

Transcription of 17GS1027

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

"Take Heed"

March 22, 2017

How you doin', Morningstar? Been a pretty crazy time for you, huh? I know, I know, I know. I've been there. Of course it's always scary when you get those calls, those issues and such, but I'm so thankful that Pastor Jack's back on Sunday. I talked with him yesterday, and I'd been texting back and forth, of course, for quite some time; and Jason encouraged me to give him a call, and I did. And I was so pleased to hear him - I was listening - can't detect anything, couldn't tell anything. I know he was here Sunday doing announcements. But God is good. Amen? I tell you what - we see such a great answer to prayer. We know thousands and thousands and thousands of prayers going up for our dear brother, your Pastor. We're just so thankful for that. So, you be blessed. Amen? Amen.

Tonight, though, I had this thought. We'll be in 1 Corinthians 10. But autopilot. Autopilot. I wonder how many of us came in tonight kind of on autopilot, kind of just going through the motions, kind of, "Okay, another night at church. Here I've got to go, I got plans, got things to do after church," and you're really not even coming in with anticipation, with a longing, a yearning; not all of you, of course, but some of us, of course, it's natural. I mean, even driving. You drive autopilot. I can't believe they can fly planes autopilot. Pilots are walking around....(Pastor Rob makes the sound of a plane flying).....what are you doing? You crazy?

But in the Corinthian church, this idea of being on autopilot - kind of where Paul was going with it. The church was doing well. It was a good church but had a lot of problems, a lot of issues - pride and arrogance; the great spiritual gifts - tons of spiritual gifts - but they actually worshipped the gifts more than the Lord, and there were divisions, and it was a loveless church. And Paul sends this letter. If you turn with me to 1 Corinthians 10, he sends this letter - a very, very corrective letter - the most corrective letter that Paul writes. And the Corinthians did not like what he had to say. He'd gotten reports. There were issues, concerns, this and that. So Paul addresses every single one of them.

And here tonight, in this passage, probably his strongest exhortation - he challenges, he warns them. He says, "Take heed. Take heed." And in verse 1 he says, "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware," the "moreover" speaking "in addition to what I've said." And right before that, Paul talks about

this idea of being disqualified. Now how many of you guys out there - take you back to your high school years - did the high school wrestling deal? Raise your hand. Don't be embarrassed, wrestlers. Come on, wrestlers. A few of you crazy guys. Well, I did the wrestling deal in high school, and the one thing about wrestling - more important really than the tourney, more important than the match is what? - you had to make weight. And if you didn't make weight, it was over. You were disqualified before the match even started, before the tournament even started. You couldn't even participate, and it was such a bummer because you worked hard, you sweat, you cut, you did everything you needed to do. And you get up on that scale, you're exhaling (Pastor Rob exhales loudly). "Sorry." Off the scale, clothes back on, sit in the bleachers. Coaches would be so mad. So that whole wrestling thing lasted for two years for me because I got tired of actually wrestlers would sit together, and the soccer team would sit together. And wrestlers would be eatin' nothin' - teeny salads, a piece of chicken, a little bit of water. Soccer players were over there laughing, having a great time, and I'll never forget the smell of mustard dogs. (Laughing) Oh, my gosh. Mustard dogs. So, needless to say, my junior and senior year, I was a soccer player (Laughing) eating tons.

But this idea of being disqualified - same thing goes with us as Christians. No matter how strong of a walk you have, Christian that you are, how good things are going, you do something, you stumble, you fall, as Paul says here, you disqualify yourself from the walk, from the ministry, from receiving the crown of righteousness. And, really, a lot of times you can never overcome that disqualification. Everything - your reputation, your integrity, your character - it's all out the door. The game is over. The match is over. The race is over. Think of King David. I mean, we all know who King David was - psalmist, warrior, great king. But what do you really remember about King David? Of course you remember the moral failure, the problem that he had there immortalized that way. And for those of you that know this name, when you mention the name Bob Coy, you can't help but think - what do you remember about that name now? Yes. A pastor who fell.

