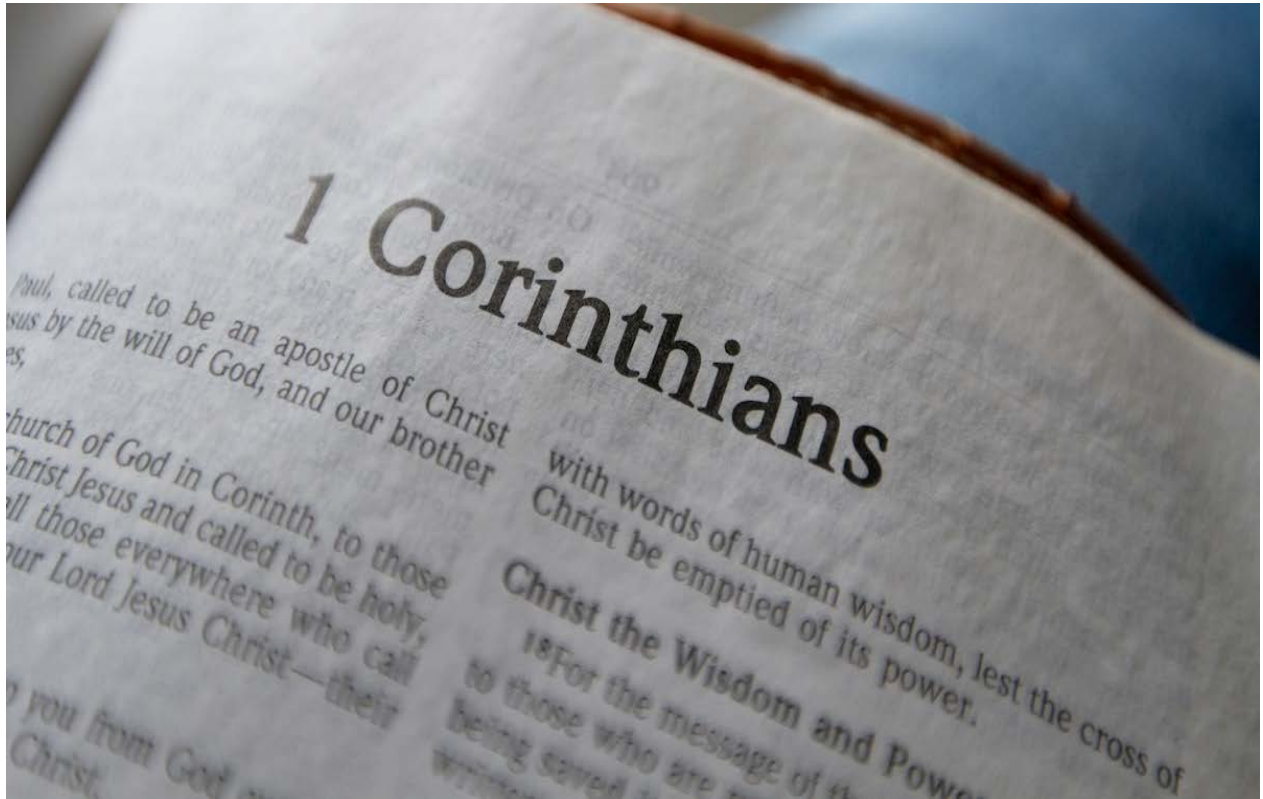


All Things for God's Glory

1 Corinthians 10

1 and 2 Corinthians Part 11



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

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All Things for God's Glory: 1 Corinthians 10
1 and 2 Corinthians Part 10
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Introduction to *1 Corinthians 10*

The Corinthians were not glorifying God—not displaying His goodness, truth, beauty, and grace—by their divisiveness (chapter 1), lackadaisical attitude toward the faith (chapter 3), insisting on their rights and freedoms to the detriment of others (chapters 5-9), and all the other ills Paul addressed to this point.

If they could just “get it” that knowing Jesus is all about God and His glory, they would easily put their selfish interests and personal needs to one side and work harder at loving and edifying their neighbors.

In chapter 10, Paul spells it out so that the Corinthians could not miss it.

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We hope you find this study instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Lost or Found?

Pray Psalm 78.8-16.

And may not be like their fathers,
A stubborn and rebellious generation,
A generation that did not set its heart aright,
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.
The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows,
Turned back in the day of battle.
They did not keep the covenant of God;
They refused to walk in His law,
And forgot His works
And His wonders that He had shown them.
Marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers,
In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.
He divided the sea and caused them to pass through;
And He made the waters stand up like a heap.
In the daytime also He led them with the cloud,
And all the night with a light of fire.
He split the rocks in the wilderness,
And gave them drink in abundance like the depths.
He also brought streams out of the rock,
And caused waters to run down like rivers.

Sing Psalm 78.8-16.

