

(1 Corinthians) ch.9:24-10:13

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the importance of self-denial, discipline, and faithfulness in the Christian journey, using Paul's teachings and the Israelites' experiences as key illustrations.

Duration: 43:59

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 10:1-23

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not allowing anyone to silence us because of a salary or any other reason. He encourages believers to adapt themselves to others in order to win them over to the gospel. The ultimate goal should be to proclaim the gospel and work for the Lord, finding satisfaction in seeing souls converted and the church being built. The speaker also highlights the need for self-control and discipline, comparing it to the rigorous training of an athlete. He warns against falling into temptation and encourages believers to rely on God's grace and power to overcome trials. The sermon concludes with a reminder that even those who think they are standing securely should be careful not to be disqualified or lost.

Transcript

Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians and chapter 9 and verse 24. In the previous verses we have been considering how Paul gave up his rights as an apostle. Remember, he began this chapter by seeking to defend the fact that he was a true apostle of the Lord.

And it's very interesting how he goes about to establish that point and that fact by, not by the means that we would normally employ, recounting the miracles that were done through his hand, but rather by his way of life, his self-denial. His self-denial was the proof that he was an apostle. And he goes on further in verse 24 on the same theme of self-denial, of giving up his rights.

He's spoken about giving up his right to eat and drink in verse 4, to have his meals at the expense of other Christians. He'd given up his right to marriage, verse 5. He'd given up the right to be supported by others, verse 6, down to verse 18. And he had even given up the right to please himself, verses 19 to 23.

He was willing to deny himself the pleasure of pleasing oneself by being willing to adapt himself to the circumstances in which he found himself in the midst of different types of people in order that he might win them. Thus he became a servant to them. When it says in verse 19 that he made himself a servant of

others, the way he made himself a servant of others was by becoming to them what they were so that he might win them.

Now in the last few verses he speaks about his self-control concerning his own bodily passions. And this is a very important thing for anyone who would be a true servant of God. But in fact the whole of 1 Corinthians chapter 9 is a tremendous passage for those who seek to serve the Lord.

It teaches us what self-denial means. It teaches us the right attitude towards money. It teaches us that even though we have certain rights, we are not to claim them if we are God's servants.

It teaches us that we cannot serve others until we are first free from them. That we cannot allow anybody to tie our mouths because he pays us a salary. That we must be willing to become weak to those who are weak and adapt ourselves as far as possible externally to other people in order to win them.

That our ultimate goal everywhere must be to win people, verse 19. That everything in our life must be directed towards the proclamation of the gospel and the work of the Lord, as we see in verse 23. So that we can become fellow partakers of the gospel.

That is, the benefits that come through the gospel, souls being converted, we ourselves find our satisfaction in that. We are shareholders in the gospel and the dividend we get from our shares is souls coming to Christ and the church being built. And that is what we are looking for, not money, not position, not honor, not respect in Christian circles, but people being one.

This is how we are fellow partakers or shareholders in the gospel. And that is the only right attitude by which anyone can proclaim the gospel. And he goes on to say, you don't have to do all these things in order to just be a Christian.

But if you want to win the prize, then you have to be wholehearted in giving up even your rights. He says, don't you know, verse 24, that those who run in a race all run to be sure. All the runners can compete, but only one receives the prize.

What he's saying is, it's very easy to compete in a race. Anybody can do that, even a slow runner who is indisciplined can compete in a race. But it's quite another thing to win in the race.

And he says, you must run, verse 24, in such a way as to win. Your mind must be fixed on winning the prize when you run. Now that is not the attitude of many Christians, unfortunately.

Many Christians have the attitude that if I get to heaven, somehow or the other, I'm all right. Let me enjoy myself here on this earth as much as possible, so long as I believe in Jesus Christ and I get to heaven. Now Paul was more than a million miles away from such an attitude towards the Christian life.

His attitude was exactly the opposite of all that. He was not just thinking of competing. He was not just thinking of getting a last seat in heaven, scraping there by the skin of his teeth somehow or the other.

