

1 Corinthians 10:1-12

“Learn The Lesson”

The best way to learn? Some would say, “Experience.” I would agree. However, does it always have to be *your* experience that you learn from? – I would say, no. Perhaps you’ve heard the phrase, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” – The idea being that the experience of others in the past should serve to save us some heartaches or repeating the same mistakes in the present...

In our current context, Paul has been establishing the place of liberty, the priority of love, my “right” to do versus the *right* thing to do. I may have the right to do something, but that doesn’t make it the right thing to do... Therefore, I’m to let *love* take priority over my *liberty*. Why? For the sake of the gospel, that we might maintain an effective witness. Jesus said, “*You are the light of the world...*”¹ He said, “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*”² So, even if something isn’t sin, but it slows me down, it “overshadows” my ability to show Jesus clearly, to “shine” brightly, then why insist on pursuing it or partaking of it anyway?

I’m not saying it’s always the *easy* thing to do, or the most pleasurable avenue. But we’re to adopt that “athletic attitude” toward the eternal end goal. That’s the concept we were considering as our time came to a close last week. An athlete may *want* to eat junk food, may *desire* to sleep till noon, there’s even the *right* to do so should they so choose. But they learn to say “no” to the desires/cravings of their body because there’s a greater end goal they’ve fixated their sights on.

& Paul’s point in bringing that up was this: if they’ll do all that for a temporary reward... How much more should we (you & me) be willing to say “no” to the cravings & desires of our body (that is, exercise self-control) if it will serve to make us a more effective witness & a greater eternal reward? We can abuse our freedoms such to the extent that our witness, our ability to share Christ w/others is rendered virtually non-existent. *Then what happens is that all that I’ve done in serving so faithfully & sacrificially, that Christ might be glorified eternally is essentially lost... That’s what Paul was talking about when he wrote in the last Vs of the 9th Ch (read).*

Just because I may be blessed currently, & a real blessing to others spiritually, doesn’t mean that my reward can’t be lost ultimately. That I can’t become “disqualified” by insisting on indulgence.

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 5:14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 5:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

If I lose sight of eternity, & live to soak up all that this world has to offer presently, it can destroy me spiritually... Just look (Paul says) at Israel's history & you'll see how a people can be blessed of God tremendously & not experience immunity from disqualification.

In Ch 9 we were shown a good example of rightly handling liberty. Here in Ch 10 we have the bad example in Israel's history... Set free from bondage by the power of God. Led out of Egypt *miraculously*, blessed *immeasurably* but disqualified tragically from entering the Promised Land because they wouldn't walk by faith or say "no" to the cravings of their bodies.

Vs 1-5

What does Paul mean when he says, "Moreover,"? He means that he wants to talk w/us more... *over* the topic at hand. — Which for them was the liberty to eat meat sacrificed to idols versus walking in love toward the weaker or less informed believers among them. Was it ok to eat meat sacrificed to an idol? The answer is, "Yes" & "No".

In Ch 8 he established the fact that an idol is really nothing. So it's fine for the Christian who recognizes this to act according to that knowledge in regard to themselves. But not everyone shares that knowledge. Therefore *love* is more important than *knowledge* leading to *liberty*... Meaning, even though I know eating meat sacrificed to an idol is alright for *me* to do, if it causes my brother to stumble, I simply won't do it because it's not the loving thing to do... it's not the considerate thing to do. It's the inconsiderate, self-serving thing to do.

Then in Ch 9. Paul gave us the example of why it's important for a Christian to be willing to give up their "rights" just as he himself gave up his right to receive financial compensation from them. & At the end of the day we do what we do (in regard to sacrifice & service) for the sake of the gospel out of love for those around us... It's our heart to be a "steppingstone" lifting others up, building others up... rather than be a "stumbling block" that trips people up & causes them to fall... We want to be effective in this life that God has called us to live before Him, in the sight of others.

& The point that he's ultimately aiming at is this. – Being privileged spiritually doesn't grant immunity from moral responsibility. Just because God has delivered you doesn't mean that now you can just do whatever you want to do! But it's a weird kind of philosophy that people will sort of silently ascribe to. That because they believe in Jesus, they've been baptized, they take communion... now they're in, so they can just do whatever they want! But Paul is going illustrate how dangerous that mentality can be.

