

Be Careful Of Complacency (Part 1) – 1 Cor 10:1-13

1 Cor 10:1-13; After several week's break, I'm eager to get back to our study of 1 Cor this weekend – looking at the issues Paul addresses in the church at Corinth . . .

So as to avoid them in ours (**Intro**)

And while some of the issues may seem *far* from our experience, others, like this one, hit very close to home – referring to complacency

Becoming comfortable and casual in your walk with Christ

Or even smug and careless about it

It's always a *risk*, and sometimes an *issue* if you're not careful

Let's face it – every single one of us has a tendency to grow complacent in our walk

A tendency to go from faithful follower, to fair-weather fan

A tendency to relax a bit and rest on our laurels; To let down

The Corinthians had it, and the ancient Israelites did it – they became complacent

- That's the issue; And though we're only going to cover the first 5 verses this weekend, I want you to see the big picture; So starting in v1 and going through v13, Paul says . . .
For I want you to know, brothers, 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 drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." 8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9 We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by 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, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. 12 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. 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.

- To understand what's going on here, you have to go back to the end of ch9, where Paul says in v27 that he disciplines and controls himself . . .

Basically guards himself against complacency – lest after preaching to others *he* should be disqualified; Why? Why the concern about complacency?

B/c people far better off than he was flaked out, and Paul figured if it could happen to them, with all *their* privileges and blessings, it could happen to him

That's the flow of thought from ch9, into ch10, indicated by the first word of v1 – *For*

Which you may not have in your Bible if you're using an older edition of the ESV . . .

B/c that word is sometimes considered redundant in Greek, and not translated

But in this case, it helps us see the flow of thought explicitly, instead of assuming that we catch it on our own, or that he starts a new one

In any case, Paul's like, "as good as I have it w/ all the blessings of the New Covenant . . .

I discipline myself to make the most of it, so as not to be disqualified . . .

Because those who preceded me also had it pretty good, and they *blew* it
Suffering God's displeasure, and discipline, and wrath"

So the first thought here from Paul, is to be careful of complacency in your walk with Christ, b/c . . .

Special privileges don't guarantee spiritual blessings (v1-5)

Special privileges in *life*, don't guarantee spiritual blessings from *God*

Privileges like a free country, or a godly heritage, or a good family, or a great church

Privileges like that, don't guarantee spiritual blessings like godliness, fruit, favor, and reward – including the affirmation of "well done, good and faithful servant"

Special privileges don't guarantee spiritual blessings – that's the point of the first 5 vs

And he uses a ton of symbolism to make it; Starting in v1 with – *I want you to know*

Which should sound familiar if you were here last weekend

It's a common way of saying that you have something of an urgent nature to convey

- And speaking of last weekend – 3549 people were here, with 53 decisions for Christ, and another 30 the weekend before
And that doesn't count the New Believer Packets we gave out, well in excess of that
All of which is a snapshot of what's to come, Lord willing; What's to come in terms of *baptisms*, and what's to come in terms of attendance; That's the future in 4 or 5 years

Which is all well and good, but we don't have enough space to accommodate it

We don't have enough CM space, and we don't have enough *adult* classroom space – to keep up with the desire and the opportunity, that those kind of numbers afford

Which is why we need to add to our building

But praise God for what he's doing; I want you to know

- Even more important however, is what Paul wants you to know – **V1**
I want you to know, brothers – brothers and sisters in Christ that is; he's speaking to believers
I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud
Our fathers in this context, referring to the Israelites of old – the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Which is an interesting thing for Paul to say as an ethnic Jew, to a church consisting of ethnic Gentiles, the Corinthians

And by doing so, he implies that we have a common heritage

That as believers, we are of the same lineage – we're all children of Abraham as he says it in Gal 3

So their history is our history; And we'd do well to know it *****

B/c that's the history to which he refers when he says . . .

I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud – referring to the cloud of God's presence as they journeyed through the Sinai Peninsula . . .

