

1 Corinthians 10:1-22

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Preacher: Greg Hendrickson

[0 : 00] Good morning, church. Turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 10. We are looking at 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 1 to 22. If you're looking in one of the pew Bibles, it's page 957 as we continue in our series through this book. So, I'll be reading verse 1 all the way to verse 22. So, let's begin reading there. Paul's words to the Corinthians.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. And all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food and all 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. Now, these things took place as examples for us that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and 23,000 fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now, these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction on whom the end of the ages has come.

Therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 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.

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel.

[2 : 34] Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No.

I imply that what pagan sacrifice they offer to demons, and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.

You cannot partake of the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? Well, about seven years ago, my wife and I were living in downtown New Haven.

It was a Sunday after church. I was downstairs. We had some kind of lunch meeting. I don't remember what it was. I got a call from my wife. You need to come home immediately. Our house is on fire.

It's one of the calls that there's only one right thing to do, and you better not delay. Well, while I was still at church, my wife had gone home. She was sitting in the living room, and she smelled wood smoke.

[3 : 42] And at first she thought, isn't that cozy? You know, one of our neighbors must have lit a fire in the fireplace. You know, reminds me of the town where I grew up. What a pleasant smell.

Until the fire department banged on the door and said, get out of the house. There's a fire on the third floor. Well, this morning's passage, Paul is giving a strong warning.

Found especially in verse 12 and verse 14, which both begin with the word therefore. Paul says, therefore, if you think you're standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. And therefore, flee from idolatry.

Paul is warning his hearers about a danger that they don't recognize. It's like he's entering a house where people are pleasantly enjoying the smell of wood smoke, and he's saying, flee, run for your life, you're in danger.

Of course, a warning like that is never pleasant to hear. But later on, when you look back on it, it might be the very thing, perhaps the only thing, that could have saved your life.

[4 : 48] Well, this morning, I want to look at three things about Paul's warning. I want to look at the basis for Paul's warning in verse 1 to 11. That will be the longest section of the sermon.

So don't be worried. If I go for a long time in point 1, point 2 will be shorter, and point 3 will be the shortest. Anyway, the basis for Paul's warning, the application of Paul's warning, verse 15 to 22, and the encouragement that accompanies Paul's warning, verse 13, right in the middle.

So that's where we're going, and let's dig in. First, the basis for Paul's warning. Let me remind you of the context that we're in. Paul's addressing the question of eating food offered to idols. This was one of the controversies that was dividing the Corinthian church.

Some people said, hey, go ahead. You know, idols aren't real, and as a Christian, you should have the freedom to eat anything, so enjoy it. Other people said, no, that's contaminated food, and we should avoid it at all costs and really keep our distance from it.

Now, Paul's dealing with a complicated situation. We've seen that. So he doesn't just say, yes, go ahead, or no, don't. He's trying to lead the whole Christian community through a process of moral and spiritual discernment in these chapters, chapters 8 through 10.

[6 : 05] So chapter 8, Paul begins by speaking about the dangers of knowledge. He says, knowledge can puff you up with pride and the priority of love. He says, you know, it'd be better not to eat meat at all, ever, than to cause your brother or sister to stumble into sin.

So Paul starts there, and then chapter 9, Paul points out that there can be a spiritual benefit to not insisting on your personal rights.

Paul says, I have rights. I can defend my rights. I'll defend other people's rights, but I won't always insist on exercising my own rights.

Last week, we saw Paul's flexibility and focus for the sake of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to all kinds of people. Here in chapter 10, Paul wants to point out some spiritual dangers that some of his people aren't taking seriously enough.

But again, you know, if you read verse 1, right, Paul doesn't immediately go for it. He doesn't immediately start with a warning by saying, flee from idolatry, stop going to the idol temples. You see, if there's a fire in somebody's house, the fire department's job is urgent, but it's pretty straightforward.

[7 : 22] Because everyone knows that fire poses a danger. The fire department knocks on the door, and they say, there's a fire, get out. Nobody will argue with them. Right?

People generally trust the judgment of firefighters, and at most, they might have to offer physical assistance to somebody who needs a little help getting out the door. But Paul's job was more complicated.

Because Paul was warning people about spiritual dangers that they didn't recognize as dangerous. And he was also warning people about attitudes and behaviors that didn't always result in immediate, obvious harm.