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Our fathers were stubborn; they would not obey;
when faced with their foes they in fear turned away.
God's work of redemption they wholly despised,
forgetting the pow'r He had shown to their eyes.

Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 10.1-6.

Preparation

1. To what did Paul point the Corinthians?
2. Why did he do that?

Meditation

Paul's as-yet-unspoken concern is that many of these Corinthians may have been deceiving themselves about being saved. It won't be until the last chapter of 2 Corinthians that he throws that gauntlet down plainly and forcefully (2 Cor. 13.5).

In these verses, however, he strongly suggests as much by pointing to the example of the Hebrews in the wilderness. Had God delivered them? He had. Had they been "baptized"? They were. Did they eat divine food? They did. Did they drink of the fresh water God freely and abundantly supplied? Yes, they did. "But with most of them God was not well pleased..." (v. 5).

The people who followed Moses in the wilderness had a name indicating that they belonged to God. Yet their commanding desires were selfish and idolatrous. Thus, they perished in the wilderness rather than make it to the land of promise and rest in the Lord. Paul holds them up like a mirror for the Corinthians to see themselves in this Old Testament example (v. 6). The Corinthians must not give in to worldly ways or

inclinations. These were keeping them from serving the Lord in their callings and loving one another as partners in the Gospel.

The people in Moses' day partook of the grace of Jesus (v. 4), but they were lost, not found. We must not be guilty of the same. If God has truly found us, His lost sheep, and we have found in Him our true life and love, then the grace we partake of in the Gospel will bear the fruit of the Gospel in holiness and oneness together before the Lord.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

“For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10.4). There are some Scripture verses that never fail to bring a smile, and this is one of them.

Now the more sobering side: the Israelites were cared and provided for and saved by God. Daily. And they ignored the goodness of God and chose to do things in their own way and strength. Which did not work out well for them. They perished in their own doings.

Paul used the Israelites as an example for the Corinthians, who he perceived were doing and thinking the same things about their own ways and doings, which so far, were not successfully working out.

Through the written Word, we are being warned and taught the same. The Scriptures are full of the many ways and means folks came up with for doing things antithetically to God's way. And not surprisingly, it never worked out. Why do we ever think it will?

Here is our hope:

“Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become wary;
rebuke one who has understanding, and he will discern knowledge” (Prov. 19.25).
“When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise;
but when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge” (Prov. 21.11).
We can learn from other's bad decisions.

We have that same Rock following our every step—providing the same manna and drink—the Sovereign, eternal Bread of Life (Jn. 6.47-51) and Living Water (Jn. 4.10).

Will we choose better than the Israelites?
Will we become wary and discern knowledge?
Will we learn from their mistakes?
Will we become wise servants of the Living God?

Let us not be lost, but “gain Christ and be found in Him” (Phil. 3.8, 9).

For reflection

1. In what sense do you “drink” from the “Rock” which is Jesus? How does that affect you?
2. Why is it so important that we not take for granted all the daily blessings God provides?
3. What can you do to make sure each day that the Word you read becomes the way you live?

Christ is the Rock on which the Christian church is built; and of the streams that issue therefrom, all believers drink, and are refreshed. It typified the sacred influences of the Holy Spirit, as given to believers through Christ. But let none presume upon their great privileges, or profession of the truth; these will not secure heavenly happiness. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 1 Corinthians 10.1-5

All Things for God's Glory: 1 Corinthians 10

Pray Psalm 78.1-7.

Pray that God will make you faithful in your calling, that He will bless your church with unity, and that together you may all bear witness to your community and to the generation to come.

Sing Psalm 78.1-7.

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Give ear, O my people, attend to my word,
dark sayings and parables sent from the LORD,
things we have before by our Fathers been told,
which we would not dare from our children withhold.

The glorious deeds of our God in His might,
and all of the works He has done in our sight,
together with all of the words of His Law,
would we on ourselves and our children bestow.

LORD, let all our children arise and declare
the truth of the LORD every day, everywhere,
and set all their hopes in God's wonderful Word,
and never forget all the works of the LORD.

2 Escaping through Temptation

Pray Psalm 73.25-28.

Whom have I in heaven but You?
And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.
My flesh and my heart fail;
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish;
You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry.
But it is good for me to draw near to God;
I have put my trust in the Lord GOD,
That I may declare all Your works.

Sing Psalm 73.25-28.

(Ellacombe: *Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*)

Then what have I in heav'n above but You, my God and Lord?
And on this earth what shall I love besides You and Your Word?
My flesh and heart shall surely fail, and death my soul release;
Your strength for me will e'er avail and grant eternal peace.

Then let them perish who depart from You and from Your Word.
All those unfaithful in their heart You shall destroy, O LORD!
But as for me, Your nearness, LORD, is where I e'er will dwell!
I hide myself within Your Word, Your wondrous works to tell.

