

1 Corinthian Series #24
"The Peril of Overconfidence" - 1 Cor. 10:1-13

I. INTRODUCTION

A. RR

B. Pilgrim's Progress

1. Christian & Hopeful fall asleep in field of Giant Despair
2. Caught and taken to stinking dungeon of Doubting Castle
3. Beat them and suggested suicide
4. They discussed what to do
5. Christian remembered a key given him earlier
 - a. had put it in his pocket and forgotten about it
 - b. took it out and looked at it
 - c. had a word stamped on it - "Promise"
 - d. he said, "I'm convinced this key will open any lock or door in this castle"
6. Sure enough, it did, and they escaped

C. A Key

1. A key is going to be pressed into our hand today as we study 1 Cor.
2. It is a vital, precious promise guaranteed to open many doors, and shut others
3. In fact, it is one of the most important promises of scripture for the strengthening of the daily Christian walk

II. TEXT

A. Set The Scene

1. RR end of last weeks study
 - a. Paul likens the Christian to an athlete
 - b. training and competing for the prize
 - c. tempers all things by his goal of winning the race
2. The challenge he gives the Corinthians is:
 - a. what is their goal?
 - b. what race are they running?
 - c. the empty, pointless race of this world — or of glorifying God by living for Christ?
3. In Ch. 10, Paul continues with the same theme but comes at it from a different angle
4. Problem in Corinth was that many had lost sight of the goal of the Christian life and had become distracted

- a. there was a great danger because they had become overconfident in their walk with God
- b. they had come dangerously close to presuming on God's grace
- c. Paul uses this opportunity to warn them of the peril of overconfidence
- d. uses the example of ancient Israel

B. Vs. 1-4

1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,
2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,
3 all ate the same spiritual food,
4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

- 1. Paul retells the story of the Exodus
- 2. Reminds the Corinthians how many blessings and miracles the Jews who came out of Egypt experienced first hand
 - a. they were led by the visible presence of God in the form of a cloud
 - b. they passed through the Red Sea
 - c. they were led by none other than Moses (They would have all thought that that was the supreme blessing)
 - d. they ate of Miracle food = manna
 - e. they drank Miracle water = from a rock
- 3. We recently covered Exodus, Lev., and Numbers on Wed. night.
 - a. amazing to see how gracious God was with Israel
 - b. He led them, fed the, protected them
 - c. He was so incredibly GOOD to them
 - d. but they were never content - they grumbled, complained and murmured the entire time they were in the wilderness.
 - e. it's hard to understand how they could have been so stiff-necked and rebellious in the face of so many miracles and blessings
- 4. That is precisely the point Paul is making - they had become overconfident of God's presence and blessing and had fallen into gross sin, thinking that the presence of the supernatural was evidence of their privileged relationship with God.

C. V. 5

5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.

1. Of the entire generation that left Egypt, only 2 survived and made it into the Promised land
2. Rest died in the wilderness as judgment for their unbelief and rebellion
3. Jews of Paul's day looked back on those of their ancestors that had died in the wilderness as being a bunch of fools
 - a. like us today, as they read the story —
 - b. they were appalled at the thought that they could have seen so many miracles and so much blessing and still be so wicked
4. But Paul's whole point here is that we must not follow in their footsteps
5. While we decry the spiritual stupidity of Israel in the Exodus and Wilderness wanderings, there's a very real danger that we may end up doing the very same things

D. Vs. 6-11

6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

1. We can learn from the example of Israel
2. While the modern world has seen tremendous advances in the realm of technology and science, the heart and soul of man has changed very little over the last 6000 years
3. People are basically the same today as they were at the time of the Exodus or as they were in Corinth when Paul wrote this letter
4. The lessons Israel teaches us are important lessons because, really, we are the same kind of people
5. Paul's point is that it's possible for the Christian who has been surrounded with the power and blessing of God to become cold and indifferent to the things of God
 - a. like ancient Israel, he's known God's goodness
 - b. but like ancient Israel, he's come to take that goodness for granted
 - c. and like Israel, he can fall into serious sin
 - d. it is of this very thing he is warning the Corinthians

