

# You Can and Must Resist Temptation Part 3

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*1 Corinthians*

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**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 10:1-13  
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Good morning, Providence Church. It is a tremendous joy and a tremendous burden to bring the word of God to you today, and so as you open to 1 Corinthians 10, as you open there I want you to listen to the book of Ezekiel 3, and I don't have a frilly introduction but this I think will get your attention. Ezekiel 3:16, listen closely.

16 At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 17 "Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. 18 When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself. 20 Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he will die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. 21 However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself."

Brothers and sisters, I am here to warn you, both the wicked and the righteous, I am here to warn you to fear sin, to flee sin, to get away from sin and to do so with desperation. I'm here to warn you so that you would be delivered from that, and I'm here to warn you to deliver myself because after you hear the word of God preached to you, I can say that your blood is not on my hand. Your blood will not be on my hand because I cannot change your heart, we cannot change each other's heart, but I can warn you and I can give you the word of God. And I need to say this because no matter how long you've been in the church, the temptation of your heart, the pressure from the world and from the devil has this erosion on your conscience to where you begin to take sin less and less seriously, you begin to forget that it was sin that caused the destruction of the world. It was sin that caused the flood. It was sin that caused the separation from God. And it was sin that

caused the Lord himself to become a man, to absorb the awful wrath due you so that you could be saved. It was sin that caused all of that. And so I'm here to warn you and to deliver myself. It's not my favorite thing in the world, to be honest with you. My favorite thing is to encourage but the word of God when it gives a warning, it is on me to warn you and it is on you to warn one another.

Let's read together 1 Corinthians 10:1-14. Paul says,

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. 6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

This is the word of the living God. Let's pray to him.

*Our Father, we come to You, we come to You recognizing that we have not truly grasped Your glory. We have no idea how powerful and mighty You are, how worthy of praise You are, how righteous and pure You are, and we have, because of that, no idea how truly wicked we are, and so, Father, I pray that today that You would give us a little bit of a glimpse so that we would worship You, so that we would flee sin, and so that Jesus Christ would be exalted as He deserves. Father, I beg You, there are hearts here that need to be awakened, people that need to be born again, believers who have grown lethargic who need to be convicted, and we all need to fear sin and its consequences that we may cling with two hands to our Savior. Lord, I pray that You would grant today, that You would do the work in the hearts that You have chosen to do that work in. May no one be hardened, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Let's read this together again, verses 12 through 14. "Therefore," together,

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.  
13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

As we previously discussed, this passage is an encouragement to those who think that they cannot stand firm against temptation and the context of this, as you may remember, is that there were some in Corinth who wanted to go into pagan temples because those temples had the best meat in town, and so they would go to the temples and eat the meat that had been sacrificed to the idols there, and they knew that an idol was not truly a god, and they knew that in their heart they were just eating meat, but it could appear to others that they were worshiping a false god and other believers would see them there and be concerned about them worshiping an idol, and still other believers having been saved from idolatry and had turned away from idol worship, they were emboldened to eat that meat sacrificed to idols and they did so against their conscience because they really thought they were doing that as an act of worship of an idol, and they were put in the way of temptation. And idol worship didn't involve just the eating of meat but also involved temple prostitution, drunkenness and many other forms of idolatry, and so putting themselves there put themselves in harm's way in the way of extra temptation, and Paul had this to say to those who didn't care that their brothers were led into temptation, he said, "You're not sinning because you're eating the meat but you are sinning by putting a stumbling block in your brother's way. You do not want to be the instigator of temptation. It would be better to have a millstone tied around your neck and to be thrown in the sea than to put a stumbling block in the way of another believer, and this is the guiding principle: your freedoms must be governed by love, not self-centeredness, not your own ease and comfort, and not your own convenience, not your own pleasure. It must be governed by love for others, love for your brothers and sisters in Christ, love for unbelievers, and you must do all of this to the glory of God. That has to be the direction. You should love your brothers and your sisters more than your rights, more than your privileges, and more than your preferences. And not only that, not only should your freedoms be governed by love, but your freedoms should be informed by fear."