So Paul, here, continuing to instruct the church, goes into a little bit of history. The Corinthians were very prideful in what they thought was going on in their church. So Paul takes them on a little history lesson to give them this instruction, and he warns them. "Moreover, you guys...." And verse 5 is so critical. It says, "But with most of them" (speaking of those of the Israelites in the desert) "God was not well pleased." And he's going after the Corinthians, and he lists four things

that God was not well pleased with, four things that were happening in the Corinthian church, and no doubt four things that are happening even across this sanctuary here tonight in our lives. Because it's the human condition. It's not like I've got sit up there and go, "Well, I think there's probably somebody strugglin' with" I mean, it's obvious the things that we struggle with. We're all in this together. And yet Paul goes after it, and he says.....really, he's basically saying, "Yeah, you prideful Corinthians who think you've got it all together. Even though you're divided, you're spiritually prideful, there're divisions, you're sexually immoral, you who think you're" (they thought they were actually smarter than God - remember the whole wisdom thing with the Corinthians). But he says, "Here's the deal, Corinthians," and Paul, in love, bam! He says, "You better wise up, you better listen up, you better beware, because if you don't, you're about to be disqualified. Your walks are such that you're doing things, you're causing others to stumble, you're stumbling yourself, you're walking in sexual immorality, you're flirting, you're on the edge, and you're going to go down." He says, "Take heed. Take heed."

And tonight that's the message. Take heed. Take heed. Are you about to be disqualified yourself in some area of your life? And only you know, and it's a self-examination, really, for our lives. And Paul gives these examples and tells us these were given to us for our admonition - to learn from others' mistakes. Because if we don't learn from others' mistakes, guess what? Others will be learning from ours.

So tonight, verses 1 through 4, the first thing we see here - Paul lays out the blessings that the Israelites had going through the desert and their experience with God when God called Abraham and all the way through that. He reminds them their fathers experienced the goodness of God in the wilderness; they saw things, experienced things that you could only dream about. Let's read this. "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." Imagine being with them during that time.

I wrote down ten things that they experienced. Just think about it. Remember the plagues? Imagine being there - seeing that take place. The Passover! The passing over, the last one. Imagine that! You're in the house, and you're just, you're shaking.....you know, like the old Charlton Heston movie, "*The Ten Commandments*," the smoke was going by. You're (Pastor Rob screams). And

yet the Passover alone. The Red Sea crossing. We read it in the Book, but imagine yourself being there. They come up to the water. What do they see? "Haaaaa! We're gonna die!" And all of a sudden (Pastor Rob makes the sound of the sea dividing). I think that would kind of get your attention. Pharaoh's army destroyed in the water. Food provided every morning. Wouldn't that be cool, ladies? You don't have to cook no more. Well, they did have to cook the manna. But the food that was provided. Water from a rock. (Pastor Rob makes the sound of water coming out of the rock). Water comes out. Quail every night. I'd have gone for ribeye, but quail every night. Cloud for shade that would move. Imagine that. The cloud. "Cloud's moving.....follow the cloud." Protecting them from the heat. The permanent night light. Isn't that cool? Permanent night light. You walk out. They had no need for street lights, anything like that. The light was on! The permanent night light - the pillar of fire. The sandals that would not wear out. I know with you ladies that'd be kind of a bummer because you love shoppin' for those shoes. I could even say the purses probably never wore out because you gotta have a purse about every three weeks, maybe, every six. Purses. Crazy. Ultimately (I know, I know, I'm messin' with you) it all spoke of the presence of God that they experienced there. And Paul listed a few. They were under the cloud, they all passed through the Sea, baptized into Moses as they identified with him as a type of Christ, the same spiritual food (manna and quail), they drank from the same spiritual Rock - another type of Christ. And God was leading them to the Promised Land and destroying enemies before them, and all these saints - all the miracles that they were experiencing and seeing; and yet, what did they do? The same thing we do. The same thing the Corinthians did. They stumbled. They fell. They kind of got complacent. They kind of went into a little bit of autopilot. "It's the same. No big deal. There's a cloud in the sky there. No big deal. Watch this. Watch. Mo's gonna go over to the rock there. Check this out. Wait a minute. Go ahead, Mo." (Pastor Rob makes the sound of water coming out of the rock). I mean, they got used to it - the incredible blessings, the privileges that were there.

And much like in our own lives, we kind of get kind of complacent to the blessings that God pours out on our lives. We don't realize it. Guess what? You're alive today. You could be dead. You're alive! And we....."Oh, no big deal." And yet we take for granted so much. And not that it's just normal, but it's still something when you think about what God has done in and through our lives, and how He's blessed us, how He's lifted us; and some in the miry clay, a horrible pit, and He's pulled you up and out and all these things - the blessings.