But in the long term, Paul says, they're just as potentially deadly. It's Paul's situation is much more like a public health worker who has documented over the last six months a spike in incidents of lead poisoning among children.

And they have to prepare a report, and they're going to prepare a report to take the regional water authority and say, something's wrong with the water. And of course, the immediate response of the water authority is going to be, but we've done our tests.

[8 : 38] It must be something else. Paul's situation is complicated. He has to make a case. It's sort of like he's going into the middle of the woods and finding people who are camping out.

And he has to convince them that there's a wildfire a thousand miles away, but it's so strong that it's very likely, given the winds, that it's going to be down where they are in a couple of days, and they've got to start hiking out now because they're in the middle of nowhere and there are no roads.

Right? It's not an immediate danger. Right? It's not going to cause you harm today, the next minute necessarily, but Paul's convincing people and saying, you need to trust me and you need to see why there's a danger that you're not realizing.

Now, how does Paul do that? Well, Paul doesn't just give a warning. He starts by telling a story. One of the most effective ways to convince someone of something they don't already believe is to tell a story that they can relate to.

That's what the prophet Nathan did when David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, and he was feeling just fine about it. And Nathan started by telling him a story.

[9 : 50] That drew David in. And then Nathan said, you're just like the man in the story. And then David got it. So what Jesus did when he told parables to the crowds, and it's what Paul does here.

Now, Paul begins by retelling some of the Old Testament story, the journey of the people of Israel through the wilderness after they had been delivered from slavery in Egypt. And Paul didn't choose this story arbitrarily.

Verse 1, Paul says, these are our fathers. That is, our spiritual ancestors. If you're a Christian, your spiritual ancestors are, number one, Christians, followers of Jesus who have lived in the past.

We can learn a lot from them. And second, the people of Israel who lived before the coming of Jesus, trusting in the promises of God. Right? And so when we read the Old Testament stories, we're sort of, in a sense, reading our own family history.

That's what Paul's saying. You know, for better or for worse, you wouldn't be who you are today apart from your ancestors. And that's how we should feel when we read the Old Testament, as if you're learning about your ancestors and how, through the generations, they've influenced and brought you to the place where you are today and what we can learn from them.

[11 : 15] Now, what Paul does is he points to specific aspects of Israel's story that parallel the Corinthian situation. So first parallel, verse 1 to 4. What Paul says is, you've all experienced powerful signs of God's favor and His sustaining power.

You've experienced and observed these things. And so did they, Paul says. Verse 1 to 4 is one long sentence. Five times Paul uses the word all. They were all under the cloud.

That is, when they left Egypt, the cloud representing God's presence, His Holy Spirit overshadowed them, protected them from the Egyptians who were pursuing them, and guided them.

They all passed through the sea. That is, the Red Sea, where the Egyptian army was drowned. They all ate the same spiritual food. That is, the manna in the desert that God provided for them each day.

They all drank the same spiritual drink, the water that God supernaturally provided for them from the rock. Now, what's Paul doing here? Well, Paul's saying, think of some of the spiritual blessings and provisions that you have received from God as followers of Jesus.

[12 : 30] In particular, Paul points them to baptism and the Lord's Supper. Paul says, think about baptism and what it represents. It's a sign and seal of being united with Christ, being washed clean from your sins, filled with the Holy Spirit, set apart to a new life, belonging to Jesus forever.

Paul says, think about the Lord's Supper. How every time you eat and drink at the Lord's table, God reaffirms His promises to you and fills you and nourishes you and strengthens you and reminds you that Jesus died for you and He loves you.

Paul says, these are wonderful, precious signs from God. And Paul says, the people of Israel had similar signs, similar experiences.

They passed through the Red Sea, the cloud above, the water on both sides. Wasn't that a kind of baptism? They could look back on with gratitude. They ate the manna. They drank the water from the rock.

Wasn't, that was a pretty amazing version of the Lord's Supper provided each day supernaturally from heaven. Now, Paul knows these are not precise equivalents.

[13 : 41] He's drawing broad parallels between the spiritual blessings and provisions God gave to the Israelites in the wilderness and the spiritual blessings and provisions God had bestowed on the Corinthian Christians.

And he's reminding them it's one and the same God who's active in both cases. You see, Paul believed the same God who had sustained Israel through the wilderness, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was none other than the God and Father of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And that's why Paul says in verse 4, he says a couple things that might sound a little odd. Verse 4, he says, the spiritual rock that followed them was Christ.