As Paul says at the end of chapter 9, as we talked about last week, "I do all things for the sake of the gospel," Ted read this, "I do all things for the sake of the gospel so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win." Okay, that's the mindset, okay, you do this Christian life the best that you can. You don't just kind of enter in through the gates of salvation and then just, you know, ride the lazy river around and around and around until Jesus comes, right? No, no, this is a race. You run like an athlete. You train like an athlete who's focused on winning, who wants to be that one person who wins. And who is it that you must win against? You must win against the flesh, against the world and against the devil. It takes a full effort to do this.

So, "Everyone," verse 25, "who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable." Okay,

eternal life. "Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air," okay, so Paul is not aimless, he's not meandering around, you know, just following the winds of serendipity. He has a purpose in what he's doing.

Just a side note, this isn't the message. You could spend a whole message on that but are you exerting a bunch of effort aimlessly? Are you punching the air with your life? Are you chasing wealth and pleasure and popularity and trying to gain a following, and trying to get people to like you and notice you? That's punching the air. That is all vanity. Are you following the purpose for which God has called you and are you doing that with a full effort, wholly striving after that?

Okay, this is all part of the mindset that informs where he's taking us in this passage. Okay, verse 27, so I don't beat the air, "but I discipline my body, I make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." So Paul did everything for the sake of the Gospel because he feared disqualifying himself. Why? Because he knew those Old Testament examples and he especially had in mind that generation that was delivered from Egypt and how they saw the mighty works of God and still fell in the wilderness because of sin. So Paul tells the Corinthians to be careful. "You must not put a stumbling block in front of your brothers and sisters, and not only that, you must be careful that you, yourself, do not find yourself falling into temptation. If you think you stand, take heed lest you fall." This is a warning to those who think that they stand securely and that they can walk through any temptation unscathed. They need to take heed. They need to be careful. You can't just go watch whatever movie you want to watch. I mean, you can, you're not necessarily sinning but what effect is that going to have? Do you really believe that you can just put yourself wherever you want and be impervious to temptation?

Take heed lest you fall. This is an encouragement and a warning to those who think that they cannot stand. We talked about this, there are those that think that they cannot fall, and there's those that think that they cannot stand, right? There's people that think that they cannot resist temptation, that if temptation is put in their way, they just have to give in. This is an encouragement and a warning to those people. Your situation and your temptation are not special, they're not unique, they're not over and above what everyone else has ever faced. You are not in a special situation. What you are experiencing is common to man. This is what it means to be human this side of heaven.

It's not special. 2. God is faithful. He's faithful because he knows how much strength you have and he will limit the scope of the temptation to not be beyond what you are able to endure. Beyond that, he will supply the way out, the way of escape, which may not mean getting out of the temptation but it means going through it and being able to endure it, being able to find a strong place where you can let the wind blow over, okay?

Yesterday my wife was picking up my daughter from a, well, I mean, you know, that storm went through, right? The heavy wind and the trees falling all over the place and rain and all this kind of stuff. Okay. Strong, and we don't get that in California, right? So we see on the weather that this is coming through. My daughter was at a birthday party so

Mel went over knowing that the storm was coming, picked up my daughter early, and drove and just barely beat the storm to our house. She found the way of escape. The storm still blew over us but she found the place of refuge to be able to withstand the storm. That's what that means. It's like a ship caught in a storm who finds a safe place in a cove or a bay or some place where they can set up and be safe and let the storm blow over. God is faithful and will give you that, not so that he will take the storm away but so you will be able to endure it, so you'll be able to run through it without falling into sin, without giving up, without giving in.

God is faithful so therefore you can endure. Now I'm speaking of believers here. I'm speaking of believers. The difference between a believer and an unbeliever is God has given you a new heart and he's given you his Spirit and he is working all things together for your good, to shape you into the image of Christ. God is for you. He is working with you. The Holy Spirit is interceding for you. Jesus Christ is interceding for you. God is for you. That's the difference between a believer and an unbeliever. God is for you and for you, the believer, he will provide the way of escape so that you will be able to bear up under it. For an unbeliever, an unbeliever does not have the ability to truly please God because without faith it's impossible to please God the Scripture says. An unbeliever does not have a new heart. An unbeliever does not have the desire to follow God, nor do they have the faith to believe what God says. And so if you don't believe what God says, you will not resist temptation.

