

Sermon 3/24/19 I Corinthians 10:1-13 God is Faithful

Dear Growers in the Faith:

We learn from our past! That's why we study history. We study the past so we won't repeat the same mistakes that people did before us. What have we learned from our study of history?

Why study history?

- On December 7, 1941 our nation was caught by surprise as our Navy at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii was attacked by Japan. The lesson we learned that day was to never let our guard down and be prepared for an attack by another nation.
- On September 11, 2001 we were attacked by terrorists. We learned another lesson that day. We learned that we could be attacked by individuals or small groups as well as by a nation and we need to be prepared in a whole different way.
- On November 22, 1963 President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas as he rode in an open car along the city's streets. We learned that day that our leaders needed better protection and never again would a president ride in an open car along a parade route.

We learn from the mistakes of the past. How many of us have learned more from a mistake on a test than from all the right answers we had? How often we learned more from a mistake we made at school or work than all the times we did something right. The mistake stuck with us and we learned not to make the same mistake again.

The Apostle Paul is teaching us a lesson from the Children of Israel's past. He is reminding us of the mistakes they made so that we won't make the same spiritual mistakes. Paul begins by reminding us of Israel's experience in the wilderness after the Lord delivered them from their bondage in Egypt. He writes:

"For I do not want you to be ignorant..."

What happened to the Children of Israel in the wilderness? The Lord told them to enter the Promise Land shortly after leaving Egypt. The Lord told them that he would deliver the people who lived in the Promise Land into their hands. They would gain the victory

over them for the Lord would be with them. Moses sent some Israelites into the Promise Land to explore the land before they would invade it.

The men came back and gave this report: “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” (Numbers 13:31) The Lord told them to go and he would deliver the people into their hands. The Israelites rebelled against the Lord and did not enter the Promised Land to take possession of it. As a result the Israelites were sentenced to wander in the wilderness for forty years until all those twenty years and older had died. Their children would enter the Promise Land but they would not.

Today’s pressures make it easy to ignore or forget the lessons of the past. Paul cautions us to remember the lessons the Israelites learned in the wilderness. The key for us is to remember the history of the God’s people. The key for us is to remember how God has blessed and led His people of the past. But, also to remember how God judged His people when they became disobedient.

Think of how privileged the Israelites were to have the Lord lead and guide them out of Egypt and into the wilderness toward the Promise Land.

Paul says that the Israelites were “...all under the cloud and they all passed through the sea.” The Lord led them by a cloud and he opened up the sea so they could walk across on dry ground as they fled the pursuit of the Egyptians during the exodus. The Lord blessed the Israelites with...

- Moses as their leader in whom they were baptized meaning that they were under his leadership
- spiritual blessings to feed their souls – they saw the Lord before them in the form of the cloud
- physical blessings to feed their bodies – Exodus 16:15; 17:6
- His presence as a cloud by day and a column of fire by night Exodus 13:21
- Safe passage across the Red Sea Exodus 14:26-31

Look and remember these lessons for the past so that we may not make the same mistakes of becoming disobedient to the Lord.

Even though the Israelites in the wilderness lived before the birth of Christ they still were blessed by his presence. Paul says that the Israelites “...drank the same spiritual

drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.” v4

The Rock

A Jewish legend taught that a real rock traveled with the Israelites for the 40 years in the wilderness. The legend said it was the rock that Moses hit once with a stick to provide the Israelites with drinking water. However, this was only a legend. The Rock that did travel with the Israelites was the pre-incarnate Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Paul here says that the Israelites had all they needed in the wilderness with the presence of the Lord who protected His people spiritually and physically. The problem with the Israelites was one of overconfidence. Because they had the Lord unlike their neighbors the Israelites became full of a sinful spiritual pride. Proverbs 16:18 says:

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

This is the lesson we need to take to heart. Spiritual privileges are no guarantee of preventing a believer from falling into sin. Again, recall the privileges the Israelites had and compare them with the privileges we have in Christ...