In verse 4, and in verse 9, he talks about, he says, that the Israelites were testing Christ. Now, you might read those verses and be like, that sounds a little far-fetched.

How is Paul seeing Jesus as the rock in the Old Testament and as the one the people of Israel were testing before he had even come into the world? But look, if you have a moment, look back at Exodus 17.

[14 : 50] Exodus 17, I'll summarize it for you. The people had no water. They start grumbling against Moses and it says they tested the Lord.

What that means, basically, is that they accused God of being unfaithful. It's a legal accusation term. And Moses cried out to God and Moses says, what shall I do?

They're about to stone me. They want to kill Moses as God's messenger. And God says to Moses, chapter 17, verse 5, take your staff in your hand.

I will stand before you on the rock at Horeb. And you shall strike the rock and water shall come out of it and the people will drink. Now, many times in the Old Testament, God summons a man or a woman or a family or even a nation to stand before him and he, as the lawgiver and judge, delivers the verdict and pronounces the sentence.

But here and only here, God says, I will stand before you. And God authorizes Moses to execute judgment with his staff in his hand.

[16 : 08] You see, the people of Israel saw an amazing sign that day. They had falsely accused God of being unfaithful to them. They were about to kill God's appointed messenger and God not only provides a spring of living water for them, he gave them a sign that he would stand in their place and receive the judgment they deserved.

And the Apostle Paul, perhaps reading this very story, knew, look, knew that that's exactly what Jesus Christ had come to do. He who had done no wrong stood on trial before a human judge who condemned him to die and he received the judgment we deserved for our rebellion against God.

And through Jesus' atoning death, God's spirit has been poured out on everyone who believes in him and so that's why Paul says the rock was Christ. Paul's not arbitrarily sort of reading something back in the Old Testament.

He's looking at something in the Old Testament and saying, that is a pretty strong picture of what Jesus would come to do. So that's the first parallel.

The people of Israel and the Corinthian Christians, they had all observed and experienced powerful, memorable signs of God's favor and sustaining power. But, verse 5, back to 1 Corinthians, verse 5, Paul says, most of them didn't make it to the promised land.

[17 : 38] So here's the second parallel. First parallel, spiritual privileges and blessings. Second parallel, the Corinthian Christians were vulnerable to the same temptations which led some of the Israelites to their downfall.

And in verse 10, Paul warns them and he warns us, don't fall into the same patterns. Verse 6 and 11, he says, these things were examples for us so that we might learn from them and not follow the same pattern.

And verse 7 through 10, each of these verses follows the same pattern. Basically, Paul says, don't do blank as some of them did and look what happened as a result.

Verse 7 and 8, Paul focuses on idolatry and sexual immorality which are linked together. Verse 7, and each of these verses refers to a specific episode in the Old Testament.

So verse 7, Paul quotes from the story of the golden calf which he says, the people sat down to eat and drink in front of the golden calf, right, eating while worshiping an idol and they rose up to play.

[18 : 43] That doesn't mean they started shooting hoops. Okay, that could mean they were partying in front of the idol, shouting, dancing, singing, in a frenzy of excitement stimulated by this idol.

It could also mean they started playing around sexually. Sometimes the word play was used that way like it still is today. That's part of what people did in pagan religious rituals.

Verse 8, Paul refers to another example in Numbers 25 when idolatry and sexual immorality are linked. They go together. where that says, the people began to indulge in sexual immorality with the daughters of Moab.

These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So again, those things are linked together and Paul's concern for the Corinthians, the reason why he warns them against these two things is he says, some of you are eating and drinking at idol feasts in idol temples.

But Paul says, if you're willing to do that, it won't stop there because sin or spiritual compromise won't stay confined in one area of your life. If you're sitting down to eat and drink in the idol's temple, what are you going to do when you rise up?

[19 : 58] And it's not an accident that Paul connects these two things. You see, idolatry and sexual immorality go hand in hand just as faithfulness to God and faithfulness in marriage go together.

They're consistent with each other. So in both cases, the issue is you need to be exclusively loyal. Paul says, you have to be exclusively loyal to God and don't bow down to any idols.

And in marriage, you need to be exclusively loyal to your one spouse and not to have any sexual relations with anyone who you're not married to. Paul says, that's how God made us to flourish in monogamous relationship with God and monogamous marriage.

marriage. That's the pattern God designed to be life-giving and safe for us. So those are the first two things Paul warns against.