So this promise is for you as a believer. If you find yourself doing nothing but always giving in to temptation and sin, the question is what is the reality of your faith, especially after the word of God has been brought to bear, especially after you've been confronted with the truth. Now I'm not saying that believers don't struggle. They do. I'm not saying we're not all tempted. We are all tempted. I'm not saying that it's not a constant thing where we have to fight, but the difference is that a believer has the resources to fight and to stand.

Okay, so you have no excuse. You cannot blame your sin on the fact that you are a victim of some crime or someone else's sin against you. You cannot blame your sin on the temptations brought upon you by somebody else. A stumbling block, you are responsible if you put a stumbling block in the way of someone else, but if you stumble over that stumbling block, that's your responsibility and the Lord will hold you accountable to that. Okay, I'm sorry if this doesn't jive with your understanding of God but we're gonna get to that in a minute.

So this passage is a warning, it's a warning to those that think that they can indulge sin without consequence, a warning to those who think that they cannot fall, in fact, it's a warning to all of us because all of us are susceptible to temptation and disqualification, and it doesn't matter what you've experienced, what your profession of faith has been, what acts of obedience that you've accomplished so far, what family you're from, what church you go to, what sermons you listen to on the drive to work, what stage of life you're in. All of these things give you the illusion of safety and false confidence and you must take heed. You are at risk of falling into serious and deadly sin and sin is deadly not

only because of its natural consequences, but because God himself has killed rebellious people in miraculous ways in the past. Make sure that's part of your theology. Sin is deadly not just because of its natural consequences, sin is deadly because God actively opposes the proud and we see that in this passage from the Old Testament, each four of these examples, the idolaters, the immoral, those who put the Lord to the test, and grumblers, they were all executed by God in a miraculous way in the wilderness.

It's not just the Old Testament, you know the examples of Ananias and Sapphira, when they, in their greed, lied to the Holy Spirit in front of the whole congregation and God killed both of them. They fell down and breathed their last it says. And here in the book of 1 Corinthians in chapter 11, we talked about this last week, those who had been dishonoring the brethren in the taking of the Lord's Supper. Here we are with food again. Those who could make it to the fellowship meal early, the Lord's Table, they got there early, ate all the food, drank the wine, and they were there drunk and there was nothing left for the people that came later. In that society, if you were wealthy you could afford to show up early. If you were not, if you were one of the lowly, you know, bondslaves or whatever, you had to wait until the sun went down or whatever, just quit working and then you show up and there's no food for you there, but all of your friends are drunk engorged on the Lord's Supper. And what was the problem with that, is that those who were there getting drunk, was that they completely disregarded their brothers and sisters. They dishonored them and did not consider them part of the fellowship. They mistreated one another and it says for this reason some of you are weak, sick and a number of you sleep, that's a euphemism for you're dead. God had killed some of them because of the way that they treated one another.

You see, sin is deadly because of its natural consequence and because God, at times, will bring death to those who walk in rebellion. That's the word of God. That's not my favorite concept but this passage is a warning to all of us. It warns us specifically in verse 6 not to crave evil things like the Israelites did. Not to crave evil things like the Israelites did, and it warns us against idolatry, immorality, and testing the Lord and grumbling. Today we'll focus on idolatry, but as we get into that, there is something that you need to know about yourself. There's something you need to know about yourself, it's this: 1. your heart is ruled by strong cravings. Your heart is ruled by strong cravings. We were created this way. We were created to strongly crave God and to love him, to submit to him, to be totally enraptured with his greatness and his glory. We were created for that.

So our heart is something that craves, something that worships, something that is devoted to something, and if you ever want to know what Satan's agenda is for your heart, just turn on the radio, turn on the tv, watch the movies, pay attention to what all of them are saying. It's like this constant drumbeat all the time. Listen to your heart. Love yourself. Be true to yourself. Follow your dreams. Don't let anyone deny your truth. All of your feelings are valid and others must accept you no matter what. Every talk show, every movie, every song, every sitcom, that is the drumbeat and the only people who should be rejected are the ones that don't accept that. That's you and me. We reject that.

Listen to your heart, they say. Well, let's go ahead and take their advice. Let's do a little spiritual stethoscope here and let's go ahead and listen to our hearts, okay? Go ahead and put your stethoscope on and let's see what's in your heart here. Genesis 6:5, "the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Are you listening to your heart? Look at that, that's crazy. Every intent. Okay, their purpose, the thoughts of his heart, these things were only evil continually. That's why he sent a flood and drowned the world. So our heart thinks, it intends, it doesn't just, it not only feels, not only emotes, it purposes, right?