He was not thinking in terms of going to heaven at all. He was thinking in terms of fulfilling God's will here on this earth in the one lifetime that God gave him. Is that your aim? Is your only aim in life to go to heaven when you die? Or is it that in the years that God gives you here on earth, you might use every bit of your energy, time, life, money, home, family, everything for the sake of the gospel? That's what he says in verse 23.

Everything for the sake of the gospel. That should be our motto. The motto of a spiritual Christian is what is described in verse 23.

All things for the sake of the gospel. Let's repeat that to ourselves. Everything for the sake of the gospel.

Everything for the sake of the gospel. That was Paul's attitude. And therefore he ran, not just to compete, but to win.

And he says, how can you run in such a way to win? You have to have self-control, verse 25. Everyone who competes in games exercises self-control in all things. He exercises rigid self-control.

He trains himself by being temperate in all things. An athlete who is out to win the 100 meters race in the Olympic Games disciplines himself in his eating, exercises himself regularly day after day after day after day, and finally wins that Olympic gold medal. And he says these people do it to receive a perishable reek.

There was a reek crown given those days to the winners of races. But he says we are in a race to win a crown that is imperishable. An incorruptible crown that will remain as part of our glory for all eternity.

Not just some empty physical crown put on our heads. This imperishable crown is a certain quality of character, a certain glory of God that will be our permanent possession for all eternity. That's going to be our reward.

And he says just think, if people can discipline their bodies so much and deny themselves so much in order to win just a gold medal in an Olympic Games, how much more? We should be willing to deny ourselves when we are going to get something far greater than the greatest gold medal that any Olympic winner ever won. He says as far as I'm concerned, verse 26, I realize this. Some of you Corinthians are so carnal babies you don't realize this.

But I've realized it. He says therefore, as far as I'm concerned, I run in such a way with a clear goal ahead of me. Not uncertainly without aim.

I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. There is a goal I have. The goal is to become more like Jesus Christ day by day and to become completely like him finally.

The goal is to fulfill every part of God's will for my earthly life. And he says I'm running for that. I'm disciplining myself.

He says I'm fighting to win. I'm not just shadow boxing or playing around with imaginary people in front of me. I'm really fighting evil spirits.

He says I'm not shadow boxing. I really fight. I'm fighting evil spirits who are seeking to get control over my body through the lusts and passions that there are in my flesh.

And so what do I do? I buffet my body. I keep on beating and bruising my body and making it my slave. How did he beat his body? He didn't take a whip and whip himself like some people used to do in the Middle Ages in the monasteries.

No, that's not how he beat his body. He put to death the lusts that sought to corrupt his body. It's not by physical affliction that we keep our body under control.

That is a heathen concept. No, it is through the power of the spirit, Romans 8, 13, we put to death the deeds of the body. And thus the lusts of the body do not have any power over us.

In other words, he put to death the lusts in his flesh every day all the time. That is how he disciplined himself. There were many lusts he would like to indulge in, which would give pleasure to his body, but he would not indulge in them because he wanted to win the race.

He wanted to win that final prize, that glory. He did not consider anything as important except that goal of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. Otherwise, he says, even though I have preached wonderful messages to other people, ultimately, I myself can be disqualified.

I can fail shamefully of that prize which God has for me. Do you realize that if the Apostle Paul himself could be disqualified, how much more there is a possibility of you and I being disqualified when we finally reach the finishing line, having no reward for us, maybe scraping through to the last seat in heaven, but no reward, no glory, because we would not discipline ourselves here on earth. If we do not discipline our bodies, we cannot be true servants of God, and we will have no reward in that final day when we stand before the Lord.

Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 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. He is speaking here about the Israelites who left Egypt. The movement of the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan described in the books of Exodus through to Joshua, is a picture of God's will for us in moving out of the dominion of Satan and into the kingdom of his dear son.

And therefore he speaks about the Jewish fathers who were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. And they were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ. Now we know that everything written in the Old Testament was written for our instruction.

As he goes on to say in verse 11, these things happened to them as an example and they were written for our instruction. And all things that were written in the Old Testament were a shadow, as we read in Colossians 2. A shadow of the reality which is now fulfilled in Christ. This is why the Old Testament is very instructive.

