

"Called to Win the Race"

I Corinthians 10:1-13

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(Continued from Sunday school lesson)

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It's great what love does. The Bible says a lot about love. I appreciate the Love that God has for you and me and that He has for this world. It's something that we don't understand. Theologians have tried to explain it. Books have been written about it, but it's an impossibility to be able to explain in full about the Love of God.

Chapter ten of I Corinthians verses 1-13

1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it .

Paul talked about running a race and how important it is to run the race. He compared the Christian life to a runner, running a race. Paul talked about; if a runner was to run that he had to condition himself. There were some things that he had to do and some things that he should avoid doing. If he was going to be successful, he would keep his mind and thought process and his way of thinking upon the goal; upon the finish line. He would stay in his lane and he would obey the rules. He would do all those things because he wanted to win a prize. Paul also stated that he needed to keep his body under subjection least after he preached to others that he himself would become a castaway. Paul wanted us to

understand how important it was to run and to obey the rules. Also how important it is to do that which God has commanded us to do. Because if we get outside of our lane, the area that God has intended for Christian people to live in then we become disqualified and we will not be able to win the prize.

Paul, in chapter ten, is going to give us some examples that happen to people that started out on the Christian race, they were following God, but along the line they quit obeying the rules of the race. Paul is going to tell us what happened to them. When you read this, it should be a stern warning to us as to how important it is for us to stay in the race and *how important it is for us to be obedient to God and to follow Him.*

Paul says here: "I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;" He is talking about the children of Israel that had been in Egypt. They had been down there for four hundred years and we know that God sent Moses down there to bring them out. Paul says here, "that all of our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea." When you read the story about the children of Israel, you will find out that God put a cloud in the daytime for them to see and when the cloud moved, they had to move. That tells us that there is a way that God does lead His people. That's what the cloud was for; it was for leadership and for direction so that they could see that God was going in this direction. If they were going to go in the direction that God wanted them to go, then they would follow the cloud. That was the presence of Almighty God. It was there. The guidance was there.

The Bible says that all of them were under the leadership of Almighty God. All of them were. All had the privilege of being able to look up in the sky and see the presence of Almighty God and see the direction of Almighty God, to know that God was leading them. They all had the privilege. Probably, two to four million people were there. Keep that thought in mind. They were all there and they all had the privilege. Not only that, but the Bible says that they were all passed through the sea; they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

We know that the cloud led them out of Egypt and they got to the Red Sea. They couldn't go anywhere, they were trapped. The Egyptians were behind them and the Sea was in front of them. We know that God told Moses to lift up his rod. We know all that.

It says here, that all our fathers, they all passed through the sea. Do you know what that means? When Moses commanded to people to go through the sea and every one of them followed Moses through the sea; they were saying, Moses, we know that God has called you; we know that God has commissioned you. We know that you are leading us in the right direction because of the cloud. We believe you and we are going to trust you, and we are going to follow you. We accept the authority that God has given you and we are going to go through the sea and they all did. Now that was a great privilege to have the cloud in the sky, have a leader like Moses, to be able to leave Egypt, and to be able to start toward the land of promise/the land of Canaan. Just because all were under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all had the great privilege of having the presence of God and the guidance of God--*just because they had this privilege did not mean that they were going to be successful.*

We have the Word of God today. We have the Holy Spirit of God today to lead us, guide us and direct us. We have great leaders that God has blessed us with but that does not mean we are going to be successful. The bible says in verse three that they all ate of the same spiritual meat. That means that God provided for them. All of them ate of the same thing that God gave them. God was providing for them and taking care of their daily needs. God was doing that. God was blessing them. God was leading them to a land of promise. God was leading them to a land of security. They all had the same privileges. They all were under the cloud, they were all baptized, they were all eating the same spiritual meat, but even though they were all doing that, that did not guarantee that they were going to succeed.

The Bible says: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." They ate the same thing, they drank the same thing, and they drank the spiritual drink. What that means is that God was supplying everything that they needed; physically, spiritually, whatever they needed, God was providing that.