Now where does this evil come from? In Mark 7:20, listen to this, Jesus said this, "That which proceeds out of the man, this is what defiles the man." It's what comes up out of him. It's not what you eat. It's not the people around you. It's not where you live. It's what comes up out of you. Verse 21, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

Do you know what this means, then? Who's at fault for your sin? Is it your parents? Is it your spouse? Is it your kids? Is it your culture? Is it your background? Is it your biology? Is it your chemical imbalances? Is that what produces anger? Coveting? Wickedness? Deceit? Is that why you lie? Is that why you are given to sensuality? Is that why you're addicted to pornography? Is that why you slander? Is it because of all these other things? No, it comes up out of your heart. It is your heart.

James 1:12 says this, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." Okay, just interesting. Now why did I read that? Well, because several of the same words are there that are in our passage. The one who perseveres under trial, that word for "trial" is the same word for "temptation." It's translated different ways depending on the context. Once he's been approved, you know that word, that means "tested; proven genuine," the same root word as where Paul says, "I don't want to be disqualified, proven to be a counterfeit." Here it says the one who perseveres under trial is proven to be genuine, the same root word, and he will receive the crown of life to those who is promised, to which the Lord has promised, to those who love him.

Verse 13, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust." That word for "lust" is the same word for "cravings" that is used in our passage. To crave evil, to lust, it's a strong desire. You are led away by your own lust.

"Then," verse 15, "when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." Why is this so important? Because I've sat across from so many people that want to say that they cannot get over their addiction because of something that happened to them when they were a kid, because of some way that

someone treated them, because of their past. This Scripture is saying that it's your lust that leads you into sin. It is your heart.

That's why in Proverbs 4:23 we are to watch over our hearts with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Watch over those cravings. Watch over those plans, that thinking. Be careful about it.

And who alone knows the heart? It is God. As it says about David in 1 Samuel, that man looks on the outward appearance. We can't help it. That's all we can see is the outward appearance but God looks on the heart. God knows the thoughts. God knows the character. He knows what you think and believe, what you desire. God looks on all of those things.

So where should we go to get an accurate view of our heart? Where should we go if we want to understand what our heart is saying? Well, as Ted providentially read this morning, Hebrews 4:12 says that, "the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Do we trust in science to reveal the heart of man? People can't see each other's hearts. You can do a brain scan, "Oh, look, here's the brain activity." You don't know what that means.

You know, I mean, another side note, interestingly they did brain scans on, there was some big study out of UCLA, those that were bipolar and it showed that the way that their brains functioned was different. It was all kind of functioning in a strange way, right? All the people that suffered, that were diagnosed bipolar. So what did they do? Is there something wrong with the brain? Well, interestingly enough, they led them through behavioral, what was it called? Cognitive behavioral therapy which is essentially like biblical counseling without God, okay? It's renew what you think to change how you feel and how you act. And guess what? They did the brain scans a couple months later, normal. The brain did not make them sin. The brain did not control their behavior. Their thoughts did and their thoughts controlled their brain. We are not merely products of our biology, we are not merely physical beings, we are a body and soul united together.

So if you want an accurate interpretation of the heart, you need to turn to the only one that sees the heart and that's God, and he has revealed his mind to us and he has given us the way to discern that. It is the word of God that cuts down to be able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The problem, the question is: are you willing to accept what it says about you, both the diagnosis and the cure? Are you willing to accept it? Are you willing to believe God and follow him? That's the question. That is the question.

So your heart is ruled by strong cravings. Okay. These strong cravings, 2. these strong cravings carve idols. Do you understand what I'm saying? The strong cravings of your heart carve out idols for you to worship. Your idols have been, whatever it is that you



worship, is shaped by your desires. The idols of the ancient world, you think about this, what were they? What did they do? Did they just kind of exist? No, these idols had power over different aspects of human life. Like Aphrodite, the goddess of love and fertility. Different gods by the name of Baal, they had control over the rain and the wind so that it would come and rain and give them crops. There's the gods of war. What are these things? These are things that people want and they want divine sanction on their desires. They want a god to give them what they desire. This is why false teachers when you look in, man, I can't remember what passage it is, you can look it up later. But people follow false religions, why? Because they heap up false teachers in accordance with their desires. The same word for "lust," the same word for "cravings."