6. Paul lists 5 dangers that confronted Israel and even then confronted the Corinthians

we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

7. No matter how faithful God proved Himself in providing for the people's daily needs of food and water, still, every time they moved to a new location it seems they began grumbling and complaining again about the lack of provision
 - a. instead of simply going to God and asking Him to provide again —
 - b. they began accusing Him of leading them out to the wilderness so He could starve them to death
 - c. in fact, instead of praying and asking God to provide for them, they began dreaming about the foods they had eaten in Egypt when they were slaves
 - d. food and water are not evil; rather they are necessities of life
 - e. but when they become the focus of our existence they become points of rebellion against God
 - f. Rom. 14 - "The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit."
 - g. if we walk in the flesh instead of the Spirit, it's easy to let our lives become centered on food and drink, clothes, entertainment, whatever
 - h. and the craving of the flesh for these things can consume us
 - i. so Paul warns us not to lust after "things"

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."

8. Corinthians would well understand this command.
 - a. city filled with idols
 - b. they had been delivered
 - c. but Paul reminds them of Israel's example
 - d. they had been delivered from Egypt, filled with idols
 - e. had seen God's judgment on them in the plagues
 - f. would have thought they learned not to worship

- g. anyone but Him
- g. they had seen His total superiority to idols
- h. but just 2 months into their journey they built a golden calf and began to worship it
- i. Paul warns the Corinthians they could do the same
- j. why he quotes Exodus 32:6 **"The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."**
- k. this is what some of the Corinthians were doing in Corinth
 - in their freedom in Christ
 - they were joining friends in worship of pagan gods
 - eating, drinking, and playing in pagan religious festivals
 - their excuse was, "Well, an idol is nothing, and besides it's all just for fun anyway."
- 9. Following Christ means forsaking the world
 - a. forsaking the world means to drop its value system and ideas about what constitutes real life and living
 - b. many Christians still idolize the things of the world
 - c. their values and priorities are determined by the world's standards of success rather than what God esteems as the successful life
 - d. when a Christian puts pleasing the world before pleasing God, he or she is an idolater.

8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;

- 10. Before entering the Promised Land, many of the young men of Israel were seduced by the women of Moab & Midian
 - a. result - a great plague swept through the camp and many died
 - b. in Corinth, temple to Aphrodite
 - the goddess of love & sex
 - 1000 temple prostitutes; way they worshipped
 - whole city given to sexual immorality
 - a part of the social scene and custom
 - c. see the challenge presented to Christians
 - faced ridicule of being prudes
 - accused of trying to resist the ways of society
 - "Oh come on. Don't be so narrow minded. Everyone's doing it."

- as though morality is determined by majority vote
- d. City of Corinth then much like Southern California today
- 11. I've met several people who call themselves "Christians" who've taken the attitude that it is impossible to resist sexual temptation in this day and age - so they don't even try
- 12. Paul makes no exceptions - "Do not commit sexual immorality."

9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;

10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

- 13. At another point, Israel began to murmur and complain again against God
 - a. they complained that God had brought them out into the wilderness just so He could kill them
 - b. they belly-ached about His provision
 - they complained about the manna; called it loathsome
 - c. said they'd prefer to return to Egypt where they could eat leeks, garlic, and onions!
- 14. Some of the Corinthians stood in danger of taking the Lord for granted in the same way
 - a. they had become so accustomed to the privileges and blessings of the Christian life
 - b. they came to despise them
 - c. they despised them in that the old life started to look appealing again
- 15. Again, Paul warns against this subtle drift away from God.

E. Vs. 11-2

11 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.

