

⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” ⁸ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; ⁹ nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; ¹⁰ nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:6-13 A 8-2-26 Ex. 3:1-8a, 10-15 Lk. 9:23-26 Ps. 31 Resp. Ps.: 119:57-72
Hymns: 39, 395 (1-2, 7-8), 396, 53

BE FAITHFUL TO OUR FAITHFUL GOD

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Why do parents teach their children? They teach their children because they love them and want them to learn what’s good for them and what’s not. In today’s text our Lord has some very strong words for us. He tells us these things because He loves us and wants us to learn what’s good for us and what’s not.

Our text begins by reminding us of the children of Israel traveling through the wilderness. Sadly, most of them were proud, rebellious, and unbelieving. We’re told, “*These things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.*” God reminds us of these Old Testament people so that we’ll take a good, long look at ourselves, and learn from what happened with them.

We’re told that they “*lusted after evil things.*” They were worldly, centering their lives on this world and this life and earthly things.

You and I live in this world, but we dare not let ourselves be worldly. Jesus said of His disciples, “*They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world*” (Jn. 17:16). The Bible tells us, “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Ro. 12:2). “*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*” (1 Jn. 2:15-17)

We’re told of the Jews in the wilderness, “*Do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’*” This refers to the time the people worshiped the golden calf. Aaron told the people, “*This is your god ... that brought you out of the land of Egypt*” (Ex. 32:8). They wrongly thought they could worship God AND

the golden calf! Jesus says, *“You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.”* (Lk. 4:8)

We might think, “How terrible, after all God did for the Jews, rescuing them from slavery in Egypt, dividing the Red Sea and bringing them through it on dry ground, miraculously providing for them in the wilderness, and more. And how did they show their gratitude? By worshiping the golden calf.” True, but are we worshiping any ‘golden calves’? Idolatry is placing our trust in anyone or anything as much as in God, or more than in God: ourselves, a loved one, someone else, our money, our things, and more. God comes first in everything.

We’re told that the people *“rose up to play.”* The picture from the original is that they had a wild party, giving in to their sinful desires, letting themselves get out of control.

Peter tells us, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Pet. 5:8). If we think that freedom means that no one can tell us what to do, we’re wrong. God says in His Word, *“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”* (Ro. 6:16). Thinking that we’re free to do whatever we want is leaving ourselves wide open to the devil. He tempts us and tries to make us his slaves, doing what he wants. Thanks be to God that one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is *“self-control”* (Gal. 5:22-23). God helps us to live the way He wants us to live, the good way that brings us happiness and peace.

We’re told, *“Let us [not] commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell.”* This refers to the time the men of Israel gave in to sexual temptation with some of the women of Moab (Nu. 25). The Christians in Corinth, to whom the words of our text were originally written, were subject to all kinds of sexual temptations. Their city was a center of sexual temptations. With the society in which we live, with movies and television shows, and with the internet, sexual temptation is all around us. Indulging ourselves in such temptations is the path to sorrow, brokenness, and emptiness. Paul told Timothy, *“Flee ... lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart”* (2 Tim. 2:22). Run away from sexual temptation, and run to the Lord and His Word for forgiveness and help and strength. James says, *“Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you”* (Jms. 4:7-8a). The Bible tells us, *“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ... [Take] the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”* (Eph. 6:10, 16)

We’re told, *“Let us [not] tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents”* This refers to the time the Israelites complained about the manna that God so graciously, miraculously sent them in the desert. They said, *“Our soul loathes this worthless bread”* (Nu. 21:5). We’re told, *“The people spoke against God and against Moses.”* They repeatedly longed for the good old days when they were slaves in Egypt (they left out the detail about their slavery) and all the food they had. So God sent poisonous snakes that bit many of them, and they died.

To be content with what we have is a gift from God. It's not wrong to better ourselves. But continually wishing we had more and better, and not being grateful for what we have at the present is foolish and wrong. "Lord, we don't deserve anything good from You. Make us grateful and thankful for all the blessings You continually shower upon us in Your grace and mercy."

We're told, "[Do not] complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer." This refers to the people complaining when God killed Korah and those who joined him in a rebellion against God (Nu. 17:41:ff.). God killed many of the people who complained about it as well. It's not our place to question God and complain about what He does or allows to happen. We're not in charge, God is. I don't tell God what's right and fair. I need to ask God for humility to accept His will, and trust that He knows and does what's best.

We're told that "*the ends of the ages have come*" upon us. Peter said on Pentecost that we're in "*the last days*" (Ac. 2:17). "*The last days*" began when Jesus came to earth the first time, and will end when He comes to earth the second time on Judgment Day. "*The last days*" refers to our New Testament era – including the time in which we're living now. Jesus is coming again. You and I need to take to heart warnings such as God gives us in our text, and be ready whenever Jesus comes again.

We're told, "*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*" Don't trust in yourself and how strong you think you are. Peter trusted in how strong he thought his faith was, and ended up denying Jesus three times. Trust in God and how strong He is.

We're told, "*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man.*" "*Temptation*" in the original also means "*trial*." Sometimes we're tempted to think, "No one has it as bad as I do." That's not true. Peter says that our "*same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world*" (1 Pet. 5:9). There are others of our Christian brothers and sisters in the world who are going through the same kinds of things any of us is. God is helping them, and God is helping us. The psalmist tells us, "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.... Be still, and know that I am God.... The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*" (Ps. 46:1-2, 10a, 11)

We're told, "*God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*" God promises that He will never send us more than we can bear. Keep placing your trust in God. He'll bring us through, and lift us up again. Peter says, "*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever.*" (1 Pet. 5:5-11)

Speaking of Jesus, the writer to the Hebrews says, “*We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*” (He. 4:15-16). Jesus experienced all the types of temptations we face. Jesus never gave in to temptation. Jesus lived a perfect life in place of our sin-filled lives. Jesus died for all of our sins on the cross, and rose again. When we’re tempted, and ask Jesus to help us resist temptation, He does. When we sin and repent, Jesus forgives us. Keep looking to Jesus. Jesus sees us safely through life, and into heaven.

Parents teach their children because they love them. God teaches us because He loves us. God wants to keep us as His dear children, and take us to heaven. Our loving, saving God is always faithful to us. Dear Christian friends, **BE FAITHFUL TO OUR FAITHFUL GOD.** Amen.