

“let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall”

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[0:00] Holy Spirit, we ask that you be present here to all of us in this room. Open our hearts and minds as we sit under the preaching of your word, please be seated.

Good morning, everyone. This morning we're continuing, as you know, no surprise, in 1 Corinthians. We're following, we've been following since chapter 8, actually.

We're following Paul's argument concerning food sacrificed to idols. In chapter 8, we saw that Paul encouraged the Corinthians and encourages us to see what the basis of our conduct to each other should be.

The basis for our conduct towards each other should be love, not knowledge. For love builds up and knowledge merely puffs up. So we are to, out of love, we must consider the weaker brethren, we must be willing to let go of our freedom to do something.

If that would mean that, if doing that thing will cause our brother or sister to stumble into sin, we must be willing to let go of the freedom to do those things.

[1:51] And he goes on in chapter 9, Paul does, and he shows how he himself has surrendered his rights and his freedoms to bring the gospel to the Corinthians.

And he said to them that he did all of this, all of this sacrifice, all of this foregoing is right. He did it all for the sake of the gospel, as one who is devoted to his Lord Jesus, and as one who is striving, not for an earthly reward, but for that imperishable heavenly crown.

And in this, Paul is willing, like an athlete, to deny himself and to discipline himself to achieve his goal.

And he calls us to do the same. Now we come to chapter 10, and Paul has now returned to talking specifically about the presenting issue of idol worship.

But to understand Paul's line of argument in chapter 10, we must remember where he ended in chapter 9. Paul's description of himself as an athlete who is self-controlled and singularly focused on finishing his race well, the race that is set before him.

[3:16] That singular focus, that self-control, stands in contrast to the Carivians. While Apostle Paul is diligent in finishing well, the Carivians, on the other hand, have become complacent.

They've become laid back in their Christian walk. Paul, with all his rights and his freedoms and spiritual benefits, refused, even as an apostle of God, called and sent by Jesus Christ himself. He refused to be presumptuous. He refused to be overconfident. He refused to take God's grace over him for granted.

Rather, he strives with God's power within him to proclaim the gospel and to fulfill the ministry to which he was called.

But the Corinthians, on the other hand, they have become complacent. They have become overconfident. They are not, as for, striving to win an imperishable crown.

[4:29] They're settling, rather, for worldly accolades that is destined to perish. The gospel is not at the forefront of their mind.

The honor and glory of Christ, the well-being of his church, are very low on their lists of concerns. That is, the Corinthians.

And so, the church in Corinth gave themselves over to the same divisions that we saw in the earlier chapters. They were clamoring for power.

They were clamoring for position in the Corinthian church. There was factionalism, grudges, divisions, the absence of repentance, the absence of forgiveness.

These are what marked the church in Corinth. Pride. Puffing each other up. Puffing each other up. Puffing each other up. They were clamoring for power. They were clamoring for power. They were clamoring for power. And what's more, they're joining in pagan worship.

[5:35] The pagan worship of their culture. They are armed. Remember in chapter 8, they're armed with the knowledge that an idol is nothing. They have that knowledge.

They have that knowledge. And so, they participate in the pagan temple functions that were going on in their city. They were in fact walking in the council of the wicked.

They were standing in the way of sinners and sitting in the seat of scoffers. They, the Corinthian church, are presumptuous. They thought to themselves, we're the best church.

We're the most spiritual Christians around. We possess all the gifts. And Paul affirmed that in the beginning of his letter to them. You have the gifts. And so, they were taking pride in all of that. But Paul reminded them in these verses that we're going to see this morning in chapter 10. He reminded them of another covenant people of God.

[6:37] Who, like them in Corinth, have taken, took their privilege for granted. He reminded them of those people. And reminded them of what happened to those people when they did so.

So, look in verse 16 and 11. Paul said, now these things happened to them as an example for us. That's the key thing he wants to show there.

By referring and by retelling the history of Israel. He's reminding the covenant people of God in Corinth.

And reminding us as well, the covenant people of God. That this was given to us as an example.

So, what are these things that happened to them?

That Paul refers to? That should serve as an example for us. Well, we first must look in the first three verses of chapter 10. To look at the privileges that these covenant people of God had.

[7:36] By the way, we are in 1 Corinthians 10. If you want to grab your... If you don't have your own Bible, grab a Bible in your pew. It's on page 1137. I do invite you to follow along. So, let's look at those first three verses and look at the privileges.

Paul says, I do not want you to be unaware. Brothers. Again, by the way, when he says brothers, the Greek word is adelphoi. It actually means brothers and sisters.