Verse 9 and 10, Paul focuses on two other sins which are also linked, testing the Lord and grumbling against God's appointed leaders. He's referring to Numbers 21 and Numbers 14.

[21 : 05] And in both cases, the people speak against God and against Moses and they say things like, why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There's no bread and no water and we hate this miserable food.

That's what they said. I'm not paraphrasing. We wish we had died in the land of Egypt. Let's choose another leader and go back to Egypt. Now, what's the parallel to the Corinthian situation?

What's Paul warning them against? Now, for one, Paul's warning them against an unrestrained craving. Right? Part of what could have motivated them to go to the idle temples is they just really wanted the food there and the drink there and it was really good and really plentiful and really cheap.

And perhaps there's a warning for us that a lack of self-discipline with regard to food and drink can be the doorway to grumbling and discontent when we don't get what we want or when we overindulge and then feel bad about ourselves and hate ourselves and feel insecure around other people and it just can be a downward spiral.

There are all kinds of ways that food can become an idol and Jesus has come to set us free from that bondage so that food can be a servant that benefits us and not a master that controls us.

[22 : 23] But, you know, that's actually not the main focus of verse 9 and 10. The main focus is not on food but on testing and grumbling. Now, I think it's very interesting verse 7 and 8 describe what we might call fleshly sins, right?

Where you're actively overindulging our bodily desires and impulses in a way that doesn't please God. Verses 9 and 10, by contrast, describe what we might call spiritual sins.

Negative attitudes that hinder us from stepping out in faith and doing the good that God calls us to do. A grumbling attitude, an accusing spirit, always blaming someone else.

We're not out there on Saturday night dancing around the idols. Perhaps we're just sitting alone feeling sorry for ourselves or scrolling down our phone looking on Facebook for the latest gossip or addicted to video games.

And Paul says that kind of self-pity and despair expressed in a variety of different ways can be just as spiritually dangerous as idolatry and lust that's directed outwards.

[23 : 41] Now, let me just say that in this fallen world, Christians will experience depression. And experiencing depression is not sin. But I think what Paul is saying here is that there's a spiritual battle to fight when you're experiencing depression just as there's a spiritual battle to fight when you're experiencing raging anger or passionate lust and you're trying to control and restrain yourself in a godly way.

I've just started reading a book called A Praying Life by Paul Miller. It's a great book. He wrote another book called A Loving Life. Both of them are down on the bookstall and they're excellent. And he has a quote in there from a 16th century monk who I'd never heard of before but I think he's pretty wise.

He writes this on this topic. He says, When you sit there utterly alone, eaten up with unhappiness in a pure state of grief, if you don't move towards God but desperately imagine that everything you have ever done has been utterly lost and forgotten, this near despair and self-pity are actually a form of pride.

What you think was a state of security from which you've fallen was really trusting too much in your own strength and ability. What really bothers you is that things just haven't happened as you expected and wanted.

Don't rely on your own strength and abilities and plans. Distrust them and distrust yourself. Your own strength will no more help you to stand upright than propping yourself on a broken reed.

[25 : 12] But you must not despair of Jesus. Hope and trust in him. Absolutely. Because his mercy is infinite. So there are Paul's warnings.

The basis for Paul's warnings, Paul's saying, these are some of the traps that our spiritual ancestors fell into. I don't want you to fall into the same traps. And Paul's pointing us toward a better way.

Second point, the application of Paul's warnings. Verse 15 to 22, Paul applies the warning to the Corinthians particular situation. Again, we'll go through more quickly this section.

Verse 16 and 17, he goes down. He gives some reasoning. Verse 16 and 17, he says, when we as Christians share the Lord's Supper as an act of worship, it's a participation in the blood of Christ and the body of Christ.

That word participation is the Greek word *koinonia*. It can also be translated fellowship or sharing or joining together or partnership. And Paul says, when we drink the cup, we share in the blood of Christ.

[26 : 19] That is, we're proclaiming that the blood of Christ has cleansed us from all sin and we've received Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. When we share the bread, we share in the body of Christ.

That is, we're expressing our oneness in Christ with every other person who eats and drinks of that meal by faith in Jesus. You see, in the Lord's Supper, here's the point.