Read 1 Corinthians 10.1-13; meditate on verses 7-13.

Preparation

1. Against what did Paul warn the Corinthians?
2. What did he say about temptation?

Meditation

Two things to know about temptation: First, temptation is not sin. Martin Luther is credited with having observed, concerning temptation, “You can’t stop the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.” Second, Christians are not well taught concerning how to recognize temptation or what to do when it arises.

The people of Israel certainly suffered from that second observation. They stumbled over every obstacle to faith and fell through temptation into sin nearly every time they were faced with it (vv. 7-11). Paul says these people are examples for us—bad examples, to be sure.

But good examples if they help us identify the sins that tend so often to lodge in our soul and hinder our walk with and work for the Lord. Lust, presuming on the Lord, complaining about things (v. 8-10). For the Corinthians “all these things happened to them as examples”, so the Corinthians, looking into the mirror of God’s Word, could see their own folly and turn away from it.

The Corinthians were pretty sure they were standing on solid ground (v. 12), though they were at odds with one another, divided over petty differences, and complaining about this, that, and the other. Paul says to them, “Take heed.” You will face temptation every day. That’s unavoidable. But you don’t have to fall through it into sin. We can grow through temptation to greater levels of sanctification if we look to the Lord,

resist the devil, recognize temptation for what it is, and walk by faith rather than by sight.

If we resolve not to give into temptation, and look for the way to escape through it, God will bear us up, draw us near, and give us the strength of His Spirit to carry us through (v. 13).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

The psalmist did not fall through temptation into sin. He saw it for what it was and railed against it:

“All Your commandments are faithful;
they persecute me wrongfully; Help me!
They almost made an end of me on earth,
but I did not forsake Your precepts.
Revive me according to Your loving kindness,
so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth” (Ps. 119.86-88).

God specifically provided the correct quota of manna for the Israelites. He told them to gather so much and no more. And not on the Sabbath. He did it in this way to “test them, whether they will walk in My law or not” (Ex. 16.4).

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jms. 1.17). But those good and perfect gifts are to be used according to His direction and quotas—tempting as it may seem that if a little is good, a lot would be a lot better—according to His Law.

The enemy, that roaring lion (1 Pet. 5.8), uses stealthy tactics to draw us off the good path. Gideon used a method, stealthy and victorious, to defeat one of his enemies. Here is how he did it: “he attacked the army [of his enemies] while the camp felt secure” (Judg. 8.11).

And Paul warned that the devil does the same to us, he attacks in places where we feel secure. “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10.12). It is right where we feel cocky and sure, so much so, that we are not following God’s way nor listening to His guidance—but seeking our own way—that we stumble and fall.

Jesus, in all things, was made like we, “that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Heb. 2.17, 18).

Jesus knows. He was tempted as we. But He never fell through into sin. Never.

We are joined to the Lord and are one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6.17).

He has sent us “the Helper, the Holy Spirit” Who will teach us all things and bring to our remembrance everything that He has told us through His Word (Jn. 14.26).

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn. 14.27).

Jesus didn’t fall. We don’t have to either. When we live our lives according to His plan, we will escape the sin that temptation wants us to fall into. No birds need nest in our hair. Ever.

For reflection

1. When have you ever been taught how to recognize and deal with temptation? What did you learn?
2. What is the role of prayer in dealing with temptation? What role does the Word play?

3. Can we recognize temptation if we are ignorant of God's Law? Explain.

The Christian's security against sin is distrust of himself. God has not promised to keep us from falling, if we do not look to ourselves. To this word of caution, a word of comfort is added. Others have the like burdens, and the like temptations: what they bear up under, and break through, we may also. God is wise as well as faithful, and will make our burdens according to our strength. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on the 1 Corinthians 10.6-14*

Pray Psalm 73.1-24.

The psalmist was tempted by covetousness, but he did not give in. How many ways of escaping did he appeal to keep himself in the fellowship of the Lord? As you pray through this psalm, ask the Lord to equip you to deal with the temptations you will face this day.

Sing Psalm 73.1-24.

(Ellacombe: *Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*)

To us our God is only good, to all the pure in heart!

But as for me, I nearly stood in sin from Him apart.

I nearly stumbled, nearly slipped as I the proud observed,

how they with ease and riches dripped while I, impoverished, served.

The wicked know in death no pain; with fat their bodies surge.

The plagues and trials of other men their ease do not disturb.

In fury, wrath, and pride they dwell; their minds run where they will.

Their tongues of sin and mocking tell; with earth their mouths they fill.

They never change but fill their soul with earth's abundant charms,
and laugh to think that God might know or do them any harm.

For thus do they themselves appease with riches and good health;

the wicked ever dwell in ease, in pleasure and in wealth.

“Surely in vain have I kept pure my heart, or cleansed my hands!