So he lays this out. "Guys, hey! There's some awesome stuff that God took our fathers through. And guess what, you Corinthians? God has done a tremendous work in your lives as well."

Number two, though, in verse 5, we have the warning. It was the blessings; now the warning. This word "but." It's not a good "but" in the Bible. There are good "buts" in the Bible, but this is not a good one. "But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness." We've got a problem. It's a problem here, guys, and really this idea - you think about that bodies were scattered in the wilderness, understatement that God wasn't pleased. Because we know from reading Scripture how many people of the ones who were numbered for war - aged twenty and older - made it into the Promised Land? Two. Two. And who were they? Joshua and Caleb. I mean, crazy is even Moses and Aaron didn't make it into the Promised Land. To say that God was not well pleased is kind of crazy. And we think about this. Let me read this to you from Numbers 26:64, "But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. For the LORD had said of them, 'They shall surely die in the wilderness.' So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun." They were not well pleasing. And the warning came with consequences. The warning, "But God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness." And due to their disobedience to His commands, they all died - that were twenty and older, in the wilderness - every single one of them. That's a lot of people.

So Paul warns the Corinthian believers as well. They received much favor from God, much blessings. The Spirit of God poured out on that church, and you read through the book of Corinthians, you see the gifts that were there - powerful gifts - prophecy, wisdom, discernment, tongues (of course). And the tongues gift is the gift that the Corinthians really took and ran away with, in a sense. That was the gift to have, the speaking in tongues, because that was a vocal gift that was so evident that, really, it was like, "Ha, ha, the tongue folks, we're over here. But you, maybe not as mature, spiritually less, what can we say? You guys gotta stay over there." God wasn't pleased with their behavior. And the question of course it leaves us is - what things in our lives is God not pleased with? A little (Pastor Rob makes a tap, tap, tap sound on the pulpit) - you heard that little tap on the shoulder that comes, the nudging of the Holy Spirit. And the autopilot person - you're ignoring it, you're ignoring it. See, the things that He sees, the things that

He knows that we ignore. And Jesus said, in John 8:29, "I always do those things that please Him," and we need to be doing only that which pleases the Lord. And as you examine your heart, as we go through this passage of Scripture, are there things in your life (now obviously none of us is perfect), but are there things in your life that God has been trying to get your attention? And He's been knocking on your door - the Holy Spirit's been there, He's not pleased with you - You know He's not pleased with you, and yet you do this. You just (Pastor Rob holds his hands up as if to brushing off), "Ah, I'll deal with that later. I gotta do this other thing. I gotta be involved in this situation here." And the temptation's just too great, and you ignore, you ignore the warning.

Number three, though, verses 6 through 11, we have the examples now. Paul lays out these examples of what was taking place and what they were doing, and he points out some of them. And these things from "our fathers," these "examples," were evident also in the Corinthians; things that would disqualify, things that would render them unfit to receive the crown.

Now one little side note. Paul's not talking about the Corinthians losing their salvation. This isn't what this passage is about, okay? There's only one sin that will keep me and you out of heaven. And what is that? The rejection, the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit unto salvation. See, God can't forgive what we never asked Him to forgive us for. So if people go through their life and they never receive Christ, they rejected the Holy Spirit all their life, they get to heaven, "Ah, can't forgive that one." Any other sin, of course, praise God, is forgivable. Amen? All right. But these sins, though, they would stumble, they would hinder, they would limit the rewards and blessings of God. Now we know that. God resists that stuff.

But one thing for sure, though. We need to make this note here. We mustn't think that the types of sins that we are doing, that our salvation would never come into question. Why is that? Well, really, once you start down this path, and you're involved in a situation, and you're involved in a sin, and you stumble in a sin, and you go all the distance and everything - the way the enemy works is that once he sees that you're down, he doesn't just walk away. It's not like in the boxing ring and the referee steps in, you go to your corner, and he lets you get up, and you do the count. No, no, no! He just continues to pound you and pound you and pound you. It's like a shark. He sees blood, he smells blood. He's goin' for the jugular. He's goin' for it. And ultimately the plan is to get you to completely turn your back on God - in disbelief, turning away to where there is a loss of salvation. See, you can't

get saved at 30, then backslide at 40, and then die at 80 and think you're going to go to heaven. It isn't once saved, always saved. It's once saved, always saved as you abide in Christ. I'm not going to rely upon some other man telling me that because I went to a church, and I got baptized by this water as a baby, that, "Hey, I'm saved. I'm going to heaven - as long as I throw in some money in the cup that's going by." No way. That's something to keep in mind as a warning in itself.