The physical act of eating and drinking has a spiritual reality attached to it. And in chapter 11, we'll see that that's true whether we recognize it or not because some people are eating and drinking judgment on themselves.

Now, the point is, when we eat this meal, Jesus is present with us by His Spirit. And when we take the bread and the cup, He confirms His promise that He is our God and we are His people.

Now, we'll go more into Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper in a couple weeks in chapter 11. But the point of this, taking is this, taking the Lord's Supper means participating in Christ. Verse 18, he gives another analogy.

[27 : 21] He says, consider the people of Israel aren't those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar. Once again, Paul uses that same word, participation. And Paul's referring probably to the sacrifices of thanksgiving that the Israelites would share when they went to Jerusalem for the feasts where they were commanded to eat and rejoice before the Lord their God as an offering of thanksgiving to Him.

And the point is, when the people of Israel ate those thanksgiving meals, they were participating, that is, sharing in the worship of God. So Christians share in the worship of Jesus when we eat and drink the Lord's Supper.

And the Jewish people, the people of Israel, share in the worship of the one true God when they participated in these meals of thanksgiving. And then Paul goes on, verse 19 to 20, he's moving toward his point, to address pagan meals.

He says, verse 19, what do I imply? That food offered to idols is anything? Are the idols anything? No, I imply that what pagan sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. Paul's saying each meal, whether it's the Lord's Supper or the Jewish meals or the pagan meals, creates or cements or reinforces a bond of participation or partnership or covenant between the people and the deity involved.

And so verse 21 is Paul's conclusion applying his warning to the Corinthian situation. He says, you can't drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You can't partake the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

[29 : 00] No more eating food offered to idols during pagan religious ceremonies. He finally comes clear with his warning and its application to the Corinthian Christians after he spent three chapters laying the groundwork and getting us there.

Now, what do we learn? Number one, Jesus calls for exclusive loyalty. So don't play around with idols.

Paul was writing to some people who were being cocky. They were saying, we have the freedom to eat any kind of meat whenever we want, however we want, wherever we want. We know idols aren't real.

We can go to the idol temple. And Paul says, beware. The first thing he wants to say is there are some practices and attitudes that followers of Jesus must not engage in.

Jesus isn't just one option in the buffet and you can take some of his meal and you can mix and match with whatever else you want. Jesus calls for exclusive and ultimate allegiance.

[30 : 03] And just as in a good marriage, you should consider your spouse's opinion more weightily than anybody else's opinion, Paul says, ultimately, in our exclusive loyalty to Jesus, we need to consider what pleases him first and foremost above anything else and be willing to refrain from other things if they would be compromising our loyalty to Jesus.

So Paul says, beware. Beware that you don't fall into idolatry. He goes on and so that's the first thing.

Jesus calls for exclusive loyalty. Don't play around with idols. Second, according to the Bible, demons are real. Now this is, Paul doesn't go into demons here, but he mentions them in 20 and 21, so let me speak briefly to that.

What does the Bible mean by demons? It means there are spiritual forces hostile to God who are active in this present world. And according to Paul, some of them are associated with certain pagan cultic rituals.

Now for some of you, that idea might sound really weird, but in a Christian worldview, it's not inherently irrational. You know, if you can believe in angels who serve under God's authority, then you should at least admit the possibility that there are spiritual beings who are in rebellion against God's authority, which is exactly how the Bible describes demons.

[31 : 38] And Paul's quite balanced here. Paul's not paranoid about demons. He's not like, ooh, there might be a demon in that piece of meat in the store because it was sacrificed to an idol a long time ago.

No! He's very clear about that in the next end of the chapter. He says, you know, that's not how it works. Okay? Paul's not paranoid about a demon being under every rock.

And in several places, the Bible distinguishes demonic oppression from physical illness or mental illness. They're not the same thing even though they can overlap.

But what Paul does say is, I don't want you to be participants with demons. That is, I don't want you to become entangled with spiritual forces that are hostile to God.

And the only reason Paul gives the warning is that it's a real possibility. Paul wouldn't give the warning if they didn't exist at all. So, so let me say this.

[32 : 37] If you think, if you think that you might be experiencing demonic affliction or oppression, let me say three things. This isn't something we talk about a lot, but, but it's, it happens sometimes.

Let me say three things. Number one, you need to be willing to renounce any ungodly practices that may have opened you up to what Paul calls participation with demons.