Because Colossians 2.17 says, All that in the Old Testament was a shadow of what is to come, which is now fulfilled in Christ. We have the body now which cast the shadow in the Old Testament. And therefore, all this that is described in 1 Corinthians 10 verses 1-4 is symbolic of certain realities that are to be fulfilled in our life as believers today.

This passing under the cloud, this passing through the sea, eating the same spiritual food and drinking the same spiritual drink, all have their counterpart today in our spiritual experience, or should have in the life of every true believer. When we look back at those Jewish fathers who came out of Egypt, we see that the very first thing that God told them through Moses on the night in which they were redeemed from Egypt was that they were to put the blood of the Lamb, of the slain Lamb, outside the doorposts. And that Lamb is a symbol of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, even Jesus Christ our Lord, who died on Calvary's cross for our sins.

And the applying of the blood of the Lamb outside the door in Egypt was what protected the family from the angel of death. The mere fact that a Lamb was killed was not enough. The mere fact that Christ has died is not enough.

We have to apply His blood by faith to our own lives. Ask for the cleansing of our sins by personal faith in the blood of Christ. If you remember that Old Testament story described in Exodus chapter 12, we see that they had to collect the blood of that slain Lamb in a basin and still they were not protected until they had dipped that bunch of hyssop, which is a plant, into that blood and applied it on their doorposts.

And their hyssop is a picture of our faith. Our faith in the shed blood of Christ, in the death of Christ on the cross, brings forgiveness of sins. Not otherwise.

They had to dip that hyssop and apply it personally to their own doorposts. And each one of us has to apply that to the doorposts of our own hearts in order to be cleansed and in order to be protected from the judgment and the wrath of God. And thus they were redeemed in the Old Testament by the blood of the Lamb and we are also redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

But that was not all. There was something more that followed once they had done that. They were to come out of Egypt, and it says here in verse 2, they were all baptized into Moses.

The next thing that took place after they were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb was they had a double baptism. It says here in verse 2. They were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. And this again has symbolic meaning.

Let's think of the Red Sea first. They went into the Red Sea and came up on the other side. And that is a picture of water baptism that must follow being redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Water baptism has no meaning if we have not first been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Water baptism always must follow conversion, must follow a person personally applying the blood of Christ to his own life. Then he is to be baptized.

And that's what we see here in the Old Testament. They did not go through the Red Sea before they put the blood on the door, but after. And so must it be in our lives too.

And it is the very next thing that followed after they put the blood on the door. It is the very next thing that must follow in our life after our sins are forgiven that we go into the waters of baptism, pictured symbolically there in their going into the Red Sea and coming out. And so we see here that baptism is an immersion.

For the Greek word baptism means a dipping or an immersion. They were immersed, it says, in the sea. That is the literal translation of verse 2. And so we are immersed in the waters of baptism and we come out.

And they were baptized into Moses in the Old Testament. There was only one leader. They were not baptized into their local tribes of Judah or Levi or Reuben or Dan or Asher or Naphtali.

No, they were baptized into Moses, the one leader. And even so today we are baptized, not to a particular denomination, but into Christ. He is the only head.

We are baptized in water unto Christ. But that was not the only baptism they had there. It says in verse 2 of 1 Corinthians 10 that they had another baptism, and that was a baptism in the cloud, whereas the sea was something they went into and came out.

The cloud was something that came down from heaven and immersed them. They were enveloped by the cloud from heaven, and that cloud is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. As we read in Isaiah 63 that they were led out of the sea, Isaiah 63, 11, Who is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? Who is he who put his Holy Spirit in the midst of them, and who led them, verse 13, through the depths? The Spirit of the Lord gave them rest.

And so we see here that the one who led them was the Holy Spirit. And we know it was actually there as a cloud, a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and both were a picture of the Holy Spirit. And so 1 Corinthians 10, 2, when it says they were baptized in the cloud, it's very obviously a picture of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which comes down upon us from above.