But the big problem, though, with those in the wilderness is instead of bringing their bodies under control, they indulged in every desire and craving. Verse 6, "Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted." This idea - and it speaks, really, to what took place in Numbers 11:1-6 - they lusted, they craved, they desired that which was evil. They went after the things that God did not provide for them, outside of the will of God. He could have given them anything to eat. He could have given them the food they wanted from Egypt. But no. He gives them manna, and He gives them the quail. But guess what? "Oh...." You know the story. They're craving. "We want onions, we want leeks," (and I'll say ribeye) "we want ribeye, all these things that we had in Egypt!" See, He gave them what He thought was best, but they craved evil things outside of the will of God. They wanted something outside God's will, which leads to the following sins that are listed. The Corinthians were doing the same thing. They wanted more than God had to offer them. The Corinthians really pushed the liberties that they found in Christ to the limit, completely overboard, to the point where they were stumbling people around them, and they didn't care about it. "I got liberty. I got freedom. I can go to this temple and worship here and eat the meat from this temple here because you know what? Hey. I got grace. I'm in Christ." Which is true. But, of course, one of Paul's big issues was if it's stumbling somebody else, Paul said, "I'll never eat meat again if it stumbles my brother" (1 Corinthians 8:13). They were doing the same thing. But for us, how about us, what are we looking for that is outside the will of God for us? I mean, where you're at is where you're at, and what He's given you is what He's given you. "Ahhhh....." And you're doin' what even the Corinthians did. It's that complaining that goes on. They lusted, they craved. They couldn't control their flesh. They went after these things.

Paul gives us four things that God was not pleased with, four things right off the bat. Who knows? I mean, obviously there was more going on than this, but we see the illustrations, the example, from the children of Israel. Every one of these is backed up by the Scripture that took place there in the exodus. He applies it to

the Corinthians. And, of course, for us tonight, we need to do the same thing. Verse 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.'" And of course an idol is anything you put in the place of God. It's a violation of the first commandment. And the interesting thing with the Corinthians - some of them went back to the pagan idols, thinking that in their liberty they were strong enough to do it, to go back into the temple. It'd be like going back to the gods of drugs and alcohol for me. That's just stupid! To go play, to go kind of....."You know, I'm saved, I don't got a problem with that. That was then. But I can go back into the bar. I can go hang out with all my old friends that do all that stuff still." And of course the story is of the golden calf in Exodus, right? That's the craziest story. Moses is gone. So they think"Forget it. He's gone. We need somethin' to worship. What are we gonna do?" They corral Aaron, start (not beatin' on him but just) ..."Come on. Come on, Aaron. You gotta do somethin'!" So what has happened? He makes a golden calf. Poom! Out pops this golden calf. Big, big mistake.

See, we don't think much about idolatry today, I don't think. You don't walk around the street and see.....see, back then, the idols, the temples were all over the place. Now what was the temple that was right above the city of Corinth, up on the Acrocorinth? It was the temple to Aphrodite. Imagine having that hanging over your backyard, a place where there were a thousand prostitutes that would come out every night and just walk into the community, seeking whom they may devour. And you think about it for ourselves - what are the idols, though? What are the things we place above God? Of course, what is the biggest idol in our lives? Us. It is what it is. As much as we say, "I don't like....." Yes, you do. We do. We do. But think about what are our idols? Where are the temples that we go to? The houses, the cars, the diamond rings, the bling, the bank account. We go to the temple of B of A or the temple of Chase or wherever your money is, and you get in there, and you just.....you just go to the teller, "I just gotta see how much I got in there. Ohh, I'm so good. I'm so set. Ahhhhh." We worship. And in doing this study, I thought about it. There're temples everywhere. The temple AMC, the temple Starbucks, the temple 24 Hour Fitness. I mean, there're temples everywhere that we go to. We don't even think about it. The temple Macy's. What about clothes? We worship our clothes. We do worship our cars. And the trouble, the problem, of course, is when those things are placed above God. And of course the career. "Whoa! Wait a minute. Now you're messin' around here. Wait a minute. Don't mess with my career. My career comes first. I got this career. I worked hard for this thing. I'm movin' my way up to the top. I don't care if I lose

my wife, my kids or anything. I'm gonna make it to the top." Have you heard that before? Been involved in the industries that are like that? What are the idols? What are the things there?