What troubles daily I endure while thus with God I stand!”

But had I spoken thus I would Your children have betrayed.

When this at last I understood, my troubled soul obeyed.

Into Your Presence, LORD, I come and see the sinner's end:

In slippery places they must run; to judgment them You send.

Destruction all at once must fall when You Your anger raise;

and terror will beset them all both now and all their days.

When my poor sad, embittered heart was pierced within by grace,

I saw how beastly was the part I chose before Your face.

But I am ever with You, LORD, You hold me by the hand,

and guide me daily by Your Word; in glory I e'er shall stand.

3 Fellowship of Christ

Pray Psalm 115.1-3.

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy,
Because of Your truth.
Why should the Gentiles say,
“So where *is* their God?”
But our God *is* in heaven;
He does whatever He pleases.

Sing Psalm 115.1-3.

(Plainfield: *Nothing but the Blood of Jesus*)

Not to us, O God, not us, but unto Your Name give glory!
For Your love and faithfulness, ever to Your Name be glory!
Why should the nations cry, “Where is their God on high?”
You rule us, LORD, on high: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Read 1 Corinthians 10.1-17; meditate on verses 14-17.

Preparation

1. How did Paul describe the cup of communion?
2. How did he describe the communion bread?

Meditation

After a chapter or so of side-tracking, Paul wrapped up his argument about meat offered to idols by saying simply, “Flee idolatry” (v. 14). If you have doubts about food offered to you, that it might in any way be associated with idols, just say No. But why?

Because belonging to Jesus is all-demanding and all-consuming. We cannot serve God and idols. If we are wholly devoted to Jesus and one together with the rest of His Body, we will not risk any association or identification with idols or any other sin. We will recognize and resist every temptation that threatens to cut off the fellowship (“communion” NKJV) of Jesus which we enjoy.

Fellowship *of*, the Greek says, not *with*. The NKJV got that right.

With implies distance. *Of* implies oneness, participation, Him increasing in us rather than merely us following along beside him, imitating what we see. What we who know the Lord possess, and what is so powerfully symbolized *and* realized in the Lord’s Supper is the fellowship of Jesus which we have entered by grace through faith. For us to live is Christ, as Paul wrote to the Philippians (Phil. 1.21). Not beside Christ or with Christ—*Christ!*

Our hope of glory, that is, our hope of *seeing* God in His glory and of *living* for His glory in all we do is not that we *follow* Jesus, but that *Jesus is in us and we enjoy fellowship of Him* (Col. 1.27). This makes the *communion* which we join with other believers the purest expression of our oneness in Jesus that we can know.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“For we, though many, are one bread and one body;

for we all partake of that one bread” (1 Cor. 10.17).

“Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*

For brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps. 133.1)

A simple science experiment will explain what Paul is saying.

The supplies needed: plain white carnations, a vase, and red food coloring.

1. Trim the stems of the flowers.
2. Place in vases filled with water.
3. Add red food coloring to the water.
4. Watch in amazement as the flowers absorb the water and change from white to red.

We are all different people. But place us in the same communion, partaking of the same Jesus, and we will—similarly—become like Him.

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 Jn. 3.2, 3). Partaking together in communion of His Body and Blood is a foretaste of our eternal oneness with Him, in Him, and with each other.

“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6.11).

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (Jn. 7.37).

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 Jn. 5.20, 21).

Paul and John had the same message for us. Keep yourselves from idolatry and flee from it.

Better to keep ourselves firmly in the communion of God the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and fellow Christians. Absorbing the same life from the same source—the precious blood of the Lamb.

*Would you be free from the burden of sin?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Would you o'er evil a victory win?
There's wonderful power in the blood.*

*Would you be free from your passion and pride?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Come for a cleansing to Calvary's tide?
There's wonderful power in the blood.*

*Would you do service for Jesus your King?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Would you live daily His praises to sing?
There's wonderful power in the blood.*

*There is power, power, wonder-working power
In the blood of the Lamb;
There is power, power, wonder-working power
In the precious blood of the Lamb.
(Lewis E. Jones, 1899)*

All Things for God's Glory: 1 Corinthians 10

For reflection

1. Communion is a “participation” in the Body and Blood of Jesus. In what sense is that true?
2. How does partaking of communion express our oneness in Christ? How does it enhance that oneness?
3. How should you prepare for this most important aspect of our fellowship of Christ?

Through those elements the Lord wished to entrust to us his body and the blood which he poured out for the remission of sins. If you have received worthily, you are what you have received. Augustine (354-430), Easter Sermon 227

Pray Psalm 115.9-18.

Thank the Lord Jesus for the fellowship you have of Him, your participation in His death, life, and reign; and call on Him to live His life through you today.

Sing Psalm 115.9-18.

