

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 1 August 2021
Services: Across the diocese
Series: **God's church** - 1 Corinthians
Title: **Lessons from the past**
Passage: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Outline:

- 1. Prequels, shadows, signs, types and anticipations etc**
- 2. Five Relationship blessings**
 - a. Cloud
 - b. Sea
 - c. Baptised?
 - d. Spiritual food and drink?
 - e. Accompanied by Christ?
- 3. Four Relationship warnings**
 - a. Idolatry
 - b. Sexual immorality
 - c. Testing Christ
 - d. Grumbling
- 4. Three relationship promises**
 - a. Nothing new
 - b. Won't be tempted beyond what you can bear
 - c. When tempted, he will provide a way out

Bible reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

If we fail to heed the lessons of **history**, than **history** is deemed to **repeat** itself...

That's the **premise** of our passage from 1 Corinthians today – God's call to the **Corinthians** – and to **us** – to heed the lessons from various incidents of judgement in the history of God's dealings with **Israel** // before we **brazenly** make the same **mistakes**.

But I've jumped right **in** here haven't I? – and perhaps as we pick up our 1 Cor series again after a four week break it would be good for me to remind you where we're **at**...

Here is what has been dealt with so far... in brief...

- **Ch 1** God will keep the Corinthians firm to the end and blameless on the last day - because he is faithful
- **Chs 1-2** - The message of the **cross** is **foolishness** - Jesus dying on the cross for sin will always be **ridiculed**... but it is the power of God for salvation and should always be central to Christian preaching
- **Chs 1-4** Leaders are only **servants** of God and God's **fellow workers**, so stop arguing about who is better... and they are misunderstanding the role God has give his leaders who are only servants. Instead, people should be rallying around – united in - the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Chs 5-6 Sometimes; blatant **immorality** needs to be **stepped** on in the church of **God**

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- Ch 7 – dealt with **making serving God your priority no matter your personal circumstance... and**
- Chs 8-9 – urged us to forgo personal preferences – becoming all things to all people that we might by all possible means win some... that is – win some into relationship with Jesus ///

Wow – so **'full on'** as they say... but there is more to come in this letter to stretch and challenge us – like today's passage!

So to ch 10 – and I can't deal with **all** of it... so I'm only going to cover the first 13 verses...

Here is where we're heading today...

I need to start by filling you in on...

1. Prequels, shadows, signs, types and anticipations etc

Then once we have our head a little around that... I can talk you through the...

- 2. Five Relationship blessings**
- 3. Four Relationship warnings, and**
- 4. Three relationship promises**

First then:

1. PREQUELS, SHADOWS, SIGNS, TYPES, ANTICIPATIONS ETC

What on earth am I talking about with that heading!?

If you just heard the passage read and/or have it open in front of you, you'll have noticed that there are quite a few concepts there that leave us scratching our heads – for example - - that the Israelites – way back 1300 years earlier than Jesus when they were rescued from Egypt, we read that they *were all **baptised into Moses in the cloud and the sea** and they **drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them and that rock was Christ!***

And we go – um - 'what was **that**'?? //

So to my strange **heading** – prequels, shadows, signs, types, anticipations etc...

BECAUSE – so much of what we read in the Old Testament – is a – well – a **prequel**, a **shadow**, a sign, a **type**, an **anticipation** of what was to come in the **New** Testament.

Everything in the **Old Testament** points us forward to the **fulfilment** of God's **plans** and **purposes** when **Jesus came**...

Perhaps the **clearest** example is the **sacrificial** system and specifically the sacrifice for **sin**

...where a sinner placed their hands on the head of an animal - symbolically transferring their sins to the animal - which was then **killed**.

That was a **prequel** – a **sign** – a **shadow** – an **anticipation** of Jesus' **once for all sacrifice** on the **cross**. //

...for we read in the letter to the Hebrews that the blood of bulls and goats can **never** take away sin – so **every** sacrifice for sin in the **Old** Testament – anticipates – points us forward to **Jesus' one true sacrifice**.

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Make sense? //

But that is just one of **many** many **signs** and **anticipations**... which we see in the Old and are fully realised in the New testament.