Right? So, he's not just talking to the men here. He's talking to the whole church. I do not want you to be unaware. Brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud. And they all passed through the sea.

And they all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And they ate the same spiritual food. Drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them.

And the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not pleased. For they were overthrown in the wilderness. So, Paul says to the Corinthians, You think you're special.

[8:36] Well, what about the covenant nation of Israel? What about them? They were under the cloud. And that doesn't mean, by the way, that they lived in cloudy Syracuse. Where the sun rarely shines.

Right? That's not what he means by they were under the cloud. The cloud here represents the covering shelter of God. The leading presence of God over them. That came upon them at the Red Sea.

Before they crossed the Red Sea. And that cloud, the protective cloud, the presence of God was with them. All through the, from the Red Sea. All through the wilderness until they entered the promised land.

This pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night. Was there, present with them. God's overshadowing protection and presence.

He said to them, these covenant people were baptized into Moses. And that means that they were under the leadership of the great prophet Moses.

[9:34] God initiated a covenant with them. With the people of Israel. Making them his people. Making them his family. With the privileges and expected obedience that comes with that.

These people were redeemed. They were a redeemed people. Delivered from bondage in Israel. Saved through the waters of judgment.

At the Red Sea. They went through the water without dying. Even when their enemies perished in the same waters. They had God's protective cloud.

They have a saving journey. As their history. Through the Red Sea and through the wilderness. And even more was their privilege than this.

They ate the same spiritual food. And drank the same spiritual drink. Meaning that they were sustained. The people of God was sustained daily by God himself.

[10:43] Through the heavenly manner that he gave them. Which he provided for them. And their thirst. When they thirst and complain. Their thirst was quenched by God's miraculous provision of water from the rock.

And Paul says to us. That rock was Christ. He. Here is an explicit. As explicit as Paul can make it. An explicit and direct correlation.

Between Old Testament covenant people Israel. And the New Testament covenant people of God. Just as Christ. Himself.

Protected. The Old Testament covenant people. Guided them. And nourished them. The same way. As he protected them through the wilderness.

Guiding and nourishing. The Old Testament church. The same way he protects. Guides and nourishes. Us. The New Testament church. Through our pilgrim journey.

[11:44] In this world. Through our journey. Through the wilderness of this world. Until we come to the home. He has gone to prepare for us. Our promised land. So you see the correlation there.

Despite all these privileges. That they had. Nevertheless. We're told. With most of them.

God was not pleased. For they were overthrown. In the wilderness. Despite all the privilege. That God showered upon them.

Most of them were destroyed. And perished. In the wilderness. In fact. Of all who went. Through the Red Sea. Only two.

Of the thousands. Hundreds of thousands. That went through the Red Sea. Only two. Entered the promised land. And on the rest.

[12:42] God visited his judgment. Upon them. Because of their. Why? Because of their unbelief. Because they removed themselves. From under the.

Redeeming guidance. And protection. And nourishment. Of Christ. And so. What. How did this happen? How did they. How did they do that?

Verse 7 to 10. Shows us. First. First though. We must stop at verse 6. Because verse 6. Again. Reminds us. It's a reminder to us.

And the Corinthian church. As well. That. This is not just. Mere history. It's not a mere history lesson. That's going on here. This. That we are being told of. The account.

Of what happened. To the nation of Israel. Is written. Written down. For who? For us. As an example. That we might not.

[13:36] Desire evil. As they did. Desire evil. Look at that word. That we might not. Desire evil. That's what they were doing. That's such strong.

Arch language. If you think about it. But Paul shows us. Why such strong words. Are warranted. Because. What have they done? Verse 7 to 10. They've become idolaters.

They sat down to eat and drink. And rose up to play. And Paul reminds them. We must not be like them. Indulging in sexual immorality.

As some of them did. And 23,000 of them fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test. As some of them did. And were destroyed by serpents. We must not grumble.

As some of them did. And were destroyed by the destroyer. So what happened? To these covenant people of God. Those who have been redeemed. Saved. Delivered from bondage.

[14:36] What did they do? They became idolaters. They gave in to their sinful. And destructive cravings. The cravings that turned their eyes.

Away from the rock. Of their salvation. Unto worldly things. And there were four ways. In which they exercised. Or they practiced. These sinful cravings. There are four ways.

Significant ways. That Paul shows us. That these cravings played out. The first was. Idolatry. They turned away from the worship. Of the only true God.