(Plainfield: *Nothing but the Blood of Jesus*)

All who trust in Jesus yield—ever to His Name be glory—
find in Him their help and shield: Ever to Your Name be glory!
O Israel, trust the LORD! He helps us evermore!
Fear Him obey His Word: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Blessings from our gracious LORD—ever to Your Name be glory—
will attend us evermore: Ever to Your Name be glory!
Bless all who fear You, LORD, all who obey Your Word,
all who Your Name adore: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Grant us, Savior, great increase—ever to Your Name be glory!
Bless us with eternal peace: Ever to Your Name be glory!
Heaven and earth are Yours; let every soul adore
and bless You evermore: Ever to Your Name be glory!

4 Let's Be Clear about Idols

Pray Psalm 96.5-7.

For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.
Honor and majesty *are* before Him;
Strength and beauty *are* in His sanctuary.
Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Give to the LORD glory and strength.

Sing Psalm 96.5-7.

(Mit Freuden Zart: *All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above*)

All other gods are idols vain; the LORD created heaven.
Splendor and strength with Him obtain; to Him be glory given!
All fam'lies, praise this mighty LORD! Give strength and glory to His Word;
exalt the LORD of heaven!

Read 1 Corinthians 10.1-22; meditate on verses 18-22.

Preparation

1. What are idols really?
2. What must we avoid?

Meditation

Having established that the Corinthians are partakers of the Body and Blood of Jesus, Paul returns to the issue which has led to this point: eating meat offered to idols.

Paul explained that, while idols are really nothing, right along with whatever sacrifices are offered them (v. 19), what lies behind all idolatry are spiritual forces of wickedness in high places--demons (v. 20). Paul did not want the Corinthians to downplay the seriousness of this question by running the risk of being in fellowship with demons.

If we drink the Lord's cup and partake of His table, we must do so exclusively (v. 21). No secondary gods or idols—not even of the secular and materialistic sort—must have any place in our lives. The Corinthians, being babes in Christ, were in danger either of compromising what faith they had or of demonstrating that they had no true faith at all.

And if they had true faith and yet were partaking of demons, they ran the risk of provoking the Lord to jealousy (v. 22). Which means anger. Which leads to discipline. Which is never pleasant (Heb. 12.3-11).

God is stronger than we are, so we ought not provoke Him to wrath against us, whether by ignorance, carelessness, or outright rebellion. Paul will have a final word to offer on this matter, but he wanted to make sure the real issue was clear so that the Corinthians, whatever course of action they chose, would be careful to preserve their participation in the Lord.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God said:

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image...you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...” (Ex. 20.4, 5).

Moses said:

“For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deut. 4.24).

The writer said:

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12.28, 29).

Jesus said:

“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Lk. 16.13).

Paul asked:

Will we make the same mistake that the Israelites made?

“Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” (1 Cor. 10.22).

Job said:

“God is wise in heart and mighty in strength.

Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?

He removes the mountains, and they do not know when He overturns them in His anger;

He shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble;

He commands the sun, and it does not rise; He seals off the stars;

He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea;

He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south;

He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number...

If He takes away, who can hinder Him?

Who can say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’” (Job 9.4-10, 12).

John taught:

“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. For 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).

All these were clear about idols. We will do well to listen.

For reflection

1. What can you do to shore up your fellowship of Jesus, so that you will not be tempted to turn to idols?
2. How can believers help each other to beware of idols?
3. We can know that the devil is at work on us when... What should you do then?

*Do you see how terribly Paul rebukes the Corinthians, shaking their very nerves and reducing them to an absurdity? Why, you may ask, did he not say this at the beginning? Because it is Paul's custom to prove his point by many details, placing the strongest last and prevailing in the argument by proving more than is strictly necessary. Thus he began here with the smaller matters and made his way up toward the greatest of evils, so that the minds of the Corinthians had been prepared by the things already said. John Chrysostom (344-407), *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 24.6*

Pray Psalm 96.1-4, 11-13.

Call on the Lord to protect you from making an idol out of anything and from being influenced against Jesus by the idols of this world. Thank Him for the fellowship of Jesus to which He has brought you.

Sing Psalm 96.1-4, 11-13.

(Mit Freuden Zart: *All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above*)

Sing to the LORD! O, bless His Name! All nations tell His glory!
Salvation's tidings loud proclaim; let earth rehearse His story!
For God is greatly to be praised; His throne above all gods is raised!
Fear Him and sing His glory!

Let heaven sing with lusty voice; let earth and sea sing sweetly!
Let fields and trees in Him rejoice, for He is coming swiftly
to judge the world in righteousness, the peoples in His faithfulness.
He comes; exalt Him greatly!

5 The Measure of Fellowship

Pray Psalm 133.1, 3.

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
...*It is* like the dew of Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the LORD commanded the blessing—
Life forevermore.

Sing Psalm 133.1, 3.