The object of your desire is not inherently evil but the fact that your desire rises to the level to where you are willing to disobey God or reinvent God to get what you want, that is an idol. In a literal sense, idolatry is the worship of an object or an image or a statute, but it's the worship of anything in the created world other than God, or it is a redefinition of the one true God. That is idolatry.

Now I want to show you this. We're gonna read from Exodus 19 because this is where our passage in 1 Corinthians 10, "Do not commit idolatry like they did," this is the passage that it's referring to. So go ahead and turn to Exodus 19. I'm gonna do a fair bit of reading here because this will illustrate the point.

Exodus 19:1, "In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain." The same mountain where Moses first encountered God.

"Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'" These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.' So Moses came," he had been up on the mountain, so Moses, he came, he came back down, "and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do!' And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD." Okay, so you see Moses kind of going back and forth. Goes up to the mountain, comes down and brings a message from God, relays the message from the people back to God, right?

So verse 9, "The LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.'" Okay, so the Lord now wants to speak to Moses in the hearing of the congregation. He wants everyone in the congregation to hear what he's about to say so he says, "Go and

consecrate the people today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments," verse 11, "and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.'" Sounds like a big deal, right? "No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, he shall not live." Okay, this isn't the time where God comes down in a still small voice, right? He's coming down and it's intense.

No hand shall touch him. Okay, verse 13, "No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.' So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. He said to the people, 'Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.' So it came about," and I won't comment on that, "So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled." Okay, you guys heard that thunder and lightning last night and the wind and all the rumblings, okay, imagine all of that concentrated very obviously in a supernatural way, come down on this mountain. It's not a huge mountain, it's like a Georgia mountain. It would be like going down to Stone Mountain, okay? And this thick cloud and thunder just descending upon it and then shaking and you're just terrified, right? That's what's going on here.

Verse 17, "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently." Just imagine this. "When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, 'Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, or else the LORD will break out against them.' Moses said to the LORD, 'The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us, saying, "Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it.'" Then the LORD said to him, 'Go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, or He will break forth upon them.' So Moses went down to the people and told them."

Okay, "Then God," verse 1, "spoke all these words." Okay, who is he speaking to? Is it just to Moses? No, it's to the entire congregation. Moses has come down and he gives them here the 10 Commandments. I've always kind of had this picture in my mind that Moses went up, got the 10 Commandments and brought it down. No, God delivered the 10 Commandments to the entire congregation at once and he says this, this is what he says to them, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out

of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me." that's his first command. No other gods. Verse 4, "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." Remember what Jesus says, "If you love Me, you will," what? "Keep My commandments." Verse 7, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Okay, and he goes on and gives the rest of the 10 Commandments.

Then he says this in verse 20, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you... So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was." Okay, so the Israelites had believed in God and Moses, they heard the prohibitions against carved images directly from God himself, they committed to obeying God. Okay, so Moses goes back up to the mountain, okay? God had delivered that to them and then Moses goes back up to the mountain to receive the rest of the law from God and he's up there for 40 days.

Jump down to chapter 32. The in-between time there is all the rest of the law that God was giving to Moses. Chapter 32, verse 1, "Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'" I'm sorry, excuse me, what? Was there anything more emphatic in what God said other than, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make an image. You shall not serve that." But give them six weeks and they start getting impatient with God's plan. They hadn't heard from him. It's only six weeks.

"Come, make us a god who will go before us." So then Aaron the priest said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." He's like, "Okay, sure, let's do it."

"Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf." Okay? So they gave him the gold, he fashioned it probably carved out of wood or something in the shape of a bull or a calf, and then overlaid it with gold. And I'm sure it was beautiful, that it was probably very similar to some of the idols that they had seen in Egypt, and you can imagine, you shine the spotlights on it and you've got the fires going on around it and it's like, "Man, this is gorgeous!"