And so we see that these two baptisms are beautifully symbolized here in verse 2, in the sea and in the cloud, in water and in the Holy Spirit. So we can say that those Jewish fathers had a three-fold experience when they began their journey. First, they were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Second, they were baptized in the Red Sea unto Moses. And third, they were baptized in the cloud that came down upon them from heaven. And this must have an exact correspondence in our spiritual experience today, that we are first redeemed, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, and cleansed from all sin, and then immersed in the waters of baptism unto Jesus Christ, and third, immersed, baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire, symbolized by the pillar of cloud and fire.

And in verse 1 it says, all the fathers went under the cloud and all passed through the sea. There was not one left out. Everyone who was redeemed by the blood of the Lamb went through the cloud and through the sea.

And so does God desire it among Christians today, that every single believer who has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ must be baptized in water, by immersion, and baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire. And then they all ate the same spiritual food. In the desert they received the manna day by day, and that is God's will for our continuing life, that every day we receive God's word.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, Jesus said in Matthew 4.4. And if we need bread every day, food every day, we need God's word every day. And every single person, all of them, were to eat it, and every believer needs this spiritual food of God's word every day. And they all drank the same spiritual drink, that is, the water that flowed from the rock.

And the picture of the ministry of the Holy Spirit flowing like rivers of living water. In other words, that initial baptism in the Holy Spirit is not enough. It must continue into a constant drinking.

If any man is thirsty, let him come to me, Jesus said, and drink and continue to drink. For then out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. Verse 4 says they all drank from a spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ.

There was a rock constantly giving water to them, smitten only once. Moses made the mistake of smiting the rock a second time, the second time God told him only to speak to it. Now Christ need not be smitten again.

We can drink from him the rivers of living water, and it can flow from our innermost being in blessing to others as well. Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 5. In our last study we were considering the first four verses of this chapter, and we saw how the Old Testament saints, the ones who came out of Egypt, had a threefold experience of being redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, being baptized in the Red Sea, symbolic of immersion water baptism, and were baptized in the cloud that came from above, symbolic of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. And they all ate the same spiritual food, symbolic of daily feeding on God's word, and drank the same spiritual drink, symbolic of constant drinking of the Holy Spirit and his life and his power in us.

And just like food and drink are constant necessities in our life, God's word and God's spirit are constant necessities in the life of any true Christian. Now even though these people had all these experiences, and it was only symbolic, they didn't have the reality, we know they didn't have any reality of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or reality of feeding on God's word, or reality of drinking of the Holy Spirit, but they had it all in symbol. And up to the light that they had, God had led them on.

But in spite of this, it says in verse 5, God was not pleased with the vast majority of them. With most of them, verse 5 means, with the great majority of them, God was not pleased. And the proof of this was that they were all laid low in the wilderness.

Their dead bones lay strewn about in the wilderness. As it says in one translation, the desert was strewn with their corpses. And how many corpses? The corpses of nearly 2 million people over a period of 40 years.

Why did God bring such a judgment on these people, who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, who were baptized in the sea unto Moses, who were baptized in the cloud, and who ate the manna and drank from the rock that was smitten? There was a reason. They were unbelieving. They were unfaithful.

And this is written, it says in verse 11, for our instruction. Now, it's always important when we study the scriptures to see the context in which a particular scripture is written. The context here is what we considered in an earlier study in chapter 9, verse 27.

That I can be a preacher to other people and be disqualified finally myself. I can proclaim about redemption by the blood of the Lamb. I can proclaim and even experience water baptism and baptism in the Holy Spirit.

I can read the word of God daily and experience the Holy Spirit's power. And yet, by unfaithfulness, 1 Corinthians 9.27, by not keeping my body under the control of the Holy Spirit, by not making my body do what it should do, not what it wants to do, by not making my body a slave of the Holy Spirit, I can be finally disqualified even though I had all these spiritual experiences. That is the point.

And we should never forget the point at which Paul is driving in all this. That the mere fact of our having gone through certain spiritual experiences in the beginning of our Christian life does not prove that we will qualify at the finishing line of the race. We can be disqualified.