Then we start getting a little heavier. Verse 8, "Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell." You know, that's the size of the Staples Center. The Staples Center is bigger than The Pond, just want to let you know. Where the Kings play there at the Staples Center, bigger than The Pond, where the Ducks play. I had to throw that in even though the Kings ain't gonna make it this year. They're just messin' up. They're so far off. They're 6 points off. That's a lot of points to make up, especially with only eleven games left. Anyhow, back to what I was talking about here. (Laughing) Twenty-three thousand, twenty-three thousand. Now, imagine if God dealt with sexual immorality in that way today. I just wonder how many people would be in the church right now. This idea. Paul's referring to Numbers 25. The people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab (and the whole thing with Balaam and all that stuff). And, again, of course, the challenge of living in Corinth was that it was so sexually immoral as a norm. The worship of their god was to take off with the temple prostitutes. So Paul is challenging them, he's warning them (even in chapter 5) - this whole idea of sexual immorality, "Guys, you've just got to deal with this thing. You can't! Can't even go there." And sexual immorality - God is not pleased with that stuff. And this word is the word "*porneo*," which is really anything outside God designed for marriage between a man and a woman. So it's adultery, it's fornication, it's homosexuality, it's all that stuff. And, of course, the pornography issue today - in our society, outside the church and inside the church - is out of control. We deal with that, as pastors, on a regular basis. I'm telling you what. There's nothing more destroying to a woman and a marriage than when a woman comes in and catches her husband on the computer, viewing pornography; or the cell phone. Whatever. I'm tellin' you what. It's tough. It's hard. It's hard to get that trust back. It's like.....and guys just don't get it. But the ladies are like, "Are you kidding me?! How disgusting! How could you do this thing?" Paul told the Thessalonians to "abstain from sexual immorality" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Avoid it at all costs.

So tonight, in your sexual arena, is God pleased with it? Are you operating within what is biblical and what is allowed and what pleases God, which God created? Or, are you outside of that? Are you messing where you shouldn't be? Are you doing things that you shouldn't be? Are you on autopilot, thinking, "You know what?" And

I'll tell you what. If God came back with this idea, "We're going to deal with sexual immorality today just like I did back then," across the nation, how many millions would be just (Pastor Rob snaps his fingers) gone? Twenty-three thousand died in one day because of this. Not a good thing. God was not pleased in this area of sexual immorality.

Verse 9, though, he goes on to say, "Nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents." Remember that story. Numbers 21. They spoke against God and Moses. Man, that's not good. You start speaking against God like you're challenging Him, like, "Come on, God. I'll take You on right now. Who do You think You are?" They spoke, and they complained the guy that brought them out in the wilderness to die. Is that not the biggest slap in the face that they could have given to God? And of course God said, "Ha, ha. No, no, no, no. We're not playing this game. Nope." They basically said that God didn't know what He was doing. "We can take over from here. We don't need Moses. We don't need Aaron. We don't need anybody. We don't even need God." Complained about His provision. They called it "worthless bread." God's provision for you - "worthless bread." Can you imagine that?! God was not pleased. He didn't play. Paul's saying to the Corinthians and to us, "Don't push God to the limit." We live in this dispensation of grace, of course, and yet Paul is talking to a church that is Christian. Christ had already come. They were experiencing tremendous grace, but they were abusing that grace. Are you abusing the grace of God tonight? Are you throwing it, in a sense, back in His face? Are you seeing how far you can push, how far you can go? Paul says, "Don't push God to the limit. He doesn't play." The serpents came, fiery serpents; they bit the people. Many of them died. They had to put the serpent on the rod there, and everybody had to come and look at it, and it stayed the plague that was there. But it's kind of like dabbling in sin, in this idea of tempting Christ. So you flirt, play around a little bit, you stretch things in your life, you're pushing the envelope. You know that what you're doing is wrong, but, "You know somethin', it's really not that wrong. Come on. I mean, the person sittin' next to me, they're way wrong - more wrong than I am." Who's sittin' next to who here? Okay, I won't say "next to you." Person at work. Okay? "The heathen at work is doing way more things than I'm in." But it's like we're trying to get as close to the fire without getting burnt. Just..... man, you're playin', you're playin' with fire, ultimately. And you've got to ask yourself - are you trying God's patience? But as hard as it is to say, there is and there will and there comes a point in time where God says, "Okay. Enough." See, the thing about our sin - God is so gracious to deal with me and you by ourselves. And you know this. Most of our sin is