Then he says, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." He didn't create a different god, he fashioned this god into a shape that they liked and then called it Yahweh, called it the Lord, said, "This, the One that brought you up out of Egypt, here He is." Because look at what he says in verse 5, "Now when Aaron saw this,

he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD.' So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings." So they're saying, "This is the Lord. This is the One that brought us out of Egypt. This is the One that did all those miracles. Here He is. Isn't He pretty? Now let's do a feast like we would normally do, like God commanded us to do. A feast to Him. Alright, we're gonna do the feast and then we're gonna offer burnt offerings." Do you know what burnt offerings are for? To make atonement for sin. So they make these offerings to this golden calf that they named Yahweh and made offerings to it to forgive their sins, and then peace offerings which is basically a celebration of their unity and their relationship to the god.

So they get antsy, they say, "Make us a god." Aaron's like, "Okay, and here it is." And then they're like, "Alright, here He is. Let's have a feast. Let's do burnt offerings. Let's do peace offerings," and then, "the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." To play. That could just, it just means revelry. It means having a good time, music and dancing and drinking and yelling and singing. It was a loud party. Often there would be debauchery or immorality going on during the different celebrations before idols. Did they do that? It doesn't say that here. We're not sure about that. It could just be that they were rejoicing loudly.

Isn't that interesting? Moses was up on the mountain with God receiving the law and here the people are doing exactly what they were commanded not to do by God himself through peals of thunder and through lightning and the shaking of the earth. "Don't do this." Six weeks later, they're doing this and they're not doing it in secret, they're doing it loudly, boldly, confidently, together. Those who are engaged in the false worship even of our Jesus do so with full confidence and boldness. Boldness and confidence does not equal correct. It doesn't make someone right. Just because you're confident of what you're doing does not mean you're right. Just because you think you're safe does not mean you are. And here they are doing this stuff so loudly that Moses hears it on the mountain.

So listen to this, verse 7, so "the LORD spoke to Moses, 'Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!"'"" Spiritual adultery is what you're talking about here. The Lord himself who loves his people, who is controlling all things for their good, who did these wonders against the Egyptians in order to set them free, to bring them to himself so that he could dwell with his people, they are down there reveling in idolatry and disobedience loudly and proudly. They were unfaithful to their Lord.

"The LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.'" How do you think God takes this? Verse 10, "'Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.'" I'm still gonna keep my covenant with Abraham, but I'm gonna do it through

you, Moses. Well, good thing for them Moses interceded and the Lord relented and did not destroy all of them.

So they were engaging in this boisterous and loud celebration, they were doing it confidently, and the Lord went down later, Moses went down and many of them were destroyed. I wish I could illustrate for you all of the ways that the Lord dealt with idolatry among his people, but it was violent because it's true wickedness. We don't seem to grasp that.

Now it's easy to look at them and say, "What are you doing, Israel? Why are you doing this? Why are you doing what God said exactly not to do? Why are you disobeying the Lord after all that He's done for you? After all that you've seen? After He set you free from bondage and gave you a promised land and just said, 'Follow Me and obey Me'?" Does that not sound like you?

You see, the craving of their heart, you see, they knew better than to say that there was any other god other than Yahweh. They knew better. They knew better than to worship an idol by a false name, and so instead of, you know, grabbing one of the Egyptian gods, "Alright, Horus. Horus is the one that saved us." No, no, they according to their cravings and desires crafted God in the shape of an image that pleased them and they named it Yahweh. They crafted it in the shape that would please them and would justify their own desires and cravings. We do the same thing, it's called modern evangelicalism, a god who just accepts me no matter what I do; a god who is okay with everything that I do; a god that could never be angry; a god that could never judge anyone; a god who would never send anyone to hell. Let's call him Jesus. A god that lets me live in immorality, idolatry, that lets, that is okay with my constant complaining, griping, grumbling, and divisiveness. A god that's okay with me, accepts me, lets me be myself and let's call him Jesus.