To worship idols. The second was. Immorality. And. By the way. Immorality follows. After idolatry. Always. So they engage in immorality.

And then the third is. That they put God to the test. And fourthly. They became. They started to grumble. Grumbling and despairing. And complaining.

[15 : 36] Against God. And Paul gives us these examples. And we should look into them. The first example of the idolatry. Is in Exodus 32.

The candor is that Moses. We know this well. Right? Moses went up to what mountain? Monsanai. To do what? To receive what? The ten commandments. You remember that. You remember your Bible.

He went up to Monsanai. To receive the ten commandments. And while there. For those 40 days. And 40 nights. As God gives. His loving. Guidance. To his people. What.

What were the people doing? They grew impatient. Exodus 32 tells us. They saw that Moses had delayed. In coming down from the mountain. In. And so what did they do?

They said to Aaron. Make us gods. Who shall go before us. As for this Moses. The man who brought us out of Egypt. We do not know what has become of him.

[16 : 34] And so they demanded that Aaron make them gods. Moses was only gone for 40 days. And they were already impatient. And they already turned to idols. And what did they do?

As they sat down to idol worship. Paul tells us. They were eating and drinking. And offering sacrifices to this idol. And then they rose up to play.

Now that's. That's. That's euphemism for. Licentiousness. For immorality. It's not they were playing. You know. Cricket.

Or whatever. Old Israelites did. You know. Whatever. They weren't playing basketball. Or football. They were. They were engaging in licentiousness. And immorality. Because this is what happens. With pagan worship. They indulged their cravings. Gave themselves over to sexual immorality. As pagan worship often does. God's chosen people.

[17 : 34] They had just been delivered. From the Red Sea. They had just been delivered. From slavery in Egypt. They saw the mighty hand of God. In delivering and saving them. They gave them themselves.

They turned away from this one true God. Gracious God. They turned to idols. Their lapse in godly living.

Their lapse in obedience. Led them to. It was just a simple lapse at first. It led them to a full bacchanalia of drunkenness.

And sexual orgy. And so you imagine Moses coming down from the mountain. With the Ten Commandments. And he's. And he's. That's what he beheld. And we're told there that God punished them.

Right. In that instance. Three thousand of them died. With. From God's punishment. Moses. Paul goes on to tell us another story about these. This covenant people of God in the Old Testament.

[18 : 34] In Numbers 25. Spoke even more in detail of their engagement. With immorality and idolatry. In Numbers 25. There's a particular king.

Gentile king. As the people go through. Through the wilderness to the promised land. By the name of. Balak. He called up. This particular prophet.

To curse the people of God. And. If you hate him. Hey. I'll give you whatever you want. Just to. Pronounce a curse upon them. But he couldn't curse them.

He could only bless them. And the king became furious. I paid you to curse these people. And the. This. This. Seer. Also said.

Well I can't. I can't. I can't curse them. They have God's blessing. Upon them. They are God's covenant people. God's chosen people. But then he said.

[19 : 31] Well the only thing. That can. That can. That can. Happen to them is. If they turn away from their God. And that's what happened. Later in. Numbers 25. The men of Israel.

They started to. Prostitute themselves. With Moabite women. Gentile women. Women who worship. Pagan. Pagan gods.

And these women. Led them. As they. Prostitute themselves. With it. Engaging in sexual immorality. Unfaithfulness. To their wives. And to their. To the. To the.

To their covenant. Wives. And to their covenant God. As they engage in this. Licentiousness. They also turn away from their God. To worship. The. The pagan. Idols. Of these women.

And for this. For this. Unfaithfulness. God struck them down. With a plague. That killed 23,000 of them. In a single day. And so you see here. That Paul isn't mincing words.

[20 : 27] With the Corinthian church. He's not given any room. For confusion here. He wants them to see. The Corinthians couldn't. Feign ignorance. And say. Hmm. What do these examples.

Have to do with us. They couldn't do that. Paul is quite explicit. Because he wants them to see. That the same worldly cravings. That brought judgment.

On Israel. In the wilderness. Those same worldly cravings. Are there. In the church in Corinth. And so the apostle warns them. Don't put Christ.

To the test. Don't presume. That you have God's blessings. When in fact. You're complicit. In your devotion to God. And in your love for him.

You know. Israel said. We have God. They said that. We have the covenant. They said. Forgetting the stipulations. Of curses.

[21 : 23] That will come upon them. If they were unfaithful. To the covenant. That God gave to them. They said to the prophet Jeremiah. Israel did. They said to the prophet Jeremiah. We have the temple of the Lord. We have the temple of the Lord.