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

- 1. Not only were those Jews who were judged an example to the rest of the nation . . .
- 2. They are a lesson and warning to us
- 3. The history of Israel provides us a great example of the danger and peril of overconfidence

4. That was part of her problem - and the thing Paul saw as a grave danger for the Corinthians
5. While its hard to understand, it is nevertheless true —
 - a. the frequent experience of God's blessing and grace can become old-hat
 - b. the reality of Hid providential care can become dull to our hearts and minds
6. If we don't keep close to the Lord, we can come to a place of taking Him for granted
7. And when we take Him for granted we are destined to fall
8. Growing in the Christian life means becoming more like Jesus
 - a. our old sinful habits are changed
 - b. we take on new, righteous, godly habits
 - c. very simply, we change, for the good!
 - d. the more we grow, the more confident we become in our relationship with God
 - we come to understand His grace better
 - we realize our rel. with Him is based on what He has done, not what we do
 - and this brings great confidence
 - e. but some of us take this too far and think:
 - f. if my rel. with God is based on what He has done and not what I do, then it doesn't really matter what I do.
 - g. that, my friends is a horribly misplaced **overconfidence**
 - h. notice what Paul says in v. 12

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

9. The key word is "*thinks*" - let him who **thinks** he stands take heed.
 - a. the issue isn't whether or not we are standing but whether we THINK we are
 - b. it's in our thoughts, and what our confidence is on as we stand
 - c. is our confidence in Christ our ourselves?
 - do we look to Him to give us the strength to stand?
 - or do we think we're doing fine on our own?
 - d. example of me and anger
 - prayed
 - watched

- looked out for help
- victory!
- thought I had it beaten; took confidence in myself
- wham!

10. In v. 13, Paul gives us the key for overcoming overconfidence

F. V. 13

13 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*.

1. As long as we are in these bodies we are going to be tempted
 - a. it is our common lot
 - b. no place we arrive when not tempted
2. No temptation you experience is somehow fundamentally different from everyone else.
 - a. others have been and are even now going through what you go through
 - b. and they have overcome the temptation!
 - c. you are unique, yes
 - d. but temptation isn't; the devil's bag of tricks is limited
 - e. one of his favorite tactics is "divide and conquer"
 - temptation is hard to deal with when we are alone and isolated
 - so when we are tempted, we are also subtly influenced to get away from others
 - that is the last thing we should do
 - Eccl 4:9-12 Two *are* better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls, For *he has* no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm *alone*? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
3. **"God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be**

tempted beyond what you are able,

- a. you have an adversary; his name is Satan
 - b. he hates you and wants to destroy you
 - c. he works out his strategy against you by trying to get you to sin and turn against God
 - he doesn't just want to kill your body
 - he wants to kill your soul and spirit
 - he wants to twist them and mar them and deface them
 - he is a cosmic vandal and he delights in nothing more than vandalizing the image of God in you
 - like a tagger with a can of spray paint, he tries to tag you as his with sin
 - that's what temptation is all about!
 - d. so, Satan tempts us, but God does not allow him to tempt us in a way that is too much for us to take
4. Why does God allow us to be tempted at all?
- a. if He can limit temptation to only what we can endure
 - b. why doesn't He limit it all the way?
 - c. answer is found in the next phrase . . .

but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

5. God makes sure that whatever temptation we face, there is a way out, a way of escape
- a. and that way out is actually something good and righteous
 - b. it is a step of faith and trust in God for which we will be blessed
 - c. so what Satan means to ruin us, God turns to good for us
6. We could spend so much more time here, but out of time today
7. Conclude with this: What is the way out that God promises with every temptation?
- a. I think it is very simply to look to Him in humble faith
 - b. if we are keeping our eyes fixed on Christ, it makes dealing with temptation much easier

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Overconfidence
 1. Last year's Super Bowl

- a. blocked punt, guy picked it up and ran it toward the goal
 - b. got to yards of the goal and held out the ball and began to waltz into the end zone
 - c. didn't realize the punter had come up behind him
 - d. knocked the ball out of his hands with only 5 yards to go.
 - e. overconfidence cost him the goal
2. Christian, you may be doing real well, or so you think
- a. watch out!
 - b. keep your eye on the goal - Christ
 - c. don't give up till you cross the finish line and fall into His arms.