

### Keep It Simple – 1 Cor 10:1-13

**Intro** – Have you ever noticed how we make things that are so simple, so complicated?

Like watching TV– do we really have to have 4 remote controls to do it?

And if you have one, does it really have to be so complicated to figure out?

And living in a household of women, why is it that some people have to put on 5 outfits and an equal number of shoes, in order to get dressed in the morning?

I don't understand that; How complicated can it be?

And then there's taxes – perhaps the most complicated, simple thing in all the world

But the best one of all for our family, is fast food orders at the drive through, when we're on vacation – you would think it's calculus

We pull up to a fast-food speaker, Becky and girls tell me what they want, I order it, they change it, I repeat it, it's wrong, I get mad, they get mad . . .

And it turns into a complicated mess

So now, before we even get there, I turn around in the car & become the fast-food Gestapo  
“Get your order in your head, tell it to me once when I ask, and there's no changing your mind, I don't care what you get”

Sometimes we make things that are so simple, so complicated

- And the Christian life is no different

We put up these artificial standards, and add all kinds of pharisaical legalities . . .

Gotta do this; Gotta say that; Gotta pray the right prayers, say the right things, serve in the right ministry, get in the right SG, do the right Bible study . . .

Cross your t's, dot your i's, and do it all just right

And after a while the life we live feels so *complicated*, when it's meant to be so *simple*

Which is why I've chosen it as our theme for the year

#### **Learn the Lessons, Live the Life – Simple**

- Something that God's people have been striving to do for thousands of years, from the OT Israelites to the NT church . . .

And we're going to look at *both* this year, in order to learn from their example

We'll start with some of the OT heroes of our faith this fall – like Joseph, Balaam, Elijah, Moses, Esther, Jehoshaphat . . .

And then, starting in January, we'll begin working our way through 1 Corinthians, in order to learn from the example of the NT church in Corinth

But to get there, we're going to start in 1 Cor 10 with the theme verse, and look at what it means to **Keep It Simple** in the Christian life (1 Cor 10:1-13)

- (Read 1-4a)

1a – *our fathers* – our spiritual predecessors

1a – *under the cloud* – they were supernaturally *guided* by God

1b – *passed through the sea* – they were miraculously *delivered* by God

2 – *baptized into Moses* – they were brought under his *amazing leadership* by virtue of these events

Just like Rom 6 says, referring to our salvation – *we have been baptized into Christ* (3)

Meaning we've been brought under his influence, lordship, protection, authority

So too, the Israelites were brought under Moses' authority and leadership – amazing as it was

And that's the point – he was an amazing leader to follow

3-4a – IOW they were all taught the same *God-given truths*, which he points out with a play on words here

B/c in the manna, they literally all ate the same food

And with a common source of water from the rock, they literally drank the same drink

And so too in a spiritual sense, they were all taught the same God-given truths

4b – implying that Jesus Christ, pre-incarnate, (i.e. in the Spirit), was there with them

And though they wouldn't have identified him as such, it was his very presence as protector and provider – that they drank in and depended on

- Put all that together – the supernatural guidance, the miraculous deliverance, the amazing leadership, the God-given truths, and the presence of Christ himself . . .

And they had all the advantages to live a life pleasing to God . . .

And all the privileges to ensure their success . . .

And yet, they *blew* it (v5 . . . *Nevertheless* – in spite of all their advantages)

Far fr keeping it simple, they made a mess of things; And God was not pleased w/ them

How much better to simply . . .

#### **Learn the lessons, and live the life (v1-5)**

In fact, like them, we are without excuse to do so; We too have all the benefits

O, your Garmin in life may not be a cloud . . .

And you probably can't remember the last time you crossed the Miss. on dry ground

But what we *do* have, is better

In addition to the power of God at work *around* us . . .

We have the *cross* of Christ to *save* us; We have the *HS* at work *within* us . . .