You may have had a good beginning. You may have got saved. You may have all kinds of things happen in your life. You may have sung in the choir. You may have preached. You may have done all kinds great things in life, but the question that we need to ask ourselves is "Where are we at today on our journey?"

Are we still on the journey? Have we thrown up our hands and quit? Are we still in this race? Where are we at? Are we still yet eating from the hand of God? Are we still yet following the cloud that God put out there for us? Are we still yet following the leadership that God has placed for us? Where are we at on this Christian race?

A lot of folks have quit. A lot of folks are contemplating quitting. A lot of folks have just turned and walked away from God. Do you know what they think? They think that they are going to be alright. It is a dangerous thing when we quit following the hand of God. All of them ate, drank, followed the cloud, left Egypt, were baptized, left the world (that's what Egypt is a picture of is the world), they all left, but something is going to happen here.

The Bible says: "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Do you know what that means? They come across the Red Sea, they come right up to the place where they could look over into the land of Canaan, but they would not go in. We know that they stopped believing the leaders that God gave them. They believed they would bring them across the Red Sea and that they would do a lot of things for them, but when it got to right to the place where they could look over into the land of Canaan,

where God wanted them to be, they stopped believing the messengers and the leaders that God gave them.

The Bible says that God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. We know that they wandered around in the wilderness for forty years. When you look at the word "overthrow" it means that there were dead bodies scattered all over the whole land in that wilderness. Do you know why? They quit believing God. They quit running the race. They didn't think that discipline was anything necessary anymore. They didn't think about what God had set down for them to do. They just wanted to do their own thing and that is what they did.

Here is what happens. They left Egypt. They were under the cloud. They went through the sea. They ate of the food that God gave them. They drank of the water that God gave them. They all did that.

I want to ask you a question. How many of them made it? How many of them were serious about getting to the land of Canaan? There were two to four million of them that left the world, they were baptized, they were associated with the things of God, they ate from the hand of God, they drank from the rock, but how many of them made it. That should be a warning to us. Paul says that these things were written for our example. These things were written for our example to the intent that we may not lust after evil things.

It's serious stuff. Do you know how many of them made it? Do you know how many of them really had their mind focused upon the promise land? Do you know how many really believed the leadership that God gave? Do you know how many were appreciative of the fact that God was leading them? Out of all the millions that were there, *only two made it*. Do you know why they made it? Because they were not sidetracked into believing that they couldn't make it.

What happens to runners today and to a lot of Christian people today is that they come up to a little difficulty in life; it may be great, or it may not be so great; and they think that they cannot do it any longer. They feel sorry for themselves and someone comes along and pats them on the back and they all sit around and have a pity party.

I am not saying that we don't need to have mercy or be kind to people—I'm not saying that. Life is going to bring a lot of tragedies. Life is going to bring a lot of problems. If every time that life brings you a problem where you want to throw up your hands and quit then you have quit a long time ago. Life is going to bring those kinds of things.

Two of them made it out of millions. Do you know why they didn't make it? They didn't make it; because they sinned. Do you know why a lot of church members are not going to go to heaven today? A lot of them have never been born again. Also, a lot of them has been born again, left Egypt, been baptized, knows what the presence of God is and who He is, ate at the hand of God; but somewhere along the line they lusted after evil things and they are not going to make it.

I want you to go to heaven. I mean that sincerely. If I teach you that you are just going to glide on in, you have left Egypt, you have been baptized, you have seen the hand of God and that's all there is to it; if I teach you that then I'm teaching you a lie. I would be teaching something that could cause you to be tripped up. I would be teaching you something that will cause you to be lost forever. I won't do that because it is serious stuff.

The Bible says: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." Do you know what some of these folks did? They lusted after evil things. When you read the scriptures, you will find out that during their journey, they started thinking about Egypt and how great things were in Egypt. They thought about all of the food that they ate in Egypt.

They got their minds off of the Promised Land and got their minds back on Egypt. Therefore, they died. That's what happens when you disobey God.

You may still come to church. You may still participate in things, but you have died. You may still speak and be mobile, but spiritually you are dead. It is serious when we lust after evil things. Whatever it is that is evil that we lust after, that we desire, when we crave it and we put our hands upon it; it's a very serious thing. If we don't repent of that then we are not going to make it to heaven.