He says, “Don’t forget that all of our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea & all were baptized into Moses in the cloud & in the sea.” The Corinthians were blessed spiritually in what would seem to be an above & beyond measure kind of way. But Paul says, “Look at how blessed Israel was in their Exodus from Egypt! **They had it ‘made in the shade’ literally!**” This pillar of cloud that went before them, provided shade & sheltered them, a pillar of fire by night that protected them... It was that constant ready reminder that God was always w/them. That His presence & His glory was right there in the midst *of* them & leading them in the way they should go.

& It makes for us a great illustration of the Spirit led life... Your journey w/Jesus isn’t to be burdensome in the sense that you’re always w/out a clue, always wondering where to go or what to do... Jesus said, **“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**³ In Ezek 44 you discover that the Lord said that when the priests entered into His gates, whenever they were drawing near to Him that they might serve Him, they were to wear linen & not wool or anything that caused sweat. **The point being that serving the Lord, ministering to the Lord isn’t about striving & sweating it out. Ministering to Jesus doesn’t wear you out, it refreshes you... So many people sweat over, “What’s the will of God, where should I go, what should I do...” They’re striving & struggling. – Listen, stay under the Headship *of* Jesus, in communion *with* Jesus. It’s not about perspiration, it’s about inspiration, moving in stride, in step w/our Head (J.C.), the One who’s covering us (like that cloud), going before us.**

But all of Israel enjoyed this spiritual blessing (being led *of* the Lord, protected *by* the Lord). *All* passed through the sea. & In coming *under* the cloud & *through* the sea, they were all “baptized” into Moses. That is, they were now *identified* w/Moses. That’s what the ritual of baptism is, right? For you & me, we *identify* w/the death/burial & resurrection of J.C. & what He did for us in solving the sin dilemma upon the cross. *He* is our Head, we are His body. He is our Leader, our Savior, our all in all.

Moses (in the Exodus) becomes a “type” or a picture of Christ. The people weren’t saved by any work of their own... It was Moses who fought for them, who stood in the gap on their behalf, who led them out of bondage. It wasn’t their faith through which they crossed the red sea! They were panicking, freaking out, complaining that Moses had brought them out there to die! They wanted to go back to Egypt!

³ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Mt 11:29–30). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It was *Moses* who went down to the water & smote the Sea w/his staff as God commanded, it was Moses who acted in faith on their behalf & who led them across on dry land & when they got to the other side... They sang (Ex 15) the song of Moses! They were baptized into (or now identified *with*) Moses. He was their leader, their savior, their deliverer... A foreshadow of what would be ultimately fulfilled in Christ. Not just for Israel but for all mankind who is in bondage, not to Egypt but to sin & death. Jesus becomes *our* Savior, *our* Deliverer, *our* Leader our *greater than Moses* whom we identify w/in baptism.

But Israel was blessed tremendously... they all ate the same spiritual food, drank the same spiritual drink. – Of course this doesn't mean that the food/drink wasn't physical, but rather it was provided for them supernaturally. Manna from heaven, the bread of heaven coming down to save/sustain them. Again, a foreshadow fulfilled in Christ...

After Jesus had fed the 5,000 w/5 loaves & 2 fish, the next day (having crossed over the Sea of Galilee that same night) the people were there on the shores looking for Him again. But He revealed the true nature of their hearts. He said, "Look, you're not seeking Me because of the signs (meaning because you think I'm Messiah) but because you ate & your stomachs were filled..." & He told them not to labor for the food which perishes but for the food (that He would give them) which endures to eternal life... They were like, "What sign will You perform that we might believe You? Our father's ate Manna in the desert, bread from heaven..." & Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' Then they said to Him, 'Lord, give us this bread always.' And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'"*⁴

Not only was bread provided for Israel super-naturally, but water as well... They all drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, & that Rock was Christ. Again, it wasn't a physical rock that rolled around in the desert... Paul says, "Spiritually speaking, it was spiritual." The point is that it was the Lord who provided salvation for them, refreshed them, gave the water of life to them. What was it that Jesus said in Jn Ch 7 on that last day, that great day of the feast? He stood & cried out saying, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*⁵ If the waters of the "wells" of this life aren't doing it for ya...