covered up by God, and only me and Him know about it. Right? But you know what Numbers 32:23 says, "Be sure your sin will find you out." There's a time that God just kind of pulls the covers. "Okay, I warned you. I tried to get your attention. I've been talkin' to you. I've been talkin' to you. I'm talkin' to you. I love you. Slow to anger, abound in lovingkindness. But guess what? To save you, to keep you, guess what? I'm gonna bring your wife home at the perfect time. Or I'm gonna have your boss walk in at the perfect time." You're like putting money in your pocket.....you're busted. Whatever it is. They tempted Christ.

And then number four, verse 10, complaining. What?! Complaining. What's the big deal about complaining? "Nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer." Now I don't know about you. We're good complainers, huh? Think about it. What is it you complain the most about (besides your spouse)? What do you complain the most about? Me, personally - I complain about the weatherman and the weather. This is just the stupidest thing in the world! "He never gets it right! See, he was completely wrong!" "What is wrong with you?" I complain about the weather. I want it sunny, it rains. I want it raining, it's sunny. I mean, it's just the most ridiculous thing to complain about. We complain about the politicians in the world, right? We complain about the Democrats. We complain about the Republicans. It's such a waste of time and energy. But Paul here referring to an incident in Numbers 16:41 where the people complained against Moses and Aaron, and God had had enough. Again, almost like the idea of tempting, but it was complaining. You read through the book of Exodus, I mean, they weren't in the wilderness how many days, and they're already whining and complaining. And here Paul is telling the Corinthians and us to quit complaining. Quit complaining about what God has provided for you. Be content with what God brings to you. And don't be complaining because you don't have what he has or what she has or what they have. It'd be like (husbands, check this out) the neighbor across the street pulls in with a nice 35-foot brand new motor home, pulls it in, and what is your husband doing? He's kicking the cat and dog and everything. "I can't get what I don't have what....." (Pastor Rob says this in a whining tone). Complaining. Because when I do complain, I'm saying to God I'm not grateful for what I have. I'm not grateful for what God has given me. I want more. So you've got to ask yourself the question - are you in the habit of always complaining about what you don't have? Or are you thankful for what you do have? And the children of Israel, honestly - I know you would agree with me, but I think Moses got a bum rap when the children complained and complained. We know he misrepresented God. Instead of speaking to the rock, he hit it twice because he was so angry with

them Israelites (Pastor Rob says this with gritted teeth). Man! And that was after thirty-nine years of dealing with them in the desert. And God said, "Ah, sorry." But of course we know Moses couldn't bring the people into the Promised Land; only Joshua, who is Jesus - the only one. And ultimately we've got to remember the character of God though. Loving, kind and gracious, but He's not going to let us continue in our sin, even this sin of complaining.

Verse 11 he says, "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." See, the children of Israel - in the wilderness - definitely weren't in the last days. We are. Paul's speaking in the last days. So these examples, these exhortations for us now to be mindful of, to take heed of, because of what is going to take place. Examples to learn from. And we love this grace, but we can't abuse it.

And fourthly, though, verse 12, now we see the pride, the pride that Paul goes after. "Therefore" (after saying all this) "let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." "I don't got a problem with any of these things here. I don't know who you're talkin' to," Corinthians basically saying, "This stuff isn't gonna happen to us. We're the Corinthians!" In their overconfidence - they didn't think that they'd ever come to a place, even with the idea of stepping back into a temple of an idol and to have dinner there with the meat that was sacrificed. "Ah, we can do that. We can hang. We're tough, we're strong. We're walkin' with the Lord." But Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." And kind of what begins to happen in our lives is God works, God does great things, and we're walkin' with the Lord, and we're doin' good, and we begin to take on the Pharisee attitude. Really. Even the autopilot attitude. "Man, I've been walkin'. I've got this thing licked. Man, I got the Bible down. I've read it a couple times. I know my John 3:16 stuff. I mean, I got it, I got it." Okay. "I don't gotta worry about these other things. Nothin' goin' on here." But we begin to think that we can't fall, we've arrived, we're strong. And we look down upon the tax collector. "I'm glad I'm not like these heathen that are out there, man, struggling with sin all the time." And yet, in our hearts (where are our hearts?), spiritual pride creeps in, and spiritual pride is a wide-open door to who? The devil. Oh, I don't think there's anything he loves more than spiritual pride because you're ready to take the bait anytime. He can throw any lure out your way. He can throw a hook with nothin' on it at all - he knows it - because you've got it all together. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed" (beware, be on guard, take notice) "lest he fall." The pride of the Corinthians that was there.