We have the temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord. While evil thrives. The temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord. And abounds among them. Their trust. And their heritage.

Their trust was in the temple. Rather. They put their trust in the temple. And in their Jewish heritage. Faith. And those things are good. In and of themselves. But it's deceptive.

To put their trust in those things. Because they've turned their gaze away. From the God. Who gave them those things. Those privileges. And those gifts. And those benefits. You know. The very things that God gives.

Gives us. To. So that we may worship him rightly. In the case of the Israelites. The temple. The law. The rituals. Those things. Can become idols. Unto us.

[22 : 25] And that's what happened with Israel. So much so that they turned away from God. And they expected. The mere building. Of the temple. To be their defense. While God.

God lives in the temple. God. This is God's home. So he wouldn't let. His home be destroyed. Even though we're unfaithful. And we're worshiping other pagan gods. And. Letting evil abound.

In the nation. God would not let. His temple be destroyed. God would not let. His holy city.

Jerusalem. Be destroyed. They put their trust.

In them. In things. In mere buildings. And in mere rituals. They forgot. That it is God. Who goes before them. It is God himself.

Who fights their battles. And give them victories. And in this regard. They. Are not unlike the Corinthians. And in some ways. Maybe not unlike us. In the 21st century world.

[23 : 28] And the deception. Brothers and sisters. The deception of Satan. Is exactly that. Is. The Satan wants us to. He wants to make us trust. In the things. That God has given.

As signs. And means of grace. Is. He wants us to trust. In the things. Given. Rather than the one who gives it. So we.

We. Then boast. In the gifts. Rather than the giver of the gifts. And in doing so. Lies the way to destruction. Just as with the Israelites.

So friends. What are we trusting in? That's the question. That Paul wants to put to us. This morning. Is it the quality of our Anglican worship that we trust in? Our book of common prayer?

Our building? The community that we build here at Holy Trinity? Our fellowship together that we build? Is that another thing we trust in? All these things, all these things that I've just named are wonderful things.

[24 : 32] Wonderful gifts from our gracious God unto us. But we must remember that they are meaningless. All of them are meaningless and devoid of power without Christ who grants them unto us.

And so let us not put Christ to the test. And so what of the constant grumbling that was going on in Israel?

They were constantly grumbling and murmuring and complaining against God. And this stems from their heart of ingratitude and discontentment with God's provision.

Remember that Israel, their murmuring against God, had even started after He gave them manna from heaven. Imagine these people walking through the wilderness. And God provided daily meals for them.

And they murmured even against that heavenly food that God provided. Oh goodness, oh this manna, we got to eat it every day, every afternoon, every night.

[25 : 36] And yet what did God do? Gracious God. Even as they grumbled, God graciously provided meat for them. By bringing quail for them.

And after a while they grumbled about that too. Too much meat, too much quail. And this pattern of complaining and grumbling continued throughout Israel's history.

Complaining, grumbling, murmuring against God. And they were so deluded in their grumbling that they even said to Moses, Is this why you took us out of Egypt?

Do you know what happened to them in Egypt? What were they doing in Egypt? Slaving away. Being killed. But such is the delusion of sin.

That they start to yearn for bondage and slavery. Better than stay in the freedom that God has won for them. And continue in that freedom. And such is the bondage of sin.

[26 : 39] And the craving after worldly things. That is exactly what it is. It is yearning for that which enslaves and puts us in bondage. Instead of standing in the freedom that Christ has won for us.

And so Paul warns. These things are given to us as an example. us to whom the end of the ages come.

God has allowed these things to happen to Israel. And written them down for our instruction. So that we may be guarded from presumption. We may be guarded from overconfidence like Israel was. We unwind. We unwind. The end of the ages come. I don't know if that sounds ominous to you as you read that. But don't let it. Because what Paul means is that we are privileged to live in the end times.

Christ has come to usher in the new creation. His kingdom has been inaugurated at its first advent. We have been brought in by grace into that kingdom.

[27 : 49] Yet, even though we have been brought into the new kingdom. We are new creations. Yet, we are still in the world. We are in the world that is passing away. This world that is destined for judgment and destruction.

We are in it. But we are not of the world. We belong to the new creation. We are part of that new creation. The new man.

We all are. Through Christ's death. And burial. And resurrection. We. The covenant people of God. That is, when I say we, I mean those who have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

And trusted in his finished work. We have been grafted in. Aliens though we were. Gentiles though many of us were. We have been grafted in.