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 6:32-35). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 7:37-38). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

You've drank of the dead waters of drug abuse, alcoholism, sexual conquest, money, power, platform & influence... whatever it may be. & You're still thirsting for more... Jesus says, "Come to *Me* & drink... & you'll never thirst again... out of *your heart* will flow torrents... rivers of *living* water."

All these things that the Lord had done for the Corinthian Christians, He'd done for Israel in the Exodus. Deliverance, bread from heaven, living water... blessing after privilege after blessing. – Look at Vs 5.

Vs 5

"But w/most of them God was not well pleased..." This is one of the great understatement of the Bible. Listen; millions, 2-3 million people was delivered out of Egypt. & Of those delivered who were 20 yrs of age & over when they 1st surveyed the Promised Land... out of all those millions. How many obtained the reward? 2... So, it's fair to say that with "most of them" God was not well pleased... 😊

You would think that with all the blessings, all the privileges, all the provision & protection, that it would invoke such gratitude that they'd have done everything they could've to be *more* pleasing to God... But such *was not* & so often *is not* the case...

There they were on the edge of the Promised Land, 12 spies went in & surveyed the land. They came back w/a giant basketball sized cluster of grapes & said the land is truly amazing... One problem, there are giants in there. We're like grasshoppers in their sight! 10 of the men were spreading F.U.D. (Fear, uncertainty & doubt), 2 of them (Joshua & Caleb) said, these people will be our bread! We'll overcome, God will do as He said He would do! But the people were persuaded to follow the report of the 10... not the 2. (How many of you realize that the majority isn't always right?)

So God said, "That's it. This entire generation who refused to trust Me & succumbed to fear rather than walk in faith will die in the wilderness & your children will inherit the land." & The longest death march in human history (40 yrs) is what followed... Their bodies were scattered in the wilderness... In the end not even Aaron or Moses made it in; they were disciplined & disqualified. All these blessings didn't ensure the reward. They forfeited it through unbelief & insistence on liberties rather than recognizing the moral responsibility in honoring God... Isn't interesting how we've somehow allowed ourselves to believe & perceive God as being there only to meet our needs, rather than seeing Him as the One to whom we surrender unconditionally?

Vs 6-10

Why were these experiences recorded? As examples that *we* might learn by rather than repeat the problem. Their experience becomes an illustration for us to make practical application of the need for personal holiness, consideration *for* one another, laying aside liberty & walking in love *toward* one another.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking, "We're under the new covenant, we don't really need the O.T." No, No, a 1,000 times No! "Man shall not live by bread alone but by *every word* that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Deut 8:3, Matt/Luke 4:4).

The people began to lust after, to crave meat. God was supplying manna, they weren't content w/that (be careful complaining about your station in life, we need to learn contentment w/God's provisions for us, not comparing ourselves amongst ourselves. If you can better your station, great, but don't get tunnel vision, lusting for more), they wanted meat. (Remember this whole discussion is over eating meat offered to idols). Long story short, God gave them what they wanted, Quail, they were literally batting the birds out of the air (that's how thick they came) The one who got the least we read got 10 homers! But they were so lustful in their desire for it that as they started tearing into it, while it was still between their teeth God struck them w/a plague... & They named the cemetery where the people were buried, "Kibroth Hattaavah" ("Graves of Craving"; Num. 11:34). Think about that...

Anything wrong w/eating quail? No, but when it becomes an insatiable lust of the flesh that I refuse to place in check... it becomes evil to me. It rules me, I bow to it, I have to have it. It's that intense, unbridled craving... lust.

It started by being unsatisfied w/how/what the Lord was providing... As they were with meat, one might be with money. Money, in itself isn't evil, it's not the root of all kinds of evil, it can be a tremendous force for good! But the *love of* money, (the lust *for* money) that insatiable desire, the insistence of pursuing it at all costs becomes evil... Beware of lust. Always wanting *something* or *someone* else. Lust is like a fire, the more you feed it, the more it demands...