(Tryggare Kan Ingen Vara: *Children of the Heavenly Father*)

O behold, how sweet, how pleasant, when the brethren dwell together;
all in unity abiding find God's blessing there presiding.

Read 1 Corinthians 10.1-30; meditate on verses 23-30.

Preparation

1. What did Paul say was the standard of true fellowship?
2. What did he say about considering the consciences of others?

Meditation

Paul's discussion of eating foods offered to idols which began in chapter 8, brackets a section (chapter 9) in which Paul made himself an example of self-denial for the sake of the Gospel. Now he returns to the question broached in chapter 8 and brings it to a close by elaborating on the meaning of true fellowship and how it works for love and edification (v. 23).

We enjoy the fellowship of the Lord, which we express and enjoy together in His Supper (vv. 14-17). And we have fellowship with one another, and are sharers together in Christ, of Christ, and with Christ. Our primary concern must be for the wellbeing of those with whom we share fellowship (v. 24). If we seek the interests, concerns, and needs of those with whom we have fellowship, the Lord will express His fellowship with us into our own lives, thus filling us with pleasure and joy. And that fellowship of the Lord will come through our lives to others, so that their fellowship with Him may be enhanced.

We cannot seek the wellbeing of others if we are ignorant or indifferent to their struggles, concerns, needs, and so forth. We must reach out to them, seek to know them, keep them in our prayers, and listen as the Spirit prompts and guides us to seek their wellbeing. If we do this in the matter of eating meat offered to idols, we will frustrate the devil and his minions (v. 20) and guard the conscience of our neighbor so as not to create problems for our neighbor's values or priorities. Better to deny our own freedom to eat (v. 29) than to risk creating a stumbling-block for others.

The bonds of fellowship in Christ are strengthened as we empty ourselves, denying our own needs and reaching out to share in the lives of others. Let love for others be a guiding principle of your own conscience, and you'll be more likely to safeguard theirs by thinking more about their needs than your own.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Paul told the Corinthians that even if something is lawful, if it is not helpful or edifying, it should not be done. This is easy to accomplish, if at the heart of everything we do, the well-being of others is first and foremost in our minds (1 Cor. 10.23, 24).

Next, he dealt with the matter of our conscience. Twice he told them, "Don't ask" (1 Cor. 10.23, 27). If you

don't know that the meat has been offered to idols, then you are not guilty for eating it.

However, if we know it is tainted, and still partake, then we are guilty.

“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (Jms. 4.17).

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law” (Prov. 29.18).

If you know something is wrong according to God's law, and you do it, it is sin. If you know something is right, but doing it will make someone stumble, and you do it anyway, it is sin.

We are to be mindful of all we do and say and eat and drink because the point of all of this is that others believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. As He said, “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe” (Jn. 14.29). So that you and others “may believe that I AM He” (Jn. 13.19).

It is the crux of the matter. God sent His Son Jesus into the world to save sinners. All of us. The world (Jn. 3.16). And those of us that have become His children need to make very sure that everything we do is pleasing to Him and is not a detriment to someone else's salvation. We dare not be a hindrance or stumbling block. “And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also” (1 Jn. 4.21).

It is the measure of loving fellowship.

For reflection

1. What would you say is the key to thinking more about others than ourselves?
2. What will you do today to show the love of Jesus or to edify someone in Him?
3. What should you do if you are the cause of someone falling into sin?

This is a precept that is very necessary, for we are so corrupted by nature, that every one consults his own interests, regardless of those of his brethren. Now, as the law of love calls upon us to love our neighbors as ourselves, (Matthew 22:39,) so it requires us to consult their welfare. The Apostle, however, does not expressly forbid individuals to consult their own advantage, but he requires that they should not be so devoted to their own interests, as not to be prepared to forego part of their right, as often as the welfare of their brethren requires this. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on 1 Corinthians 10.23

Pray Psalm 133.2, 3.

Ask God to show you what you can do to enrich the fellowship of Jesus which you share with the people in your Personal Mission Field.

Sing Psalm 133.2, 3.

(Tryggare Kan Ingen Vara: *Children of the Heavenly Father*)

Like the precious oil of blessing flowing down on Aaron's vestment,
God's anointing rests forever where His people dwell together.

Like the dew of Hermon's fountain falling down on Zion's mountain,
so the blessing of the Savior dwells where unity finds favor.

6 Salvation So Small

Pray Psalm 84.1-4.

How lovely *is* Your tabernacle,
O LORD of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
Even the sparrow has found a home,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
Where she may lay her young—
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,
My King and my God.
Blessed *are* those who dwell in Your house;
They will still be praising You.
Selah

Sing Psalm 84.1-4.

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

LORD of hosts, how sweet Your dwelling; how my soul longs for Your courts!
Let my soul with joy keep telling of Your grace forevermore.
Like a bird upon the altar, let my life to You belong.
Blessed are they who never falter as they praise Your grace with song!

