

Be Careful Of Complacency (Part 3) – 1 Cor 10:1-13

St. Vincent team; 1 Cor 10:1-13

This is part 3 of a 3 part message, where Paul addresses the issue of complacency

The bottom line being – be careful of it

Be careful of complacency in your walk with Christ

And Paul gives 3 reasons for it in these verses; The first of which is that . . .

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

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

They don't guarantee spiritual blessings like salvation, and favor, and eternal life

Special privileges now, don't guarantee spiritual blessings later; That was v1-5

Then, in v6-11 he warns us to be careful of complacency, b/c . . .

Sin won't be ignored (v6-11)

Sin like idolatry; Whether it's *religious* idolatry – where saints, icons, or angels receive a portion of your worship and prayer . . .

Or *secular* idolatry – where things like sports, leisure, money, or fame are the primary focus of your life and energy . . .

Or *philosophical* idolatry – where you supplant the truth about God, with falsehoods

Don't let anyone or anything take *any* place of worship in your life, other than God

B/c idolatry won't be ignored; There *will* be consequences

And the same is true of sexual immorality, trying God's patience, and grumbling and complaining

Examples from the Israelites of old, that were written down for our *instruction* Paul says in v11 – so that we wouldn't *do* the same, nor *suffer* the same

- That brings us to part 3 from v12-13

But in order to get the flow of thought, I want to read the whole passage starting in v1, where 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.

IOW be careful of complacency, b/c . . .

Falls often follow over-confidence (v12)

As in *thinking* you can stand, when you can't, v12

That you can be smack dab in the middle of sin, and won't be affected

That you're just fine, when you're not; That a little bit of sin won't hurt anything

That you can handle it, when it's really handling you

That you're immune to the sting, when the allergic reaction is right around the corner

That's when falls occur – when you're over-confident

- And history is *filled* with examples

Like King David, who was so powerful that he thought he could get away with murder – and fell in shame

Or Solomon, who was so wise he thought he knew better than God, and fell into sin

Or Napoleon, who thought he was unbeatable, and met his Waterloo

Or how about some of the presidents in our country, who thought they were above the law, and ended up getting impeached

Or any number of sports figures, who thought they were impervious to a promiscuous life style, and fell from grace – losing their edge, and sometimes their health

And you can't leave out religious leaders; From high profile evangelists, to Catholic priests, to prominent pastors – the landscape is littered with fallen spiritual leaders
Much of it, due to over-confidence

- B/c that's when we tend to get careless

That's when we tend to relax, and let our guard down

That's when we think we're strongest, and deceive ourselves

That's when we push our freedom in Christ to the extreme, and expect no ill-effect

But it doesn't work that way, does it?

You can't play with fire, and expect no burns

You can't lie with dogs, and expect no fleas

You can't exceed the limit, and expect no tickets

And you can't live on the edge, without falling into sin

It's tempting to try, but be careful of that – b/c falls often follow over-confidence

But here's the thing – you're not alone in facing it; Falls often follow over-confidence . . .

But you're not alone in facing temptation (v13a)

Whether it's the temptation of over-confidence, or *any* kind of temptation – you're not alone in your struggle

V13 says – *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.*

Including the temptation of sexual immorality, materialism, power, you name it

Anything you face, has been faced before – anything; There's nothing new under the sun

And it hasn't been faced by just a few, but by *countless* others

And often to a greater degree

The ultimate example of which is Jesus – *who in every respect* [the Bible says] *has been tempted as we are* (Heb 4:15)

And who resisted temptation and evil to the point of shedding blood (Heb 12:3-4)

If temptation is misery, and misery loves company, this is one area where there's a crowd – you're not alone

- Nor is temptation just a solicitation to sin

It's also a test of righteousness; An opportunity

Once again, that was the case for Jesus when he was led into the desert by the Spirit, to be tempted by the devil (Mt 4:1)

He was led there *by the Spirit* – not to be tempted by him, b/c James 1:13 says that *God tempts no one . . .*

But rather, to display his perfect righteousness – that's the implication

While at the same time being tempted to sin by Satan himself

It was a solicitation to sin, *and* a test of righteousness – at the same time

And while we can't know if *our* temptations are ordained like that, or simply *allowed* by

God – either way they're still a test of righteousness

They're still an opportunity to choose rightly and glorify God

In *addition* to being a solicitation to sin; It's both/and

- And though you may *feel* all alone in facing them, you're not
They've been faced before, and are being faced now
Which is why involvement in a SG, or a SG-based ministry around here, is so vitally important
B/c you *can't* face it alone and be successful – at least not for any length of time
Nor *should* you face it alone and risk failure; And you're *not* alone, so you don't have to

Falls often follow over-confidence, yes

But there's opportunity for righteousness in every situation . . .