On their way to the land of Canaan

They had just left Egypt after 400 years of bondage and slavery, and were under *the cloud* Paul says – the cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night

That is, they were protected and guided by the glory of God's presence – that's the idea of being under the *cloud*

Sometimes called the *Shekinah* glory in post-biblical literature

A term *way* overused in some circles, especially since it's not in the Bible

But a good descriptor nonetheless, of the over-whelming, awe-inspiring majesty and presence of God

It was a special *privilege* our forefathers enjoyed, while on their way to the Promised Land

All [were] under the cloud [he says], and all passed through the sea

IOW they were all miraculously delivered, and perfectly preserved, when God parted the Red Sea as they were being pursued by the Egyptian army . . .

Allowing them to go through on dry ground

Only to have the waters close on the Egyptians

It's yet another *privilege* – they were miraculously delivered, and perfectly preserved

- Not only that, but **V2** says that *all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*
Here begins a rush of metaphors, that if we don't take the time to understand and investigate, we'll miss the point
And some of them seem a bit strange; But they're *packed* with meaning and significance

So when he says that *all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea* . . .

He's saying, that by virtue of these events and phenomena, the sea and the cloud – by virtue of those things, they were baptized into, or brought under . . .

The leadership and influence of Moses *****

Just like as believers, *we have been baptized into Christ* Rom 6:3 says

We've been brought under the influence, lordship, protection, and authority of Jesus, by virtue of our salvation

So Paul's point here, is that the Israelites of old enjoyed yet *another* special privilege, in being led by such an amazing leader in Moses

- *All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea [V3], and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink*
Now, there's a lot here, but it all comes down to this – they were all taught the same *spiritual truths*
Which he points out w/ an analogy, that he expects us to get, b/c it's part of our history

You see, in the desert, during their 40 year sojourn from Egypt, God gave them manna each morning

Described as bread from heaven, and tasting like wafers made from honey

5 days a week, they'd wake up, go outside, gather enough manna for the day, and eat it

And on the 6th day, they'd gather enough for the Sabbath as well

So they literally all ate the same food

And with a common source of water from a rock, or natural springs, or a well,

depending on where they were – they literally drank the same drink

They ate the same food, and drank the same drink

So with that in mind, Paul says that they also *ate the same spiritual food, and drank the same spiritual drink*

Meaning, that they were taught and internalized, the same God-given truths

Truths from a common source, God himself, and spoken through a common leader

Truths that enabled them to be of one heart and one mind

Yet another *privilege* of their situation *****

- But that's not the *only* comparison being made here
There also seems to be an analogy that he's drawing, between what they ate and drank in the *desert*, and what *we* eat and drink at the Lord's Table
It's a comparison you can see best, when you put ch10 together with ch11, where Paul talks about participation in the bread and cup . . .
And the implications of sharing the Lord's Supper together

The bottom line being, just as *they* were privileged to eat and drink the same food together, physically *and* spiritually – so too are we

We drink from the same cup, and eat from the same bread, physically, at communion . . .

And we read from the same Word, and hear the same truths, spiritually, in our worship services

Enabling *us*, just as it did *them* – to knit our hearts together, be of one mind, strive for the same things, and grow in the same ways

IOW just as the manna and water were symbolic of the spiritual truths *they* received, and the resulting unity of *their* fellowship . . .

So too the Lord's Supper is symbolic of the spiritual truths *we* receive, and the unity of *our* fellowship

It's yet another reason not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together

Otherwise, you forfeit the blessing, that comes with the privilege, of church

- And then, in **V4**, after saying that *all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink* . . .
He gives the reason for that, saying – *for they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.*
That is, they took in the same spiritual truths, b/c they were coming from one spiritual source – Christ himself

Which is a bit strange, b/c he hadn't even been born yet

But Paul says he was there, following them around the desert

Which implies, that he was present not in the flesh, but in the spirit; Pre-incarnate

And though they wouldn't have identified him as the second person of the trinity, or the coming Messiah like we can, and do . . .