The only thing, and it's very important for us to see this, that can enable us to qualify at the end of the finishing line is if we have disciplined our bodily lusts by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why the way we treat our body, whether we yield it to God or yield it to our own lusts, determines whether we will qualify at the finishing line. And how important it is for us to see this.

And this is why he says about the... he tells them about the Israelites in the Old Testament. 1 Corinthians 10.1 begins with the word for or because. I don't want you to be unaware.

That means it's connected to 1 Corinthians 9.27. He's saying, I want to warn you, dear friends, about all the Israelites who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, symbolically baptized in water, baptized in the Holy Spirit, symbolically receiving the food of God's word every day, and drinking the spiritual drink, etc. Yet, God was not pleased with them. How many out of those 600,000 men between the ages of 20 and 60 who came out of Egypt was God pleased with? He was pleased with only two of them.

That was Joshua and Caleb. Only Joshua and Caleb. None of the others.

So, when it says the vast majority, it is quite a huge majority. It's more than 99% of the people who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb God was not pleased with. And why has God given us such a severe warning in the New Testament? That it is possible even today, for these things, verse 11, are written as an example and written for our instruction, who are living in this New Testament age, that it is possible for us to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, to be baptized in water and baptized in the Holy Spirit, and yet for God not to be pleased with us.

That's the point. God may not be pleased with us, even though we have had all these experiences. Now, this doesn't mean that God forsook them in the sense of not giving them food.

No. During those 40 years in the wilderness, they received food to eat, water to drink, their clothes never wore out, their sandals never wore out. God did supernatural miracles for them, healed them of snakebites, and many, many supernatural miracles.

In fact, that crowd of 600,000 people saw some of the greatest miracles that any human being has ever seen on the face of this earth. The plagues in Egypt, the splitting of the Red Sea, many other miracles in the wilderness, daily manna falling from heaven. Think of all those miracles.

And even though they had answers to prayer, healing from their sickness, material blessings in plenty, yet God was not pleased with them. Verse 5 of 1 Corinthians 10. What does this teach us, dear friends? It teaches us that material blessing is no proof of God's blessing.

It's no proof that God is happy with us. It is God's blessing in a sense, but it's not God's greatest blessing. The greatest blessing that God can ever give to any Christian is to transform him into the likeness of Christ increasingly.

If that is not taking place in our lives, God may answer our prayers, heal our sicknesses, bless us materially, prosper us in every possible way, and yet He may not be happy with us. That is the warning for those who have years to hear from 1 Corinthians 10, verses 1 to 5. It's possible for 600,000 people to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, baptized in water and the Holy Spirit and fire, and yet only two of them may be pleasing to the Lord. All 600,000 may get answers to prayer and material blessings, but only two are pleasing to the Lord.

Why? Because the others are careless in their attitude to sin, and we find an exact parallel in a lot of Christendom today, where Christians who are baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit yet develop a careless attitude to sin in their personal life. That's what he goes on to speak about in verses 6 to 10. These things happened as examples for us, it says, so clear.

That's not just written there for us to read, but it's an example and a warning for us that we should not crave after evil things, that we should not be careless in our attitude to sin, as they also craved. First, we should not be idolaters. Before that, he puts it all under the general category of lust.

We should not crave after evil things. Verse 6 means that we should not keep on lusting. We should not allow our lusts to control us.

We should not yield our bodies as slaves to the lusts that dwell in our flesh. That is the paraphrase of verse 6. We should not lust after evil things. There are dirty lusts in our flesh, but we must put them to death in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7, we should not be idolaters. What is an idolater? An idolater is one who has something in his life other than God as the primary thing in his life. Anything that takes the place that God should have in our heart is an idol.

It can be money. The pursuit of money makes a man an idolater. It can be a job.

It can be some loved one. Some boyfriend, girlfriend, some child can be an idol. Some personal ambition in life can be an idol.

Don't be idolaters, it says. John writing to Christians says in 1 John 5.20, Little children, keep yourself from idols. What type of idols? Idols in the heart.

Even in the Old Testament, in Ezekiel chapter 14, the Lord spoke through the prophet Ezekiel about those who set up idols in their hearts. Ezekiel 14, verse 3. The idols in our heart are more dangerous than external idols. The people sat down to eat and drink.

