

Parson to Person

1 Corinthians 10 – Part 4 (Thou Shalt Not Tempt the Lord!)

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 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.’ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

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

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 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? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 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. 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. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (1 Corinthians 10:1–22).

Carnal Christians—and the Discipline Required

Paul was quite aware of the carnality practiced in Corinth—and by the Corinthian Christians. For this reason, he wrote them the admonishment we now study! His manifold concerns and rebuke were valid and necessary. Any good pastor who noted the kind of sinning in which the Corinthians engaged would quickly address his “sheep” and provide directives and/or discipline.

As we have previously considered, Paul used Israel as the example of rebellion to demonstrate their deserved losses via actual historical accounting. These disciplines did not come to Israel as the result of inadvertent shortcomings and fleshly mistakes. They came as the result of direct rebellion and evil action. Therefore, the disciplines they suffered were well deserved.

Anything less would prove an omission. The righteous standards of God, and responsive disciplines, were essential to the promotion of genuine fear and reverence for God. His people were/are called to righteousness.

A Note on Mercy

By great and eternal mercy God demonstrates longsuffering. He does not act indiscriminately, randomly, or in reckless rage. He responds, when appropriate, to the circumstances and intentionally intervenes as needed. For this we can all be thankful! Were it not for the mercy of God and His overarching, omniscient understanding, we would all rightly have deserved the same consequences Israel suffered. Moreover, Israel is presently under a “spirit of slumber” (Romans 11:8), and without the hope of a final restoration (Romans 11:11–27), they would be completely lost.

Illustrative Judgments and Why

Paul gave the following four illustrations as warning to the Corinthians. Herein they were called to learn, grow, repent. We too can learn from these illustrations:

- 1) Don't have fellowship with idols or participate in idolatry (vs. 7).
- 2) Don't engage in sexual immorality (vs. 8).

3) Don't make false and selfishly motivated accusations against the Lord (vs. 9).

4) Don't falsely accuse appointed leadership (vs. 10).

But We Are Believers— “All Things Are Lawful” Right?

We have already noted the fact that “*all things are lawful*” for the believer. However, that fact does not suggest all things are right, good, or should be practiced. Moreover, if a believer (even though secure in Jesus), walks out of line in direct and willful disobedience, he or she (like Israel) may find himself or herself in the cross-hairs of God's disciplinary judgment.

Church discipline should be exercised—as described in this letter (1 Corinthians 5). However, even still, God may, at times, take the disciplinary actions as He sees fit. One example is the penalty God enacted upon Ananias and Sapphira (see Acts 5).

Communion—with God

Paul concluded the admonition and exhortation with how a believer is to be kept pure in their/our fellowship with God. He wrote, “*Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.*” Moreover, with emphasis he identified the fact that believers are in “*communion*” with God and must not “*co-mingle*” by way of “*fellowship with demons.*” This indeed was the sin of Israel—as taught by Balaam: seduction through infiltration (see Numbers 25).

Think Again—If You Think You Will Get Away with It!

Are we able to stand up against the Lord's judgments? Are we stronger than Him? Are we so foolish as to put His patience to the test? I think not! However, some have, some do, and some will. I have seen it!

We are called to righteousness—even though we might argue that *“all things are lawful for me.”* The judgments may only be temporary, but spare yourselves. Why not enjoy the blessings of God in this life as we will in the life to come?

I love you all,
Pastor Paul