He speaks of "idolatry". Specifically, Ex 32, the golden calf incident. The people were all, "Hey, our pastor has been gone along time... what's he doing up on that Mt anyway?" So they spoke to the assistant pastor. "You be our leader, make us gods to go before us!" So that's what Aaron did, crafted a golden calf & the people ate & drank, started partying & having sex w/each other... they lost sight of the Lord & gave way to placing other passions before Him.

We can't worship God however we feel like it, the right God must be worshiped in the right way, the way He prescribes in His word. You start worshiping *what* you want, (Mary, "Saints", angels or whatever) in the *way* you want, in the name of God... that's idolatry.

He speaks of "sexual immorality". (Which as we've discovered was a real problem w/the people in Corinth, just like it is w/the people in America). This is a reference to Num 22-25. Essentially a prophet by the name Balaam shared w/king Balak how to invoke a curse upon the nation of Israel by introducing them to their gods. Sending the young women into their camp & teaching them how they worship their gods through ritual sexual immorality. & They enticed the men of Israel & again God sent a plague that wiped out 23,000 in one day (24,000 in total).

"Testing Christ". Seeing how much we can sin & still get away w/it. Will God really do anything about it... He mentions the serpents that God sent among the camp to destroy the people because of their complaining. They were griping at Moses for bringing them out of Egypt only to die in the wilderness (btw, God doesn't appreciate our constant complaining) He sent serpents to bite the people, the bites burned & the people were dying. Moses interceded, God said, "Fashion a serpent of bronze & set it on a pole & it shall be that when anyone looks upon that serpent they shall live & not die."

Now, Jesus drew on this example in Jn. 3 when He was speaking to Nicodemus. & He said, *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."* ⁶ He was saying, "Nicodemus, mankind has been bitten by the fiery serpent of sin, & they're all dying. But God will judge their sin upon the cross that I'm to be lifted up on (just like that serpent), & if people will look to *Me*, if they'll trust in *Me*, they'll not perish but have *everlasting* life... You see? In the *volume* of the Book it is written of Christ. – Those things were foreshadows, the fulfillment is in Christ.

He brings up complaining in Vs 10. & Time would forbid us to touch on all the areas of scripture in which Israel complained in their wilderness wanderings. – But it brought destruction, disqualification. It's been said that murmuring & complaining is the language of hell, praise & thanksgiving is the language of heaven... If it happened to Israel, it can happen to you & to me... That's Paul's point. Notice.

Vs 11

What's the takeaway? "Learn the lesson." These things were written, *not* so we could sit around in our climate controlled buildings & asserting how stupid *they* were so as to feel so much better about ourselves! But so that we won't do the same stupid stuff in a different day & age... Their lessons were for our learning. How much worse is it when we fall into the same traps having their example to warn us otherwise?

Vs 12

Don't fall into the pitfall of pride thinking that because you've been baptized, you've been blessed of God, you've experienced supernatural provision, protection & privilege so you have nothing to worry about... Knowledge puffs up, can result in over confidence.

Resist the temptation to be self-focused, always indulgent, let's learn to say "No" to that man in the mirror. Let's not look at these illustrations & think, "Man, I can't believe what *they* did. How *they* acted." But let's receive the *application* & take inventory of our own lives, humble ourselves in the sight of God, learning to crucify the flesh & walk in the Spirit. That others might see Him & be drawn *to* Him through our lives...

Prayer Points:

Father we thank You for the instruction of Your word. May we take it to heart that You might change our hearts. We want to trust You more, walk by faith, be content w/such things as You've provided. & We want to honor You practically, edify others spiritually... pour Your Spirit out upon us & be glorified in us.

If you've not looked upon the Lord, trusted *in* the Lord that you might be saved, I'm going to invite you to do that today. We've all sinned & fall short of the glory of God. The question is have you believed upon J.C. for the forgiveness of sin? He's the One who was lifted up on the cross, so that by believing on Him you'll never perish but have everlasting life.