Eating and drinking can be a form of idolatry. Where food becomes our God and they stood up to play, playing, dancing, pleasing ourselves can be a form of idolatry. And then he speaks about immorality, verse 8. Immorality, looseness in the sex area led many of them to fall.

23,000 fell in one day. Testing the Lord, verse 9. Tempting him by displeasing him, not keeping his commandments. Grumbling, verse 10.

These were some of the things that made God displeased with them. And these things are written for our instruction. So let's take heed to these things and be careful.

Not rely on past experience, but put to death the lusts in our flesh day by day. Let's turn now to 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 11. These things happened to them as an example and they were written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

We could take that verse and apply it to the entire Old Testament scriptures and also to what we read in the New Testament. That everything written there is for our instruction. And here of course he is referring particularly to the history of Israel who left Egypt and did not enter Canaan.

The 600,000 who perished in the wilderness are the ones he is referring to. And he says these things are a warning to us because it is possible for us also, 1 Corinthians 9, 27 to preach to others and be disqualified ourselves. In other words to proclaim so many wonderful truths and yet not enter in to God's highest in our own personal life.

Now it is good for us to look at the failure of the Israelites in the wilderness which is mentioned here because that is specifically written for our instruction and as a warning we could say for us. And the things that are mentioned here we could look at them briefly. First of all verse 6 that we should not lust after evil things.

There are lusts in our flesh and the Israelites lusted after the leeks and the onions and the garlic of Egypt and kept on despising the manna. And it is possible for us to lust for the things of the world for that which gives us carnal satisfaction in our bodies and to despise the simple word of God which can give us spiritual life. This is a warning to us that we should not indulge in the lusts of the flesh.

Number one warning. And the second one is that we are not to have any idols in our life. Not let anything take the place, the supreme place that God should have in our life.

Not money, not loved ones, not ambitions, not our job, not our profession, nothing. Third, verse 8. We are to be very careful in the matter of immorality. We are not to allow our eyes to lust sexually.

We must even be willing to pull out our eyes to overcome lust. To be so radical in this attitude towards lust that we are willing to suffer any pain. That's the meaning of pulling out our eyes.

Suffer any pain in order to deny this lust. We do not act immorally. And then number four, verse 9. That we are not to try the Lord's patience.

We must not keep on testing the Lord's patience. And how do we test the Lord's patience? By a loose attitude towards sin where we say, well the blood of Christ is always there to cleanse us. That is true.

But we can take such a light attitude towards sin because of the blood of Christ being there that we can treat the blood of Christ like something common. Like tap water. And this is what is referred to in Hebrews 10, verse 29.

Of the blood of the covenant being treated as something common or unclean. Something cheap. And then we try the Lord's patience.

Keep on provoking the Lord by tempting him, by doing things that are displeasing to him and yet the judgment hasn't come so we try his patience some more and some more and some more. He says don't keep on doing it because one day the judgment will fall. They were destroyed by serpents.

And the serpent is ever active even today, Satan. To destroy those who keep on testing the Lord's patience and the Lord just gives them up finally. And then something very serious which many Christians don't take seriously is the sin of grumbling, verse 10.

Grumbling. They grumbled because they didn't get what they wanted in the wilderness. God hasn't given us this, God hasn't given us that.

And that's a serious sin, dear friends, to grumble. When we are discontent with our appointed lot in life then we become grumblers. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

To be discontent with the house you live in or the parents God has given you or your salary, to go on strike because you're not happy with the salary you get or to grumble about your physical appearance or your health condition or anything, or about your children or about your wife or about your husband. Grumbling is a sin which brings down upon us, verse 10, the destruction of the destroyer. It opens the door for Satan

to enter our lives and to enter our homes.

So these things that happen to them are written for our instruction, are a warning for us. Do not lust after evil things. Do not have an idol in your life.

Do not play fast and loose with sexual sin. Avoid immorality. Do not try the Lord's patience and stop grumbling completely.