Into the promised story of redeeming grace. We've been grafted into the family of God. The church. The new Israel. But.

[28 : 50] We must not become overconfident of all the privilege that we enjoy. As the family of God. We must eat the warning example of Israel. Now. We have.

Food. The spiritual food and the spiritual drink. Right? Do we not? As the people of God. The new covenant people of God. We will participate. At the table of the Lord.

In a moment. As God feeds us. With the spiritual food and drink. We have also. We have also. Passed. To the waters of judgment.

We are no less privileged than Israel. In fact. We are more privileged than they are. They were. Yet we must not be overconfident. We must eat the warning. Look there in verse 12.

Therefore. Let anyone who thinks that he stands. Take heed. Lest he fall. So we know that this world is not our home.

[29 : 50] We are pilgrims. Journaling through. Yet we must remember that our pilgrimage requires self-discipline. As Paul says at the end of chapter 9. This pilgrimage requires self-discipline.

It requires our confidence. Not in ourselves. But in the one who protects us. The one who guides and nourishes us. Like Israel. Not only do we have partaken the spiritual food and drink.

We have also passed through the waters of judgment. Into life. At our baptism. As Paul said in Romans 6. All who are baptized into Christ Jesus.

Are baptized into his death. We were buried. Brothers and sisters in Christ. We were buried therefore with him. By baptism into death. In order for what?

In order that just as Christ was raised from the dead. By the glory of the Father. We too might walk. In the newness of life. And that's the newness of life that we have.

[30 : 52] As we are raised with Christ. The newness of life in which we walk. Is the new life Christ has won for us. The resurrected life. Are you aware of the great privileges you have.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. But temptation. And danger lurks. All around us in this world. Just as the Corinthians were faced with it.

And Israel was faced with it. There is idolatry all around us as well. The world is ever offering a way. That is smooth. A way that is pleasure filled.

Decadent. Self-fulfilling. That is the religion of the day. Self-fulfillment. Sex actualization. Loving yourself. That is the way that the world offers.

That way is smooth. And it's broad. But that way leads to destruction. But the pilgrim way. Is a narrow path. The pilgrim way.

[31 : 56] Is a narrow path of self-denial. Of sacrifice. For the sake of the gospel. It is a way of love. Sacrificial love. For the brethren. It is a way of self-discipline.

And dependence on the God. Who journeys with us. It is the way of patiently trusting. In God's promise. To bring us home. That is the way.

We are to follow. And to tread. Next week. We will look more closely. At the command. To flee. From idolatry. And what that looks like. In our 21st century world.

Because. Be aware. Brothers and sisters. There is idolatry. Rampant in our world. Just as it was. In the Corinthian world. And in the nations around Israel.

Well. But for now. Let us. Let's end. In verse 13. With these comfortable words. That. That. That Paul gives us. The God.

[32 : 55] The God. Who by the price. Of his own shed blood. Placed you on this path. This same God has promised.

To uphold you. Listen to the words of comfort. In verse 13. No temptation. Has overtaken you. That is not common to man. God is faithful.

And he will not let you be tempted. Beyond your ability. But with the temptation. He will also provide the way of escape. That you may be able to endure it.

God. God. Is faithful. Do you hear that? He is faithful. To see you through. All the temptations.

That this world will throw at you. He will give you strength. To bear up. Under the temptations. And the dangers. That lurks. At every corner.

[33 : 55] That comes. At you. And he will provide. A way of escape. That is the promise. Of your God. So while you are not to be overconfident.

Don't be presumptuous. Of the great privileges. That you have. You are also not to despair. No temptation. Is irresistible. To God's power.

To guard. And keep you. And to nourish you. Don't misplace your trust. And desire. Dear Christian. Fix your eyes. On him. Who is the author. And finisher. Of your faith. Gracious God.

We confess. That we are prone. To wonder. We do confess. That we are prone. Just like Israel. Just like. The Corinthians. Churches. We are prone. To leave the God.

[34 : 56] When we love. And we also know. That dangers lurk. On all sides. There's temptations. There is. Immorality. We live in the world. That is. In opposition.

To you. And so we pray. That you will bind. Our wandering hearts. Oh Lord. To you. By your goodness. That you will cause us.

To know. That we are debtors. To your grace. That you will cause us. To know. When we become forgetful. The depth. Of the riches. Of wisdom.

And knowledge. That we have in you. That our faith. And trust in you. May increase. And our lives. May reflect. That high calling. To which you have called us.

We pray all this. In the name. Of our gracious redeemer. Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.