Which is why (by the way) we don't cut our Old Testaments out of our Bibles... because all the **prequels** and **signs** etc – deepen our understanding of the **significance** of **Jesus!**

So with **that** background let's jump into the passage, looking at

2. FIVE RELATIONSHIP BLESSINGS

Do you remember what I said this passage is about? Ensuring that the Corinthians – and we - take on board the lessons from **history** of God's **judgement** on **Israel**...

So God begins by **reminding** the **Corinthians** that this nation of **Israel** was remarkably **blessed** by **God**.

They had been dramatically **rescued** from the cruel slavery of the **Egyptians**... and now they were in the **wilderness** for a **time**.

He points out **five very clear blessings**.

Now – some of them will seem **weird** – so please keep in mind all I've said about **prequels and signs and anticipations!**

Here are five blessings Israel experienced in the wilderness – all there in vv1-4 if you want to check!

1. **They were under the cloud** – that phrase might have a different connotation today – but what is meant here is that Israel knew the very **presence** of **God**... **symbolised** in the **pillar of cloud** which guided Israel by **day** and provided **light** at **night**... They experienced the **presence** of God and therefore the **protection** of God
2. **They all passed through the sea** – a reference to the whole nation passing through the **red sea** which had been **parted** by **God** so that they could escape the **Egyptian** army which was on a **march** to **recapture them!** God's great **rescue!**
3. **v3 – they were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and sea** – that is – through the experience of God's **presence** and **protection** **AND** because they passed through the **water** in **safely** – Israel was there **joined to God** through the redeeming work of Moses // a figure – a sign of how **WE** are joined to God through the ultra redeeming work of Christ! It's an anticipation of use becoming one in Christ through baptism!
4. **They knew the blessing of spiritual food and drink** - you will remember that food and water were in short supply in the wilderness, and that God provided manna for them to eat – and then when they were short of water – Moses struck a rock with his staff and water came out... Now this **literal food** and **drink** of the **Old Testament**, the letter to the Corinthians describes as **"spiritual"**! Why is that? Because it was sign of the spiritual nurture of God... of the spiritual relationship they had with God... It was a sign that he was their shepherd providing them food and water...

And the final blessing God lists here:

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5. When he says *they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them...* and **that rock was Christ**.

Christ accompanied the Israelites in the **wilderness**?

How does **that** work? //

because **Christ** is the **cornerstone** of the **church** – and **Israel** was the **prequel** – the **anticipation** of the **church**!! ...and because of the rock from which water was extracted...it is inferred that Christ (remember he is the eternal Son of God!) - was with them in the wilderness! // That might be hard to get our head around, but it's a reminder of Christ – our Rock and our Redeemer !

So let's recap the blessings – God's **presence** – **in the cloud**, God's **rescue** – **through the water**; becoming **one** with God through the redeeming work of Moses; **spiritual food and drink** (God's great provision) and Christ's **presence**!

Amazing blessings...! ////

So it is actually **devastating** to read in v5 - **Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness**.

What? We're **staggered!!!** What went so **wrong**? ///

Simple but tragic – v6 – they **set their hearts on evil**. //

And even **more sobering** – in the **same verse** – these things occurred to them as **examples** to keep **US** from setting **OUR** hearts on **evil**...

If those are the relationship **blessings**, lets now look at the relationship **warnings**:

3. FOUR RELATIONSHIP WARNINGS

Here are **four** examples of frankly **disturbing** and **devastating** incidents in **Israel's history** which are listed so that **WE** might not set our **hearts** on **evil**... //

Here is how Israel had:

1. **idolatry** – you'll remember that when Moses was up on Mt Sinai receiving the law, Israel turned away quickly from God, throwing in all their gold to make a golden calf which they then honoured as the god which had rescued them from Egypt! Their **revelry** showed how **far** their idolatry had taken them away from the one true **God**!
2. **sexual immorality** – a reference to Numbers 25... where the men of Israel engaged in sexual relations with Moabite women... which was inextricably tied to pagan sacrifices the Moabite women were making – more idolatry! As a result, a plague in Israel killed **24,000**. /

Remember – this is an **example** to us... **not** to set our hearts on **evil**... so that we might take seriously the **holiness** of **God** and the **radically different** life to which we're **called**!

3. **Testing Christ** – the Corinthians must not **test** Christ as some in Israel did. If you grew up on Morning Prayer as your main Sunday service, every Sunday, you rehearsed God's praises in Psalm 95 (the Venite), and were reminded 'do not harden your hearts as Israel did in the wildness... when

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your fathers tested me....'