- The Israelites were led out of bondage from Egypt; we have been led out of bondage from Satan
- The Israelites were identified with God’s prophet Moses who led them as we are identified by God’s Son Jesus who leads us
- Israel ate the manna from heaven and drank the water God provided and we are blessed with “daily bread.”
- Israel was nourished with spiritual food as we are today. John 6:63, 68; 7:37-39

Yet, these spiritual privileges did not prevent the Israelites from falling into sin. Good beginnings do not guarantee good endings. The Israelites experienced God’s miracles and yet they failed when they were tested in the wilderness. We will never, never come to the place in our Christian walk where we are “free” from temptation and potential failure when it comes to sin.

The Christians in Corinth were guilty of the same sins that the Israelites had committed in their 40 year journey in the wilderness. The Corinthians and the Israelites had these sins in common...

- lust I Corinthians 6
- idolatry I Corinthians 10:8 and 10
- murmuring II Corinthians 12:20-21

Israel was God's people but abused their privileges...

- they lusted after things outside of God's will Numbers 11:4-6
- all of them died in the wilderness never seeing the Promised Land except Joshua and Caleb for their failure to enter the Promise Land the first time the Lord commanded them to Numbers 20:8-12, 24
- they committed idolatry and sexual sins v7-8 "indulge" means gross sexual relations
- they tested God v8
- they complained against God v10

God judged the Israelites for their sin in the wilderness.

- v8 "...in one day 23,000 died" Exodus 32 tells the story how the Lord directed the Levites to kill 3000 Israelites and allowed 20,000 to die in a plague because of their sins.
- v9 "...were killed by snakes..." Numbers 21 records the story of the Israelites questioning the goodness of God. The Lord then sent serpents to judge those who sinned against Him.
- v10 "...were killed by the destroying angel." Numbers 16:3ff

Sin – All About ME

Sin is anything and everything outside of God's will in our lives. To sin is to disregard God, ignore his teachings, deny his blessings. Sin is "God-less" living. The sinner's life is me-focused, not God-focused.

- the sin of idolatry is anything or anyone that we may put in the place of God
- the sins of complaining against God is wanting something outside of God's will for us
- we are not to test the Lord or grumble against Him

Paul says learn from the Israelites. Verse 6 “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.”

We are saints but we are not immune from stumbling and falling into sin. v12 We all have been tempted with the same thoughts, feelings and desires. v13 The Israelites took their privileges and relationship with the Lord for granted. May we not do the same.

Yes, temptations will come. But the Lord says he will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear and will provide a way out for us.

Every difficult circumstance that enters a believer's life can either...

- strengthen us as we remain in the Word
- weaken us if we give in to doubt and disobedience

God allows trials to enter our lives but promises us...

- strength to resist
- deliverance to escape

God knows how much we can take. We are also told to take the opportunity the Lord gives us to escape temptation.

- Flee fornication I Corinthians 6:18
- Flee idolatry I Corinthians 10:14; Psalm 106:37
- Let the devil see your heels as you run away!

At times, though, we will fall into sin. Some always have this question gnawing at their conscience: “Can God ever forgive me?” Some may say...

- God gave me a wife; I blew it
- God gave my children; I blew it
- Some fear they have out-sinned God's patience

Remember, God came for sinners...people like you and me. Jesus says to us:

“Take courage...your sins are forgiven.” Matthew 9:2

“And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

He will provide a “way out” this word means “escape” The word picture refers to an army trapped in the mountains which escapes through a pass from an impossible situation. This gives us comfort, strength and assurance.

Remember the lessons from Bible history...

- wrong desires and temptations happen to everyone
- any temptation can and will be resisted with God’s help
- recognize those people and situations that give you trouble
- run from anything you know is wrong
- choose to do right with the Holy Spirit’s guidance
- seek friends who can help you and share your faith
- run...run...run from temptation II Timothy 2:22

Remember God is with us...and He is faithful

- He was with Adam and Eve walking in the Garden
- He was with Abraham calling him friend
- He was with Moses and the Children of Israel
- God is with us...therefore we are able to resist temptation, forget the past, forgive those who have sinned against us and forsake sin.