And you're not alone in facing it

The best part of which, is God's faithfulness to help you

You're not alone in facing temptation . . .

And God is faithful (v13b)

13 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.

Do you realize what that means? That God is faithful?

It means you don't have to worry; It means God's not going to leave you hanging

It means you don't have to be concerned about him forgetting you

Or being preoccupied with something else for a minute, leaving you to the wolves

Leaving you to figure all this out on your own

Leaving you to avoid temptation in your own strength

It means you don't have to worry about whether you'll be able to do what he says, or live

like he wants – b/c *he* is *faithful* to help you

God is faithful to ensure it

Faithful as in – solid, constant, consistent, steadfast, never wavering, always watching,

always enabling, always guiding, always strengthening, always loving . . .

Always on, never off, always awake, never asleep, always reliable, never changing

Always near, never far, always filling, never depleting, always fueling, never draining

Always moving, never dormant; Always faithful, always faithful, always faithful

[You're not alone in facing temptation . . . **And God is faithful (v13b)**]

• **Faithful to protect you**

He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability it says; That's protection

And he has all the knowledge and power to back it up

In fact, he knows you so well, that he knows exactly where the edge of your limits and abilities are – every moment of the day

Anybody here have some weaker moments every now and then like I do? God knows that

And he knows exactly when they are, even before you do

And he has the power to protect you in those times as well

Sometimes by preparing you for the temptation with the truth of his Word . . .

Sometimes by eliminating it, sometimes by minimizing its appeal, and sometimes by redirecting your path

He has the power/knowledge to prevent you from encountering anything you can't handle

- What's more, is that he cares enough to do so; He cares enough to protect *you*
Don't miss the personal nature of this
The verse says – *He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability*; Your ability
One size does not fit all – not in this *room*, and not in this world

We're all different, and this is personal; He loves *you*, and is faithful to protect *you*

Just like the person sitting next to you; And next to them; And next to them

So that you need not worry whether you can withstand what someone else does

All of which means, that the single most important aspect of your sanctification, your holiness – is God's protection to ensure it can happen

Without which, we wouldn't stand a chance; God is *faithful*, to *protect* you

Not only that, but he's . . .

[You're not alone in facing temptation . . . **And God is faithful (v13b)**]

• **Faithful to provide for you**

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,

He'll provide a way out, an exit; But you have to use it

John Bunyan wrote a book called *Pilgrim's Progress* back in 1678, that remains one of the best allegories of the Christian life ever written

And at one point in the story, he tells of two characters named Christian and Hopeful . . .

Who were walking along the King's Highway, and stopped to rest in a field belonging to the giant Despair

The problem is, they fall asleep – they got complacent

And it wasn't long before they were found, and taken into Doubting Castle

At which point they were beaten, deprived of food and water, and left in darkness to die

In fact, the giant Despair even suggested they commit suicide, and get it all over with

But in the midst of discussing it with one another, Christian remembers that he has a key in his pocket called Promise

A key that will open any door in Doubting Castle, and *provide the way of escape* – if he'll just use it

Which he does, and finds that doubt and despair give way to promise, every time

- In the midst of temptation, God is faithful to provide a way of escape, and may have already done so

But you have to use it; You have to *appropriate* the provision

Whether it's hiding God's Word in your heart and thinking on *it* . . .

Or trusting his promises to *overcome* your doubt . . .

Or literally getting out of a room before *you're* overcome

Whatever the case, God is faithful to provide an escape in the midst of every temptation

He's faithful

- But here's the thing – it may cost you

It may cost you *friendships* – when they leave you behind to indulge in the things you can't or won't

It may cost you *money* – b/c you refuse to booze/smooze in order to get more business

It may cost you *favor* – like it did for Joseph, who upon fleeing the temptation of

Potiphar's wife, was thrown into prison

And it may cost you *time* – like when you need to take a longer route in order to avoid a certain bar as a recent alcoholic . . .

Or a casino as a gambler; Or a strip tease as a sex addict

Whatever the case – God is faithful to provide an escape for the temptations you face, but you have to take it, and bear the cost

- Otherwise, you'll *never* be able to endure it – which is the purpose in the first place

That you may be able to endure it – v13

That you may be able to deal with it, even when you think you can't

That you may be able to stand under its pressure, when you can't get away

That you may avoid it all together on some occasions, and so endure its attraction

I don't believe Paul is saying that only way to escape temptation is to go through it

To resign ourselves to the fact that we're going to have to face the full weight and force of every temptation, every single time

I don't think that's what he means by *endure*, b/c on other occasions he tells us to flee

In fact, he does so in the very next verse

Rather, I think he's using *endure* in a very broad sense to say that temptation is all around us, and the only way we're going to get through it, or endure it . . .

Is to lay hold of the escape that God is *faithful* to provide

Which could include the strength to stay in the ring, or a key to get out of the castle