same table with someone indicated friendship and fellowship with that person. Since you ate of one bread, that made you one body, because you both shared of the same food at the same table. So to eat at the table of a pagan temple restaurant was not as innocent as it seemed.

19-20

19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?

20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. Now we saw last week that an idol has no power- **1 Corinthians 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.**

Does Paul now say that idols themselves are actually demons? No. But here the Bible does say demonic spirits take advantage of idol worship to deceive and enslave people.

Without knowing it, idol worshippers are glorifying demons in their sacrifice.

21 **You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.** Paul is commanding the Christians if you love the Lord and partake in communion, then you should not be participating in the meat sacrificed to idols by fellowshipping at their tables.

22 **Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?** The unknowing fellowship of some of the Corinthian Christians with demons, by participating in the dinners at the pagan temples, provoked the Lord to jealousy.

See God is our creator, and He has a right over all our worship, and has the right to be offended if we give our fellowship to demons.

For sure the Corinthian Christians didn't intend to worship demons at these heathen feasts in pagan temples. If a person puts their hand into the fire, it doesn't matter if they intend to burn themselves or not, they'll be burned just the same.

So as Paul closes this section, we'll see these verses emphasize to not just avoid what is harmful, and look for loopholes and workarounds, but rather pursue what is good.

23 All things are lawful for me,[fn] but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me,[fn] but not all things edify. Essentially, instead of wanting to go forward with Jesus as much as they could, they wanted to know how much they could get away with and still be Christians. That's the wrong approach! Just because something is permitted doesn't make it good for us.

24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being. Here again is the foundation for our actions as Christians. We're free from law, as long as we live by love. And it's love that determines what's "helpful" and "edifies."

Love is the key to living the Christian life.

25-26

25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; 26 for "the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."[fn] What if one of the brothers with a weak conscience objects saying, "Wait a minute! That meat was sacrificed to an idol"? Paul responds by quoting Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness.

The cow belonged to the Lord when it was in the field, and the cow belongs to the Lord now that it's on the barbecue! The food wasn't the issue, the idol worshipping atmosphere was the issue.

27 If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. Notice that Paul does not prohibit socializing with non-Christians, he only prohibits the meal of fellowship at the pagan temples.

28 But if anyone says to you, “This was offered to idols,” do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience’ sake;^[fn] for “the earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness.”^[fn] This describes the meal where a Christian is warned about the food by his unbelieving host saying it was offered to idols. In that case, the person thinks it is wrong for Christians to partake of meat sacrificed to idols, so don’t eat it – for the sake of their conscience.

29 “Conscience,” I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man’s conscience? 30 But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks? If my liberty to eat is seen as a moral lapse, or poor judgment - or worse, as a betrayal of Christ – we shouldn’t go there. Our primary concern should be to protect our witness for Jesus by our conduct.

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, An offense is an occasion to stumble, leading someone else into sin. Paul says none of our behavior should encourage someone else to sin.

33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. See the freedom Christ gives us isn’t just for us, but it’s also for the sake of others. And we are commanded to be others focused.

So whatever it is you do in the freedom Christ has granted you, do it for the glory of God. if you wanna play sports, or watch the game, maybe got to the mall for a little shopping, plan a thanksgiving feast, whatever we do, we’re to do for the glory of God.