**Common Temptations**

**1 Corinthians 10:6-13**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text proclaims a very simple truth, “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.” You and I are not very creative when it comes to most stuff, including the sins we fall into. You and I do not need anything exciting to tempt us, we fall into common temptations. You know the ones I am talking about. They are the temptations everybody has and to which all people succumb in their daily life. You are probably now thinking, “Oh really, and what are those?”

Look at our text from first Corinthians, common sins are listed there; idolatry, sexual immorality, putting God to the test, and grumbling. Three of those are found under the first table of the law, those are the ones that need the most attention, and so we will deal with those today.

Sexual immorality, the fourth temptation in the list, barely needs to be mentioned. We all know how common sins of that kind are – everything from outright acts of adultery, to sexual relations outside the bonds of holy marriage, to hardcore and softcore pornography which are rampant everywhere, and so easily accessible on the internet, to even simple lust in the heart. But we really do not need talk about sexual immorality at all, do we.

However, there are some common sins we fall into which we try to play off, we’d like to overlook them as a momentary weakness of faith and not ***really* actual** sins. However, here we have Paul taking the time to write this in order to remind us that these are big deals, they are indeed, sin. As I have said in the past, I know we cannot read the whole Scripture every Sunday, but it is unfortunate that our pericopal system began our text at verse six and did not go to the beginning of chapter ten. I am sure you have read the whole book of first Corinthians, but looking at the beginning of this 10th chapter will help us understand our text, when we read it in full context.

Paul starts the tenth chapter in this way:

*I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.* (1 Cor. 10:1-5)

These Corinthian Christians, Gentiles, are being informed that they are now part of The Church, that they are of the same faith as all those who came before them. They have been grafted into the vine of Israel, the eternal Israel, they have been made a part of God’s chosen people. It is for this reason that Israel’s history is their history. All those who have come before them in the faith are their “fathers.”

I pray you understand what that means for you! It is in the same way that all those who came before us in the faith are our spiritual fathers.

Did you pay attention? Take note of this… They were baptized. hey all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink – Christ. And yet, God was not pleased with most of them. Do you understand what this means? God was not pleased with most in his church.

Why?

What was the problem?

What did they do?

They fell prey to the common temptations.

First there was idolatry. Their worship of God was mingled with play. It may not seem like much to us, but God will not be mocked. They turned their worship time into a carousing party and God would not tolerate it. It may not be a problem in our congregations, but it is a temptation. I have seen churches in which their worship, if it has not turned holy time into a circus and mockery, it is surely very close.

There are two common temptations to sinfulness mentioned by Paul, which should concern us today. They are putting Christ to the test and grumbling.

Remember when the Israelites were marching around Edom. The people became impatient and spoke out against God and Moses, “Why did you bring us out here to die in this wilderness? For there is no food and no water and we loathe this worthless food.” At that time, God allowed the fiery serpents to come in and bite people and Moses was instructed to make the bronze snake and put it on a stick for the people to look at.

What was their sin? They were be dissatisfied with all that God was giving to them. God was providing manna and water for their needs. They did not like it. They wanted what they wanted, when they wanted it. Eating the same thing every day sounds quite boring, we can almost sympathize with them.

However, there was a greater problem – who was the food they were given? Christ! Who was the water? Christ! Notice that I asked ***WHO*** was the food and drink? God was not giving them simply physical food, but spiritual food for their journey in the wilderness. That is why Paul records that they put Christ to the test.

What do you want to happen here on Sunday morning? Do you like the food and drink that you receive? Do you understand the significance of what you are receiving as you gather together in this place; what you are hearing, eating and drinking? Would you like something else, something different, something “better,” something more tasty, something more appealing to your sensitive taste buds? Do you want something more fun and enticing? That is what the Israelites in the wilderness wanted, they were dissatisfied with what God gave to them – that which was best for them – and they tested God’s provisions to them. God responded to dissatisfaction by sending them fiery serpents.

Finally, Paul speaks about their grumbling. We could talk about our grumbling against God. Let’s face it, depending on the day, there is something that will come up that we can find reason to grumble against God. Try sitting in confinement at home, quarantined – yeah, life stinks! There is the nasty thing out there called COVID-19…

masks are now required,

you can only get so close to people,

events have been cancelled,

life is complicated and difficult because of it. “Why don’t you fix it God!”

You can hear people grumble against God, “life stinks, and then it rains.” How many are grumbling against God for the inordinate amount of wet weather. Indeed, there are some places where the water is way too high, livelihoods are being threatened, shorelines are gone, and people are afraid of what will happen to their property. So yes, we should pray to God that He grant relief from the flooding, *if it is His will.* But we should not grumble against God, nor put Him to the test.

There are a multitude of things people complain about. One complains about a hangnail, another grumbles about their cancer. Some grumble against God for their boy or girl friend problems and another blames God for the death of a spouse of many years. Some blame God for the stupidity of their boss and others grumble that they have no job. It is common to blame God for the woes of the world – completely forgetting that sinfulness has brought all of creation to the point of groaning, as in the pains of childbirth.

To blame God, and to grumble against Him as the cause of our problems – is sin. Paul is referring to the time that Korah and his company questioned Moses’ and Aaron’s authority and were grumbling against them and God for what they were doing and how they were leading Israel. If you remember, they, their families, and their followers were destroyed when the land opened up and swallowed them.

Dear friends, these are common temptations, every single one of them. We are like the Israelites, our forefathers in faith, we are also tempted to believe that we are beyond such sins, or else tempted to believe that they are not such bad things. These are sins which grieve the Lord deeply and we need only look at His response to them in the lives of His chosen people of the Old Testament era.

But let not our sin and God’s wrath against it be the last word. Yes, these are common temptations that come upon all – including you and me. But we are not left alone to face them, nor are we left alone when we have failed to overcome them.

God has promised that with every temptation He will provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it. The way of escape is none other than Christ Himself, who has overcome all sin and all temptation. He has overcome it all and then allowed Himself to suffer the punishment we deserve for our failures to resist temptation.

Christ Himself is our escape in the face of temptation

And Christ is our escape from wrath and punishment when our flesh, struggling against the Spirit, leads us to be overcome by temptation.

That is why we do not neglect water, word, and meal.

United to Christ in the water of baptism, we are baptized into His death and given a new life. We are already dead to sin, and raised to the new life He lives in us.

With a Word, Christ comes to us and gives us forgiveness, the great escape – that which releases us from sin and its eternal consequences.

In a meal, Christ is still the bread of life come down from heaven that feeds us in the wilderness of this world – and the very blood He shed is given us to drink for the forgiveness of sins.

Even as the temptations are common, so are the cures. There is nothing exciting in them. In fact, their commonness may lead us to complain about them because they are so plain. But only the outward trappings are common, they only seem plain to our fleshly eyes – a sprinkling of water – a word from the mouth of the pastor – a wafer of bread that may get stuck to the roof of the mouth – and a sip of wine.

You have been given to know the truth, that they are so much more. God uses water, word, bread, and wine to give you the way of escape – to give you Christ – to give you the forgiveness He purchased for you and eternal life. Do this often, receiving these gifts. Amen.