Second, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because Jesus has given his followers authority over demons in his name. And third, seek spiritual help and discernment from other Christian believers.

And particularly, if you're trying to figure out what's, what, what if anything might be demonic oppression and what's simply a physical or mental illness and how do we help each other in all those ways and get the help, kind of help you need.

All right, so that's some of the application of Paul's warning to the Corinthians about don't eat the food in the idol worship services and a little bit to us.

[33 : 44] Finally, the encouragement that accompanies Paul's warning. Right, this whole chapter is a warning, but right in the middle of it, Paul gives a word of assurance and encouragement.

And that's a common pattern in the Bible. There are wonderful passages of encouragement, but often with them, there's reminders to keep our focus where it needs to be and there's strong warnings.

But with those warnings, God also provides a word of encouragement and he doesn't leave us alone. He doesn't want us to end feeling like, oh no, I've fallen into this and I can't get out.

Verse 13. It's right in the middle of his two warnings. He gives this word of encouragement smack in the middle. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.

God is faithful and he won't let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he'll also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it. So let me just end with three brief truths from this verse that I hope will encourage you if you're struggling or feel beset by any of these temptations that we've mentioned today.

[34 : 56] Number one, Paul says, you're not alone. No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to man. You know, one of Satan's most common strategies when you're being tempted is to make you feel all alone like nobody else has ever been through what I've been through and nobody else could ever understand and nobody who doesn't completely understand could ever give me any help at all.

And you know, that's always a lie because God knows you and God says, no temptation has overtaken you except what is common to man.

There's other people who've been there. It might take a little while to find those people and there's other people who can love you even if they haven't been there because we're all tempted in different ways.

And Paul goes on and says, God is faithful. You don't need to fear that temptation will overtake you like a thief in the night and rob you of everything that you have in Christ.

No. Paul says, God is faithful. He won't let you be tempted beyond your ability. God's like a good coach. He knows the capacities of his players better than the players do.

[36 : 05] He knows when to put you on the field and he knows when to put you and give you a little rest on the bench. He knows you better than you know yourself. He's been faithful in the past.

He'll be faithful in the future. And because God is faithful, Paul says, third thing, there's a way through it and or out of it. With the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

Now, that's a very interesting verse and I always get messed up when I try to quote it because in my mind, I think, does he provide a way out or does he provide a way to endure through it? And he says, both.

says, God will provide a way out so that you can endure through it. He'll give you the strength to endure through it as long as you need to and he's also going to provide a way out.

And for the Corinthians, Paul's saying that way out is don't go back to the idle temples and be indulging in these pagan meals.

[37 : 09] Paul says, you know, if you're running headlong into temptation, you can't claim this promise that God's going to rescue you from it. God's provided a way out.

The way out is don't go there. Right? Sometimes we need to flee temptation. But sometimes you can't flee temptation because it's just there or it's in your mind and you can't run away from yourself and you've got to face it.

And Paul says, God will strengthen you to endure it. And the reason we can know and be confident that that's a true promise from God is because he came to meet us in the middle of it.

The Bible says, Jesus Christ was tempted in every way just as we are and yet he never sinned. He never gave in.

And Jesus knows the strength of temptation. Honestly, most of us don't know how strong temptation can be because we give in too quickly. Right? It's like if you're arm wrestling and you just sort of let your arm go limp.

[38 : 12] Right? The way that you really know how strong somebody else is is if you hold that arm up and your arm gets burning sore.

Right? And you're trying to push it over and you... That's the way that you're going to know how strong somebody else is. Not if you just sort of give in right away. You see, Jesus knows how strong temptation is because he never gave in.

He held on all the way. And so he's able to help you and me when we're tempted because he's been there and he's done it. And he sent his Holy Spirit to help us in the middle of it so that we're not alone.

And so the scripture says we can boldly approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find help in our time of need. Let's pray and do just that. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[39 : 15] Amen. Amen. Amen. Lord God, we thank you for this warning. We thank you that it is in your love for us and in your wisdom that you give us these warnings so that we don't fall into deadly patterns of sin but so that we can fix our eyes on you so that we can be both warned and encouraged.

We thank you for this word of encouragement that you are faithful. Lord, that you won't let us be tempted beyond what we can bear that you will provide a way out so that we can endure through it.

Please strengthen us to trust you and to walk in faithfulness to you as you have been faithful to us.

We pray in your name. Amen.