The Bible says: "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Moses went upon the mountain to get the Ten Commandments. He was gone for awhile and the people said, we don't know where Moses is at, we don't know if he is coming back or not. Therefore, they convinced Aaron to make them a golden calf.

They were worshiping a golden calf and saying this is the god that brought us out of the land of Egypt. If you read the scriptures, you will find out that they were having a great big party worshiping this golden calf. They were being very immoral in their worship of this golden calf. The Bible says that they sat down to eat and drink then they rose up to play. That is what that means. They become very immoral in their idolatry worship of a golden calf. They died spiritually.

When we worship anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ then we are dead. Preachers, pastors, deacons, and lay people are dying because they have lusted after evil things. We are worshiping things today that we should not worship. We get our minds focused upon everything today except keeping our minds upon the Lord Jesus Christ and worshiping Him.

What happens to us in our church world today as a whole is when Spring rolls around and the first flower shoots through the ground then many people lose sight of the goal. So many people lose sight of the race. As long as it is warm, we can do so many things and whatever it is that we are doing; we completely lose

sight of the goal. Then when the first freeze comes along and some can't do what they want like the things that they can do in the summer; they come back to church as happy as a lark. They want things to go great, jumping, hollering, and snorting, but then next Spring comes when the first flower comes up they are out and gone again.

Running a race is more than just running part-time. If we are going to run this race and we are going to win this race; it is going to be because we used some diligence and we are going to run day in and day out, week in and week out, month in and month out; whether it is winter, spring, summer or fall we are going to run this race with one thing on our mind and that's getting to heaven.

I'm not saying that we don't need vacations because we do. Everybody needs those times of rest. Jesus took time to rest. However, we don't need six months of vacation.

Many of them, God was not well pleased with. These things were written for our examples. He uses the sin of lust, idolatry, and fornication. Fornication is a horrible sin and it covers a whole lot things. The people that were lusting, that were worshiping the idols, and that were committing fornication; were the same people that had been under the cloud, the same people that passed through the sea, the same people that ate of the spiritual rock, and drank of the spiritual rock; it was the same people. It is not talking about a different group here. He is talking about the same people that left Egypt, and were baptized in the sea, He's talking about the same crowd.

Paul said, "That's a warning to us." Just because we left Egypt, been baptized, just because we know what the presence of God is; does not mean that we are going to win the race. We forget that sometimes. We think that God is going to overlook our sin. If God did not overlook the children of Israel sins, God would have to be unjust if He overlooked our sins. God is not going to do that.

They committed fornication which is a horrible sin. The Bible says here and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Do you think that these people actually died? He used the word "fell" when you look that up, it means died. Do you think that God killed twenty-three thousand of these people who were under the cloud that passed through the sea, which ate of the food and drank of the rock. Do you think God really killed these people? I promise you they are dead because they committed fornication.

They done things that God said was illegal and out of bounds. God said if you are going to follow me and I am going to provide for you; then you cannot commit fornication. These folks committed fornication and twenty-three thousand of them died in one day.

Do you think that is serious? It is serious.

When we do things that are wrong, we die. If we don't repent, we die spiritually. Maybe not physically, but spiritually and that is a whole lot worse.

The Bible says: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." They got impatient with God. They were very impatient and did not want to wait upon the hand of God. Do you know what God did? God's got a way to get our attention.

God's got a way to get my attention and God's got a way to get your attention. When I become impatient, when I think that God doesn't know what He is doing, when I think that God is not doing things when I think that He should be doing things; then I'm getting at a place where I am putting God to the test then God is going to react and we won't like it.

When I get impatient, I get bit by snakes that kill me. God sent fiery serpents among the people. They died. Do you really think that the people that got bit by the snakes died? Do you think that all those who would not look at the pole died?

They died because they got outside the standard that God said His people were to live inside of; they got outside of that and they died. They died a horrible death. The poison that these snakes put into them made them die a horrible death. They got outside the boundaries that God placed for us.