Do you remember when Saul, King Saul, was tasked by God to wipe out the Amalekites? Do you remember that, you guys? Remember that story in 1 Samuel, I think 16? And Samuel or Saul destroyed most of the Amalekites but he spared all the best bulls and all the best of the livestock and some of the spoils and he spared the king of the Amalekites when God had commanded him to wipe it all out very specifically. So Samuel the prophet, rose early in the morning to meet Saul and he came up and saw him and here's Saul building a monument for himself and when Samuel showed up, Saul goes very confidently, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord!" Very proud of himself. Samuel's like, "What is this bleating of the sheep that I hear in my ears and the lowing of oxen which I hear? You know, those things that were, last I checked, dead oxen don't low, dead sheep don't bleat. They were supposed to have been killed?" Saul says, "Well, they have brought them up from the Amalekites for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but the rest we've utterly destroyed." Samuel said to Saul, "Wait and let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night. Hey, Saul, you're not the one that defines right and wrong. You're not the one who defines what godliness is. You're not the one that defines what's okay and what's not. Let me tell you what the Lord said to me." Saul said, "Speak." Verse 17, Samuel

said, "Is it not true that though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel and the Lord anointed you king over Israel and the Lord sent you on a mission and said go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated? Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord?" Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the Lord and went on a mission on which the Lord sent me and have brought back Agag the king of the Amalekites and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, and the choicest of the things devoted to destruction to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal."

"Oh, this is all worship to God. Oh, I see. Oh, okay, Saul. Well, God said to do this but you know what? You had a better idea for how to worship God." Samuel says, "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to heed than the fat of rams," which was part of the sacrifices, "for rebellion is as the sin of divination and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king." Disobedience equals idolatry. Why? Because you are ruled by your desires and cravings. Those cravings carve idols and you name those idols Jesus because they justify your desires and then God comes along and says obedience is better than sacrifice. You must, you must follow me. You must obey the word of God. You must believe how he has revealed himself. And I wish, if you were to read the Old Testament, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, all of the prophets, they are all railing against their wickedness and their idolatry of the Israelites and it's for that reason they were sent into slavery or sent into captivity.

So these idols are used to justify sinful actions and we will talk more about this next week, but immorality and idolatry go hand-in-hand. Every false teacher that you've ever heard of is finding a way to justify immorality. Quarrels and conflicts are among you, James says, because you lust and do not have and you commit murder. There's that same word, lust, desire, craving. The source of these conflicts is the pleasures that wage war in your members. You have not because you ask not. You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, to spend it on your pleasures. You want God to justify your desires and your motives and to give you what you want and so you try to manipulate him and others to do that. Verse 4 says, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility towards God?"

So what is the only reasonable response to idolatry? In our passage, 1 Corinthians 10:14, "Flee." Flee idolatry. Repent of the cravings of your heart that shape God into an image that justifies those desires. And do you know what's amazing? Do you know that wrath and fury? I didn't give you, I gave you a fraction of the zealous fury that God displays against idolatry in the Old Testament and in the New. In Isaiah it talks about how those who cling to their idols will want to crawl into caves and hide under the rocks of the ground to hide themselves from the terror of the Lord on his day of judgment. The same thing is repeated by Jesus and in Revelation because in Romans 1, the chief sin was the rejection of the glory of God and exchanging that glory for something created, and it's because of that that the wrath of God is coming and do you know what? That fearsome

wrath is what Jesus Christ himself, the only true image of the invisible God, he bore all of that wrath though he deserved none of it. He took enough of that wrath to save you from it so that by faith in him, if you flee to him, you will avoid that wrath. And, and he set you free not only from the punishment but from the power which is why he can say that no temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man. And God is faithful. He will not allow you, he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, that along with the temptation, he will provide the way of escape so that you will be able to bear up under it. And all true believers want that escape. What an amazing thing that rather than judgment and wrath for those who believe, he is giving you the opportunity. His mercy means so much more in light of the wickedness of our sin.

Let's pray.

*Father, we desperately want You, we want to see You correctly, we want to worship You as You've said, we want to obey You, we want to walk with You, we want to be right with You, Lord, and we don't want to dishonor You. We don't want to exchange Your glory for something created. We don't want to craft You after an image according to our own liking but we want to worship the only true image of God and that's Jesus Christ. So Lord Jesus, we exalt You because You are worthy. You are the only God. You are the only Creator. You uphold all things by the word of Your power and You became a man and You resisted every single one of these temptations so that You could become that merciful High Priest. So while there is time, I pray that we would run to You for help in time of need. May we see our idolatry as the wickedness for which it is but, Lord, You have not left us to wallow in self-pity but You have shown us the ark in which we can find safety, the refuge. So Father, I pray that anyone here who has not yet repented, turned from their idols to the living God, I pray that You would motivate them to stop at nothing until they have found safety in Christ. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*