Read 1 Corinthians 10.1-33; meditate on verses 31-33.

Prepare

1. What did Paul instruct the Corinthians to do?
2. When were they to do this?

Meditation

The Corinthians had a twofold problem that was keeping them from becoming something more than babes in Christ. The first was that their view of faith was centripetal rather than centrifugal. God had reached them with His grace through Paul's ministry, and so they assumed that being a Christian was all about them. My freedom. My needs. My group. Paul's corrective was to explain that they were all together in the fellowship of Jesus and were partakers of Him. Their calling was to love one another and build one another up in Jesus, to deny their rights, set aside their freedoms, postpone their needs, and care for their brethren.

The other problem was that their salvation wasn't small enough. They were saved. Great! They were forgiven and going to heaven! What a great and glorious promise! But the grace God showed them in Jesus is more than the promise of everlasting life then and there. It is also a promise of everlasting life now and here, and in all the small, quotidian matters that make up our daily lives.

To each of us God has given a full life each day: thoughts, experiences, work, conversations, preparations of various sorts, coming and going, eating and drinking. And in all these routine activities—"whatever you do"—we are to honor and glorify God (v. 31). We do so by being careful not to offend others in any of these matters (v. 32) and by seeking to please and benefit whomever God puts into our path (v. 33).

God uses all the small stuff of our lives to manifest His Presence, radiate a measure of His glory, channel His grace, and fill us with joy and pleasure in serving—in short, to fill our world with Jesus (Eph. 4.7-10). And we, like the Corinthians, must take up the challenge of ordering and conducting all our activities so that, by

the power of grace and truth, grace and truth shine from us in everything we do. The people in our Personal Mission Field could be built up in the Lord, if only a little, or even come to a saving knowledge of Christ (v. 33), if we just lived our salvation as small as it is great.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

When we “live our salvation as small as it is great”, we will be imitating our heavenly Father, the majestic Creator of all things, Who does all things well (Mk. 7.37).

In His encounter with Elijah, who was busy hiding in a cave, God found him, to encourage and comfort him. First, God asked him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” Then, He said to him, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” Then the LORD passed by him. “And a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice” (1 Kgs. 19.9-12). Then God spoke with Elijah. The great and mighty God, Who created the wind and the earthquake and the fire, chose to minister to Elijah with a still small voice, because that was just what he needed.

God is calling us to minister in much the same way. We are told that whatever we do or say throughout the day, whether it is something large or small, all that we do is to glorify God. All of it (1 Cor. 10.31).

What a relief! We don't have to be doing the grandiose to be a vessel that God can use moment by moment. Conversely, we are warned, that those small things that we do can also be an offense to others (1 Cor. 10.32). So, we are to be mindful of our ways, and means, and doings, at all times. As Solomon wrote to his own son, “Hear...and be wise; and guide your heart in the way” (Prov. 23.19). And that way is Jesus. For He said, “I AM the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14.6).

And Jesus came to earth so that we, and all other sinners, could be saved. And we follow His leadership, and we listen to and do Paul's words: Don't seek your own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved (1 Cor. 10.33). Because that is the long and short of it, that is the beginning and the end—the end all be all of our existence—to do all to the glory of God, so that others may be saved.

In all the great and small ways—for God cares about the details of our lives.

For reflection

1. What “small things” does God have in store for you today?
2. How can you prepare right now so that you use these small things for His glory?
3. When you review your day before retiring, do you thank and praise the Lord for the small things He has given you to do? Would doing so help you to realize the potential of the small things in your life for glorifying God? Explain.

In eating and drinking, and in all we do, we should aim at the glory of God, at pleasing and honoring him. This is the great end of all religion, and directs us where express rules are wanting. A holy, peaceable, and benevolent spirit, will disarm the greatest enemies. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 1 Corinthians 10.31-33

Pray Psalm 84.5-12.

Pray that God will give you strength for your journey today, so that you will glorify Him in all the details of your life, be they ever so small.

Sing Psalm 84.5-12.

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

All Things for God's Glory: 1 Corinthians 10

Blessed are they whose strength is founded in Your strength, O LORD above.
All whose hearts in You are grounded journey in Your strength and love.
Though they weep with tears of sadness, grace shall all their way sustain.
In Your Presence, filled with gladness, they shall conquer all their pain.

LORD of hosts, my prayer receiving, hear me, help me by Your grace!
In Your courts I stand believing; turn to me Your glorious face!
LORD, our sun, our shield, our glory, no good thing will You deny
to those who proclaim Your story, and who on Your grace rely.

7 To Glorify and Enjoy God

Pray Psalm 116.4-6.

Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
“O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”
Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;
Yes, our God is merciful.
The LORD preserves the simple;
I was brought low, and He saved me.