Paul's telling us that it was his very presence, and the truth he imparted to Moses, that they drank in and depended on for life *****

Yet *another* special privilege that was at their disposal

- And Paul likens Jesus to a *rock* from which they drank, b/c on two different occasions in the desert, the Israelites got their water from a rock (**photo**)
Which may have looked something like this – a big boulder that split when struck

But the kind of rock to which Paul refers here, is not *petros* in Greek – a large stone or boulder; But *petra* – referring to a massive rock cliff

God used a boulder to feed his people physically, but a *mountain* to feed them spiritually

And the same is true today – Jesus is a rock of biblical proportions on which to base your life, and there’s room enough, for everyone*****

- And one more thing here, is Paul’s choice of the word *followed*, as opposed to accompanied or led

Once again, it seems a bit strange that he would characterize Jesus as following *them*, as opposed to them following Jesus

But I think he does so, in order to correct a rabbinic legend at that time, that speaks of an *actual* rock, actually following the Israelites around the desert

So reading between the lines a bit, Paul’s like, no – the only thing following them was the pre-incarnate Christ

And *that* was for the purpose of drinking the same *spiritual* drink

In any case, when you put it all together – the supernatural guidance of the cloud, the miraculous deliverance in the sea, the amazing leadership of Moses . . .

The God-given truths, and the presence of Christ himself . . .

They had all the advantages, and then some, to live a life pleasing to God

All the privileges to ensure their success, and God’s *blessing* on their lives

- *Nevertheless [V5], with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

Literally, their bodies were strewn about the desert

They failed to reach the Promised Land, in spite of all their advantages and privileges

Which for some, means that they were disqualified as his *people* – not saved; b/c they disobeyed in unbelief

While for others, it means they were disqualified from the *prize* – saved, but stripped of their reward; b/c they disobeyed in *belief*

Like Moses, who wasn’t able to enter the Promised Land b/c of *his* disobedience

And still others were disqualified from further *service* – saved, but no longer used by God to accomplish his purposes

Just like the worthless servant in the parable of the minas, found in Luke 19

His money was taken from *him*, and given to another who made *good* use of his opportunity to serve the Lord *****

Some were disqualified as his people in the desert, some disqualified from their reward, and some were disqualified from further service

- B/c w/ *most of them God was not pleased*

Which is quite the understatement, b/c only two of them over the age of 20 at the time of their disobedience, reached the Promised Land – Joshua and Caleb

The two spies who believed that God would do what he said, despite the obstacles

With the rest, he wasn’t pleased

Not b/c he’s *hard* to please, or *impossible* to satisfy . . .

But b/c the people lacked faith; They didn’t trust *him*, they didn’t trust his *promises*, they were blatantly disobedient, and they were casually complacent

Despite the fact that they enjoyed an amazing number of special privileges

So they were disqualified – the very thing Paul was striving to avoid, and the very thing about which he warns *us*

That special privileges don’t guarantee spiritual blessings

If the Israelites of old were DQ’d, if *they* met the discipline and wrath of God with all *their* privileges, then so can we; We’re not exempt

- So be careful that you don’t take the privileges of God for granted (**Summary**)
Be careful that you don’t presume on his goodness

Be careful of thinking that you can ride the coattails of your mom or your grandma or your wife, into heaven – b/c you can’t

Or that your *past* service in the church, *guarantees* your future reward

Or your past confession of faith guarantees your future presence with God, when there hasn’t been any fruit in the intervening years

Be careful of thinking that a great life now, means great blessing later

Or that just b/c your life is filled with privilege, your life is filled with him

Or that just b/c you have it all, you’re going to get it all

Be careful of complacency in your walk with Christ

B/c our forefathers found out the hard way, that special privilege doesn’t guarantee spiritual blessing