From Numbers 21:5 - *they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" The Lord sent venomous snakes and many Israelites died.*

again – the **warning** – take **God** and his **holiness seriously** – not **lightly!**

- 4. Grumbling** - Israel grumbled about lack of food and water and the difficulty of travelling around the wilderness... even though they had just been saved by God from slavery in Egypt!

and many who grumbled in this way, died and of course in the end, an entire **generation** was kept from entering the **promised land!**

So – five relationship **blessings** – four relationship **warnings**.

Friends – let's be **clear** – we also know **great** blessing from God in our relationship with him – all the richer through the gift of God's Son and his sacrifice for sin.

We have his **presence and protection** – he has promised to be **with** us to the end of the age and **indwells** us by his **Holy Spirit**

We have been **rescued** – not from the waters of the red sea – but from **sin and death**

We have been **joined** to **God** by the redeeming work **Christ symbolised** in **baptism**

We have **spiritual food and drink** – that water welling up to everlasting life Jesus promised... and the **bread and wine of the Lord's Supper...**

And **WE** are **accompanied** by **Christ...** our **rock and our redeemer!**

What does the Bible say in Ephesians 1? – that we have every **spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm!! //**

We are **blessed** beyond **measure...** and therefore – and **because** of these **warnings** – **WE** should **NOT** be setting our hearts on **evil! //**

And if we think "well that won't happen to us...", hear what God says in v 12 – *if you **think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! //***

Well that brings us finally to

4. THREE RELATIONSHIP PROMISES

We **are** tempted aren't we, to set our hearts on **evil...** in **many** ways and many **forms**.

For the **Corinthians** – living in a city of **pagan temples** – people thought it **strange** if you did not offer with them sacrifices to the **gods** and join with them in temple **prostitution**

For us in **today's** world – people think it **strange** if you have no desire to join with them in serving **today's** idols of **money, of sport, of sexual immorality** of **many** kinds, of **gambling, of drugs...** of the great idol of **self**.

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But in the temptations we find – hear these precious **promises** and take them on **board**...

1. **No new temptation** - v13 - *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.* Sometimes we think we are so strange or even so godless that we think I bet no other Christian is ever tempted to... whatever it might be. Not true! **Whatever** temptation you do battle with – no matter **what** it is – others have faced it **before you!** //
2. **We're promised that we won't be tempted beyond what we can bear – v13 again.** I find that both **wonderful** and **disturbing**... **wonderful** that I will **always** be able to say **no**... and yet **disturbing** that I've often **caved in** in the **past!** //
3. **When tempted – he will provide a way out – v13** *But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.* Again – both **wonderful** and **disturbing** – **wonderful** that there **will** be a way out – **disturbing** that I've not always **looked** for it or **taken** it!

So let me bring things to a close:

Despite the **great and wonderful blessings** Israel knew as God's **precious** and **newly rescued people**, they set their hearts on **evil... idolatry, sexual immorality, testing God and grumbling** against him despite all he'd done for them! Despite all he'd rescued them from!

God delivered his righteous **judgement** on them... and it's all there as an example to us!

But let me ask you - would **WE** be **so unappreciative** of him – so **dismissive** of God's **holiness** – so **blind** to the **incredible blessings** which have been **lavished** upon us?

I'm afraid so!

Here's the warning – if we set our hearts on **evil** – serving idols, sexual immorality, testing God, grumbling our salvation... the Lord will not just strike us dead **overnight** – **but** there is a real danger that if we will **harden** our **hearts toward him** and he will in the end, harden **his** heart toward **us**...

So **heed** the lessons of **history**... let we **repeat** history... and knowing that he will not let you be tempted beyond that which you can bear and that he will provide a way out... then **use** those means to **flee** the **evil one** – flee **temptation**... flee sexual immorality; flee anything which breaks God's heart; fell anything which pours contempt on the very great blessings he's brought us into and **cling: cling** to Christ our **rock**... cling to the one who has been given to us as the one true sacrifice for sin that we might be reconciled to him for all eternity.

Remember God's great blessings... remember the warnings given to Israel... and cling to Christ, fleeing ungodliness... temptation... fleeing sin... running to Jesus!

Amen.