And even tonight, there could be some here that say, "Hey, none of these things are ever going to happen to me. Pastor, I appreciate the message, but you know what? It's for somebody else. I got this one." And I'm sure there're a couple of people that might've thought that. But that's exactly what the devil's looking for because none of us, none of us, is above falling. The devil's got your number. He knows what button to push. And unless you're tucking in under Christ, and you're holding on to Him with all you've got, it's just a matter of time. He's going to catch you off guard, you're going to step through a door, and it's going to be over with. He's gotcha. And even to the point where you give yourself that little, "Attaboy, Rob. Man, you're doing so good. Goodness gracious." I even said to myself today, "I've been a Christian for 29 years now. Sheesh. Only got a few more to go." Ah ah.

But the wonderful thing about Paul - he gives the escape in verse 13. He tells them, "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." Paul, in his love for the Corinthians (I don't think I would have put that in if I was Paul and yet he does because he knows what they're gonna do - he knows where they're heading, he puts in the way of escape for them, for all of us; shows them the way out, how not to get disqualified, how to keep doing the things which please God. And that's what we have to think about - doing that which is pleasing to God; not pleasing to the world, not pleasing to ourselves, not pleasing anybody else. Pleasing to God. And, of course, the temptation - the word means the "testings" or the "provings" - and really, ultimately, it's just part of the human condition. We're all in this together. We all have these same problems. But the cool thing is - Paul reminds them, "Hey, God is faithful." Lamentations 3:21, "This I recall to mind, therefore I have hope. Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning." What is it? "Great is Your faithfulness." We sang about that tonight. He's faithful, you guys. He's faithful. He's on our side. He does not want us to stumble. He does not want us to fall. He doesn't want us to come to the place where we're doing things that aren't pleasing to Him. Aren't you glad you have a God like that, who's doing everything He can to help us?

But also the idea is that we need to remember that God knows our limits. "Will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able." No matter how crazy it looks to you. You been in that place? I was in a place here the last three months. It

was pretty close. I'm thinkin', "Man, Lord, one more thing, and I'm goin' off the cliff." And yet God is faithful. He is faithful. He's not going to allow you to be tempted, and this is the key right here - you will never be put into a place where you cannot win the battle over sin. Let me repeat that. You will never be put in a place where you can't win the battle over sin. Otherwise this Scripture would not be true. Doesn't feel like it sometimes, does it? God knows our limits. "God will provide the way of escape," he says. Because God is able. Jude 24, "Now to Him who is able to keep" (me and) "you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen." He is able. He provides. He brings what is needed. And oftentimes the way out is what? Pretty simple. The way out is just look the other way. Or the way out, like with Joseph, was run - run through the door. Or the way out (and oftentimes) is the way that we have to go, is we just have to die. We have to die to ourselves. We have to deny ourselves. We have to surrender our flesh, and any of these temptations - denying ourselves - we surrender to God. That's not the easy way. It would be, "Yeah, I just gotta run." It's hard to run. It's hard to look the other way. It's hard to turn that computer off. It's hard to deny your flesh. And ultimately, though, we look to Jesus. Amen? Hebrews 4:14. Love this. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." Why? "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses," (and I don't understand this), "but was in all points tempted as we are," (it was written) "yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Looking unto Jesus is the ultimate and really the only way of escape. Because we're all going to go through it, it's all common to man. We're all in this thing together. Solomon said, "There's nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). What was happening to the Israelites was happening to the Corinthians, is happening to us here in 2017. The human condition.