They are written for our warning because it's possible for us to do these things. To say we are baptized in water, baptized in the Holy Spirit and to fall into all these five things mentioned here. And then God will be displeased with us like God was displeased with them in verse 5. And we can preach to others and be disqualified ourselves.

We can bring others to Christ and be lost ourselves. Verse 12. Therefore, when someone hears all this, it says here, let him not imagine that these things can never happen to him.

Let the one who thinks that he is standing, the one who is so sure that he stands safely, the one who is so sure of his eternal security. Let him be careful, lest he fall, lest he be disqualified, lest he be lost. All these warnings are being done away today, done away with today by Satan.

He keeps telling people you shall not die, you shall not die like he told Eve in the Garden of Eden. Romans 8.13 says if you live after the flesh, you shall surely die. But the voice of the serpent in Eden is heard even today.

You shall not die, even if you live after the flesh. That is a deception. Let him who thinks he stands.

Are you one who thinks that you are eternally secure? You stand and you can allow yourselves to live after the flesh? Then be careful, for you can fall, you can be disqualified, you can be lost. And then a tremendous word of encouragement. This is one of the greatest words of encouragement in the entire New Testament.

Verse 13. After all these severe warnings, he comes forth with a fantastic word of encouragement. Every phrase in verse 13 is valuable.

He says there is no temptation that has come to you, overtaken you, but such as is common to man. And that is the first thing we need to understand. That every trial and every temptation that we ever face in our life is common to all mankind.

In other words, it is something that other human beings are facing and have faced in other parts of the world. The devil tries to harass us sometimes by saying, you are peculiar. In this area, there is nobody who is being tempted like you are, the devil says.

Sometimes the devil harasses young people by saying, you are being tempted in the sexual area in a peculiar way. You are a pervert. All this is false.

Every human being is tempted in exactly the same way around the world and has been tempted all over the world. And the amazing thing we see in Hebrews 4.15 is that Jesus Christ himself, when he was on the earth, was tempted in every point as we are, for he came as a man just like us in our flesh. So that is the first thing we need to see in verse 13.

That every temptation that comes to us is a type of temptation that all other human beings in the world have faced, that Jesus himself faced. That is the first thing that encourages us, that we are not peculiar, that our temptations are not special. They are ordinary.

The second thing it says here is that God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. So that is a wonderful promise, that God can be depended upon to ensure that no temptation comes to you which is beyond your power to overcome.

In other words, we can never say about any temptation that comes into our life that that is too much for me. No temptation is too much for me. I may have fallen into it because I was unfaithful or because I did not watch and pray and receive grace from God, receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

But if I had watched and prayed, if I had received grace from God through watching and praying, through crying out for grace to help in our time of need as it says in Hebrews 4.16, then the promise of Romans 6.14 would have been fulfilled in my life that when we come under grace, sin cannot rule over us. But sin did rule because we did not watch and pray. But the temptation itself was something we could overcome.

That is a tremendous word of encouragement that God measures and weighs the temptations that come into our life. He does not allow any trial to come to us which is too much for us to bear. Remember that.

When you face a trial, say to it, facing that trial, I can overcome you. I can overcome this trial. I can overcome this temptation.

Speak the word of faith and you will overcome. God is faithful. Do not accuse God of unfaithfulness.

Every time you say this is too much for me to bear, this temptation cannot be overcome, you are saying God is unfaithful. No, he is faithful. The devil is a liar.

You can overcome. And then thirdly, in the temptation, God will provide a way of escape so that you can endure it or that you can overcome it so that you can get victory, so that you can come through victoriously. What is that way of escape that God provides? It is his grace which is given to the humble.

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, for God gives grace to the humble, it says in 1 Peter 5.5. We cannot escape and overcome without grace. Only through grace we overcome, but that grace is given only if we humble ourselves in temptation and our humility is manifested there by our crying out for help. If we are strong and self-sufficient, we will not cry out for help.

But when we are humble and aware of our own weakness, we cry out to God for help and he gives us grace. And through that grace we can overcome. So remember these three things.

Every temptation that comes to you is common to all men. Second, God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. And third, he will give you grace if you seek him in the moment of temptation.

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