And we have the *Word of God* in *front* of us

We are the beneficiaries of things they could *never* have imagined

Leaving us without excuse to learn the lessons and live the life

And yet far too often we don't, just like the Israelites, and God is not pleased

Leaving us empty, miserable, lonely, and dissatisfied – to name just a few

Not to mention the fact that we may risk illness and premature death just like them

Ya; It's the very thing that Paul warns us about in the next chapter, re those who participate in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner

Read 1 Cor 11:27-30

Whether you're missing out on life to the full and intimacy with Jesus . . .

Or risking the judgment of illness and death – don't go there

Learn the lessons and live the life – it's that simple

Especially with so many examples at our disposal, of those *did*, and those who *didn't*

- Look at v6

*These things*, referring to the punishment that God brought on the Israelites for failing to live the life

Learn the lessons and live the life; And second . . .

### **Learn from those who didn't (v6-11)**

Bad examples in life can steer you one of two ways

They can either influence you toward evil, or influence you towards good

Which is exactly what happened to me growing up

I have two older brothers 6 and 8 years older than me

And I watched them get in fights, get in trouble, cause trouble, be troubled, and do all

kinds of troubling things that brought nothing but trouble to their lives

And I was like – “that’s stupid; I’m not doing that”

And consequently I avoided a whole bunch of punishment and hardship

I learned from those who didn’t – thank you Rick and Randy

They were examples for me; Just like the Israelites were *examples for us* (v6)

They messed up repeatedly, and God punished them repeatedly, and it’s recorded for us in the OT

But it’s not written down just for information’s sake

Their disobedience, and God’s punishment – was *written down for our instruction* (v11)

The plight of the OT Israelites was recorded, that we might *learn* from those who *didn't*

That we wouldn’t do the same things they did – especially in these last days

That we wouldn’t rebel like they did; Or wander like they did; Or sin like they did

Or desire evil like they did

1. Evil like idolatry in v7 – the first of 4 examples Paul cites to support his point

He’s quoting Ex 32:6 where the Israelites made a golden calf to worship . . .

And were it not for the intervention of Moses, God would have consumed them

Instead, 3k were killed by the sword, and many more suffered a plague that God sent

A lesson written down for us, so that we would learn from those who didn’t

2. The second example comes from v8 . . .

Referring to an episode in the desert found in Nu 25, where God’s people began to

*whore with the daughters of Moab* (Nu 25:1), and yoke themselves with their idol god

So that idolatry and fornication went hand in hand, leading to a plague that killed 23k in

*one day*

A lesson written down for us, so that we would learn from those who obviously didn’t

3. From v9 . . .

This example comes from Nu 21 where the Israelites became impatient and spoke out against God, resulting in him sending fiery serpents to bite them (Nu 21:6)

And his reference to putting *Christ to the test* once again implies that as part of the

Godhead, the second person of the trinity, *he* was there – not physically, but spiritually  
It’s a lesson written down for us, so that we would learn from those who didn’t

4. In v10 – [we must not] *grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer*.

Obviously referring to Satan’s part in carrying out some of the punishments of God

Again, a lesson *written down for our instruction* (11), so that we would learn from those who didn’t

From idolatry and fornication, to rebellion and grumbling, and everything in between . . .

God punishes disobedience

And the wisest people are not necessarily those who are the smartest, or even those who learn from their mistakes . . .

But the wisest people in the world are those who learn from the mistakes of *others*

Especially when *God* records it for them – which he has for you and me

Learn the lessons and live the life; Learn from those who didn’t . . .

And third, after saying all that, he comes to a conclusion in v12 and says . . . IOW

### **Don’t get cocky (v12)**

*Let anyone who thinks that he’s* got it all together

Who thinks he’ll never stumble; Never fall; He’s good to go

Who thinks . . . More highly of himself than he ought; He’s got it going on

Who thinks he’s different than everybody else

*Let anyone who thinks that way, take heed lest he fall*

As in, clue in, lest he crash; Beware, lest he break down

Let him wake up to the fact that he’s flirtin’ with disaster

Which **Proverbs 16:18** makes very clear – *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*.

Are you a little bit cocky about your walk with Christ?

Are you casually indifferent to the lure of sin?

Are you blissfully ignorant about your human nature, your sin nature?

Are you secretly confident about your ability to resist temptation?