So tonight some application in taking heed. Number one, you've got to beware of the spiritual pride. Beware of spiritual pride. And this is that self-examination time where you sit before the Lord, and you ask yourself. He'll tell you! The Holy Spirit will tell you. You've just got to listen. Pull the earplugs out, the spiritual pride earplugs, the whole, "I got it together. I got this thing lifted. I'm strong enough." But also we must learn from the mistakes of others. It's exactly what this passage is about. I'm not trying to shame a brother, but I'm going to tell you when Bob Coy fell, there was this shot across the bow of thousands of pastors -

not just in Florida, not just in the United States - but around the world. Because that news traveled. That news traveled fast. And I guarantee you - from Bob's mistake probably literally thousands of pastors were saved from where they were going because the warning was so strong, the consequences were so severe, that it was like, "Whoa. Time out. Back up. God, I got it. I hear it. Sorry. Forgive. Repent." And nobody knew. Nobody still knows. Learn from the mistakes of others. Don't play with sexual immorality. Don't play this game, folks. Any of its forms. Don't test the limit. Don't see how much you can get away with. And guys, again, you know this whole thing. If you have to, destroy the electronics in your life. You've got to do something. You've got to get yourself free and set free. It's destroying marriages, destroying kids. Parents - the iPhone, it's horrible. The statistics that are out there. Pastor Jeff did a study Sunday morning on some of the information that's out there about what kids are seeing on their little iPhones. It's instantaneous. You can get it just like that. It's crazy. Don't play with it. Then also remember that we're all in this thing together. "Except that which is common to man." Encourage one another. Build each other up. When a brother or sister stumbles and falls, don't just do the Pharisee thing on 'em. Come alongside. Be mindful, taking heed lest you fall. Bearing one another's burdens, "restoring such a one with the spirit of meekness" (Galatians 6:1) and fear because it can happen to you. And then last, number five of course, look for Jesus' way of escape in any type of situation. The door is right in front of you. It's right there. You've just got to open it. There is a way of escape in any situation that we find ourselves in. No temptation is so strong, no situation is so that you can't - there's got to be a way out, and there is a way out. Sometimes it is really, really simple. You just say "no."

So tonight I've just got to ask you that question. Are you looking to Jesus? And how are you doing? How is your walk? Is it well pleasing to God? Or are there things - maybe the Holy Spirit's pushed a button or two - in your life, and you're maybe outside of the four things that were mentioned? But it covers quite a bit. Are you guilty of the autopilot Christian walk? We're just kind of going through the motions, and things aren't really doing anything for you anymore. You're not seeing correction in God's Word. You're not, "Oh, man, Lord. Thank You so much for that. And Lord, thank You for helping me in this area."

So I'm going to close in prayer. Then, as customary, the pastors will be down here in front. And maybe tonight you're not even looking to Jesus at all. You've just come in, and you don't even know Him. Man, we would want and love for you to come

forward and ask someone to pray for you to receive Christ. But maybe you're in trouble, and you know it. And the great thing is you confess it, you speak to God about it, He deals with it, you repent though - you've got to turn, and it's solved. It's taken care of. You've taken the right way to go. But you want someone to pray with you about it just to encourage you. Or maybe to be accountable too, to let them know what's going on because accountability between brothers and sisters is so important. Amen? Let's pray.

Father, thank You for Your Word, Lord. And Father even knowing that in these last days the struggles, the trials, the challenges that we face as Christians, the spiritual warfare, the obvious plan and agenda of our enemy, Lord I pray for any that are here tonight that are caught up. They know that what they're doing is not well pleasing to you, Lord. Maybe there are those that are here that are stuck in that place where they think they're immune to anything the devil can do. I pray that You would speak and minister. Pour out Your grace upon them, Lord, letting them know that this is their time, this is their opportunity to make it right, to get it right, to turn away from that sexual immorality, that sin, that affair, that situation, that struggle that is there, to let go of the idols that are in their lives, to get rid of the bitterness that brings the complaining and just not happy and satisfied with what You've given them. Lord, I pray You would speak, You would minister. Thank You for Your Word, God. Again, Lord, we shift, and we pray for Pastor Jack. We pray for him for this Sunday, Lord. Thank You, thank You, thank You, God, for Your faithfulness. Thank You for Your healing touch. Lord, bring him back stronger than ever, more on fire than ever, to continue the race, Lord, that You have set before him. Bless this dear congregation, Lord, I pray. Continue to strengthen them, even in their trials, even in their waiting for this whole building thing. God, minister, bless, continue to cause it to grow, to be a representation of You, to be a lighthouse here in this city, Lord. Bless, we pray. Be with the staff. Continue to strengthen them. Thank You for the job that they have done, how they rose to the occasion to hold things up and keep things together, Lord. Bless them, we pray. We thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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