

Sermon Draft for March 23, 2025

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:1–13

Sermon: “Able to Endure”

During the season of Lent, Christians customarily focus on the reality of temptation, both as our Lord experienced it and as we experience it. Yet the reality is that unlike their Lord, Christians do not merely experience temptation; we often fall prey to it following the way of the wicked instead of the way of the righteous.

“The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play” (v 7). I have to admit that when I read today’s Epistle, this line struck me as kind of strange. After all, there’s nothing wrong with eating and drinking—I intend to do both of those things today at some point. And if any of you have had small children, you know that the natural thing for little people to do once they’ve sat down to eat and drink is “rise up to play.” But the apostle Paul talks about it as a bad thing. Like when the people sat down to eat and drink and got up to play, they were doing something wrong.

What's the deal with "the eating and drinking"? And since Paul tells us that all of this was ***"written down for our instruction"*** (v 11), what does it have to teach us in our life of faith today? That's what we're going to be talking about this morning.

Israel belongs to God. They are His chosen nation. How can you tell they belong to God? By what they eat and drink (vs 3–4). When they need food, Israel eats the manna that God miraculously provides (Exodus 16:13–15, 31). When they need water, Israel drinks the water that God miraculously provides (Exodus 17:1–7).

Because Israel belongs to God, God expects them to act in a certain way. They should avoid sexual immorality, sexual relations are meant for the marriage bed. (Exodus 20:14). They shouldn't test God (Deuteronomy 6:16). We were reminded of that two weeks ago in our Gospel, when Satan was tempting Jesus, Jesus replied ***"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."*** And they should trust God (Exodus 20:2–3).

But Israel forgets that they belong to God (v 7). How can you tell they've forgotten? By what they eat and drink. What are the people of Israel eating and drinking? They're eating and drinking the feasts that go along with pagan sacrifices. When the people worship the golden calf, they go from eating manna and drinking the water God provides to the eating and drinking that accompany idolatry (Exodus 32:6).

Israel forgot that they belong to God and they fell prey to temptation. They give in to sexual temptation (v 8). The Israelites begin to have illicit relations with the women of Moab and Midian (Numbers 25:1–9). These relationships drove them further into idolatry. They put God to the test (v 9). The Israelites despised God's provision of food and wanted him to give different food and drink than he already had (Numbers 21:4–9). They grumbled against God and his servants (v 10).

The Israelites determined that they would overthrow Moses and Aaron, choose their own leaders, and go back to Egypt (Numbers 14:1–4). Looks like the world around us, never content and always wanting for ourselves.

As Christians we still frequently forget that they belong to God. Why do we forget? Because of eating. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. That caused all of their children to be set against God. When we, like Israel, forget that we belong to God, we can also fall prey to temptation. When Christians give in to sexual temptation, it's often because we forget our bodies belong not to ourselves but to the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:18–19).

When Christians give in to the temptation to anger, it's often because we forget we belong to a God who will avenge wrongdoing (Romans 12:19).

When Christians give in to the temptation to grumble against God and his servants, it's often because we forget we belong to a God who will provide for all our needs.

Jesus reminds us that we belong to God. How does he remind us that we belong to God? By what we eat and drink. Under the form of bread Jesus gives us his body broken on the cross, into which we were incorporated when we became children of God in our baptisms into Jesus' death. Under the form of wine Jesus gives us his blood, which he shed to reconcile us to God, even for all the times we've forgotten we belong to him and have given in to temptation. In this eating and drinking where Jesus reminds us that we belong to God, he gives us ***“the way of escape, that you may be able to endure”*** temptation (v 13).

If we feel tempted to abandon God's design for the human body and sexuality, we should look to the Lord's body and blood, which will enable us to endure the temptation.

If we feel tempted to take vengeance on people who have done us wrong, we should look to the Lord's body and blood, which will enable us to endure the temptation.

If we feel tempted to grumble against God and his servants, we should look to the Lord's body and blood, which will enable us to endure the temptation.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are now almost half-way through the season of Lent, a season when we focus on the temptation that each one of us experiences as we try to live faithful Christian lives. So if you "walk in danger all the way," as we sing in the hymn (*LSB* 716:1), if you're still dealing with the fallout of that eating and drinking all the way back in the Garden of Eden, if you feel the allure of temptation, I have good news for you: you can endure it. You can make it through. Because you may be tempted, but ***"with the temptation [God] will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it"*** (v 13). And what is our escape hatch? What enables us to endure? It's right here on the altar, in the body and blood of the one who overcame temptation for us all. By feeding us His body and blood, Jesus reminds us whose we are.

So, take, eat; take, drink. Remember whose you are. And endure.

Because “**God is faithful**” (v 13).

Amen