Is so, you’re flirtin’ with disaster \*\*\*\*\*

Don’t get cocky – b/c if you do, it’s only a matter of time before you’re humbled

It’s only a matter of time before you fall

It’s only a matter of time before you’re destroyed

Pride is the shortest path to the floor – and your landing will not be pretty

• We were downtown Chicago one time (this had to be about 15 years ago)

And we were standing outside a restaurant waiting for our name to be called

When all of a sudden we noticed this guy in a nice shirt and tie, running down the sidewalk toward us

But he wasn’t running normal – his arms were flailing, and he was leaning forward as if he was going fall . . .

Kind of like when you’re running down a steep hill and doing everything you can to keep your legs underneath you?

And just about the time he reached us, he fell flat on his face; I mean flat

No hands to break his fall, no smooth roll to minimize the impact

Just bam, face down on the concrete

So we started to help him up

And quickly realized that in addition to his broken glasses, bloody nose, and split lip – he was drunk

But not so drunk that he wasn’t embarrassed/ashamed of what had just happened

And not so drunk that he would accept our help, or even acknowledge his need

No, he was still cocky about his ability to *handle* it

To stand on his own, and keep going

And so he did, stumbling down the sidewalk, at risk of doing it all over again

- Don't get cocky about your ability to *handle* life; to handle temptation; to handle sin  
B/c if you do, it's only a matter of time before you'll lose your grip, and fall

Better that you humble *yourself*, before you're humbled

Better that you *bend* your knee, before you're broken

Better that you're face down in *worship*, than face down in *shame*

Keep it simple – learn the lessons, live the life, and don't get cocky

And finally . . .

### **Trust God (v13)**

The Christian life is a life of faith, a life of trust – there's no getting around it

And if we're to live it like he wants – we have to learn to trust him

Meaning, we have to trust that what he says, is *true*

And trust that what he says, he'll *do*

That's what this entire issue of temptation comes down to here in v13

Trusting that when God says – *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man* (13a) . . . it's true

Whatever you're facing, it's been faced before – thousands of times, over thousands of years

Your situation is not unique, and neither are you w.r.t. the temptation

Which should help you resist it when you're confronted by its luster

Knowing in that moment that you're not alone . . .

And that others have faced the same thing . . .

And that they've been successful in resisting the urge to indulge – helps

If they can do it, you can do it – that's the idea here

But it starts with trusting that what God says about that, is *true*

That there really is no temptation that hasn't been faced countless times before

And therefore you really can endure it

- Not only that, but *God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

If you're going to live the life God wants – you not only have to trust that what he says is *true* . . .

But trust that what he says, he'll *do*

You have to trust, in this case, that he has your back

That he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability . . .

Beyond your capacity to endure; Beyond your strength to stay true

He won't allow it – you can trust that what he says, he'll *do*

He may stretch you; He may push you beyond what you thought you could endure

He may test you

He may bring you to a place of crying out to him for help like you've never cried out before

He may take you right to the edge in order to strengthen your faith and show his power

But he will never force you to endure a situation you can't – a situation beyond your ability to stand and persevere

When *that* happens, he will always provide a way of escape – a way out

- The problem is, we don't look for the exits soon enough

We're either naïve to the temptation

Or rationalize our ability to handle more than we can

Or we start looking for the exits far too late

We just had an insurance inspector come through here to meet with our staff about some of the safety risks and features of our building and ministry

And he showed us a video of a nightclub fire several years back

And one of the many problems he pointed out, is that people didn't start looking for the exits *soon* enough

In fact, at first, they thought the fire was a cool part of the show

And when they realized it wasn't, they couldn't get out soon enough b/c they didn't know where the exits were

If you wait until the sparks of temptation turn into flames of passion – it's too late to look for an exit, whatever that passion is

You're judgment will be clouded by the smoke of sin

And your resolve, overcome by the intensity of the heat

- Know your exits

If God has provided them, you need them – so don't get cocky

And if you need them, he'll provide them – so trust him

Trust that what he says, is true

And trust that what he says, he'll do (**Simple**)

It may not be easy, but it is simple