Sing Psalm 116.4-6.

(Mit Freuden Zart: *All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*)
I called to God, “O LORD, I pray, my soul redeem with favor!”
The LORD is gracious in His way, and righteous is our Savior.
His mercy to the simple flies; He lifted me up to the skies—
I rest in Him forever!

Review 1 Corinthians 10.1-33; meditate on verse 31.

Preparation

1. When should we glorify the Lord?
2. How can we do that?

Meditation

This single verse summarizes the entire corpus of Paul’s writing: Do everything for the glory of God, to exalt His Name, advance His Kingdom, and turn the thoughts of others to Him. This is nearly the exact opposite of what was happening in Corinth within the believing community.

The Corinthians were not glorifying God—not displaying His goodness, truth, beauty, and grace—by their divisiveness (chapter 1), lackadaisical attitude toward the faith (chapter 3), insisting on their rights and freedoms to the detriment of others (chapters 5-9), and all the other ills Paul addressed to this point. If they could just “get it” that knowing Jesus is all about God and His glory, they would easily put their selfish interests and personal needs to one side and work harder at loving and edifying their neighbors.

We have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2.16). God has called us to His Kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2.12), each of us in our own unique calling and condition (1 Cor. 7). We are not our own, but we belong to Christ (1 Cor. 6). If we want to flourish, to know the joy and pleasure of God in our salvation, to see others coming to Christ and growing in Him, and to strengthen the fellowship of Jesus among our fellow believers, we must seek the glory of God, give honor and praise to God, and offer the cup of thanksgiving and singing to God in everything we do.

What shall we render to the Lord for all the grace and goodness He has shown us? Glory and honor and praise and selfless devotion to His calling.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

After Solomon died, Rehoboam his son was made king. He had a spurt of almost doing the right thing when he consulted the elders and asked, “How do you advise me to answer these people?”

They were the people who had come to complain that Solomon had put a heavy burden upon them. Surprise, surprise: This is the very burden that God warned the people of when they whined to have a king (see 1 Samuel 8.10-17).

Anyway, I digress. The elders said to Rehoboam, “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever” (1 Kgs. 12.1-15). But Rehoboam chose to listen to his friends who recommended treating the folks harshly, and it didn’t work out well, just like nothing ever does when we do it our way and not God’s way.

If only. We do not want this said about us: If only they had done what the Bible said, then their churches would have prospered, and many people would have come to know and serve Jesus, and all would give glory to God.

Wouldn’t it have been lovely for the people of Israel if Rehoboam had done the right thing? Wouldn’t it be lovely for the people in our Personal Mission Field if whether we were eating or drinking or raising our children or grocery shopping or coaching Little League or cleaning house or going to work or cutting the grass or driving our cars or going to the doctor or brushing our teeth, that more than anything, anything at all, we were doing it all to the glory of God?

“If we want to flourish, to know the joy and pleasure of God in our salvation, to see others coming to Christ and growing in Him, and to strengthen the fellowship of Jesus among our fellow believers, we must seek the glory of God, give honor and praise to God, and offer the cup of thanksgiving and singing to God in everything we do.”

“He who glories, let him glory in the LORD” (1 Cor. 1.31; Jer. 9.24).

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.*

*Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!
(Walter C. Smith, 1867)*

For reflection

1. Is glorifying God something you can plan for (Ps. 90.12)? Explain.
2. What role does prayer have in bringing glory to God in whatever we do?
3. How can you keep your focus on God so that you glorify Him in all things?

Lest they should think, that in so small a matter they should not be so careful to avoid blame, he teaches that there is no part of our life, and no action so minute, that it ought not to be directed to the glory of God, and that we must take care that, even in eating and drinking, we may aim at the advancement of it. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on 1 Corinthians 10.31

Pray Psalm 116.10-19.

Praise God and give Him thanks for the day ahead. Offer every detail of your day to Him and for His glory. Pray that God will help you fulfill your calling to His Kingdom and glory.

Sing Psalm 116.10-19.

(Mit Freuden Zart: *All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*)

Afflicted, I believe His Word, though lying men would undo me.

All Things for God's Glory: 1 Corinthians 10

What shall I render to the LORD for all His blessings to me?
Salvation's cup I lift above and call upon the God of love
and pay my vows most truly.

How sweet to Him when saints depart—make me, Your servant, Savior!
From sin You loosed my wand'ring heart; I praise Your Name forever!
On You I call, my vows to pay; here in Your Presence I would stay,
Your praise to offer ever.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What does it mean to participate in the fellowship of Jesus?
2. How does the fellowship of Jesus help us in love and edifying our brethren in the Lord?
3. What is the conscience? What is involved in being sensitive to the conscience of someone?
4. What does it mean to glorify God in whatever we do? How can we do that?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this part of our study of 1 and 2 Corinthians?

For prayer:

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