We can have fun and enjoy our Christian life as we go to heaven. I can't enjoy my Christian life and enjoy living here while living in sin and then expect to be happy here and go to heaven when life is over. It cannot be done. God will not overlook your sin. God has a standard that we have to live inside of and God's got a way for His people to live. When I get outside that and when I have sinned against God; then God will judge my sin.

These folks died. They were under the cloud, they left Egypt, they were baptized, they ate of the meat, they drank of the drink, they accepted Moses leadership; but yet they sinned and they died. It is serious. We don't need to put God to the test because He will react. You will not like what He does.

The Bible says: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." He is talking about the people that left Egypt. Some of them murmured and they were destroyed.

Isn't it sad to hear people murmur and complain about the lot that they have in life? Isn't it sad to hear people murmur and complain about the leadership that God has given? Isn't it sad to hear people complain about the mate that they have? You might think that God doesn't hear, but if God heard the murmurings of these people then God hears the murmurings that you have today. If you have been saved then somewhere along the way you have said that I don't like it any longer. I am going to murmur. I am going to complain; well, God is listening. You are going to die. God is going to destroy that.

Sure we are living under grace. Grace does not give me the right to sin. Grace does not give me the right to murmur and complain. Grace does not give me the

right to lust after evil things. Grace does not give me the right to commit fornication. Grace does not give me the right to tempt God and to worship idols.

If you live that way, YOU ARE GOING TO DIE. You'll NEVER SEE THE CITY that God has prepared for us.

You might say, preacher; I use to sing, God use to come down and bless me when I sang. I use to pray at home. The question is; "Where are you at today?" Are you still in the race today? Are you still living for the Lord today? Or, have you got sidetracked and lusting after evil things, committing sins, worshiping the wrong god. Where are you at today? Somewhere along the way, these people quit following God and they died.

If you rebel against the leadership of God, then you are going to DIE.

"¹¹ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Paul says that all of these things are written down for an example for us today so that we can look back and know that if we commit the same sins, then we are going to suffer the same consequences.

He uses the words, "upon whom the ends of the world are come." We know that we are very near the end of this age. Paul says that since we are there that all of the examples of the children of Israel; they should warn us not to live an ungodly life. God hates sin.

"¹² Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Sometimes we get to thinking that we have been on this road 20, 30, 40, 50 years; we think that we have it all figured out and that we are stronger than what folk thinks that we are then we get over confident. When that happens, we fall.

"13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

They were tempted but they didn't have to sin. They didn't have to lust after evil things. They didn't have to commit fornication. They did not have to do all the things that they did. They were tempted, but they did not have to do them.

It says that temptation is common to all men. What that means is that there is no temptation that is specific for this person or that person. We all face the temptations that mankind faces today.

The enemy cannot make you do anything. He cannot make you sin. He will tempt you to sin, but when you sin it is because you follow your own lusts or your own desire. That is when sin comes into place.

It also says that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God is faithful and God will keep me if I want to be kept. God will keep me within His guidelines if I want to be kept. God will keep that which I commit unto Him. If I will commit totally this fellow, myself totally to God; He will keep me.

When temptation comes my way, God is faithful and He will not allow the enemy to tempt us with something that we cannot withstand. He says that with every temptation God will make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Do you know what that means?

When temptation comes this way, God will make an avenue for me to get away from temptation. What happens a lot of times is this: when temptation comes our way and God will make an avenue for us to get away from temptation, but

instead of taking the door away from temptation we run towards the temptation. When we do that, we get in trouble.

The children of Israel, they didn't have to sin. You don't have to sin either. They didn't have to walk away from God, but they did and millions died. Only two made it.

That's a warning to us. They were under the leadership of Almighty God but they disobeyed and they died. Disobedience will kill you. Disobedience will separate you from God. That's what death is.

Where are you at today on your Christian race? Where are you at on your journey between Egypt and heaven? Where are you at today? Are you still yet obedient to God? Are you walking and living as God wants you to live? Are you being disobedient to God? Are you tempting God? Are you committing some kind of illegal or immoral sin? Are you worshiping something that you shouldn't be worshiping?

The question is today. Where are you at? It doesn't matter what happened yesterday. Where are you at today? That's the important question. God saved us and God will take us to heaven if we will just follow Him.