



PRODIGAL

CHURCH

SERIES: PRODIGAL CHURCH

DATE: SUNDAY, 4TH OF OCTOBER 2020

SPEAKER: MONICA CAREY

SERMON TITLE: IT HAPPENED AND IT HAPPENS

SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 10

It has been said that a wise person not only learns from their mistakes but from the mistakes of others. In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul, after urging the Corinthians to continue the race and be disciplined, warns the Corinthians against losing focus and letting their eyes and hearts get the best of them. How does he do this? He reminds them of their history.

Q1. Why do think Paul does this? What point is he trying to get across?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-11 IN THE VOICE TRANSLATION.

"I wouldn't want you to be ignorant of our history, brothers and sisters. Our ancestors were once safeguarded under a miraculous cloud in the wilderness and brought safely through the sea. ² Enveloped in water by cloud and by sea, they were, you might say, ritually cleansed into Moses through baptism. ³ Together they were sustained supernaturally: they all ate the same spiritual food, manna; ⁴ and they all drank the same spiritual water, flowing from a spiritual rock that was always with them, for the rock was the Anointed One, our Liberating King. ⁵ Despite all of this, they were punished in the wilderness because God was unhappy with most of them.

⁶ Look at what happened to them as an example; it's right there in the Scriptures so that we won't make the same mistakes and hunger after evil as they did. So here's my advice: ⁷ don't degrade yourselves by worshiping anything less than the living God as some of them did. Remember it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and then rose up in dance and play." ⁸ We must be careful not to engage in sexual sins as some of them did. In one day, 23,000 died because of sin. ⁹ None of us must test the limits of the Lord's patience. Some of the Israelites did, and serpents bit them and killed them.

¹⁰ You need to stop your groaning and whining. Remember the story. Some of them complained, and the messenger of death came for them and destroyed them. ¹¹ All these things happened for a reason: to sound a warning. They were written down and passed down to us to teach us. They were meant especially for us because the beginning of the end is happening in our time."

Q2. Why do you think Paul chose these particular stories to reference in Israel's history? What 4 "evils" does Paul warn them against in verses 7-10?

Q3. Can you give some personal examples of how you have learned from the mistakes of others? How have you put them into practice in your own spiritual walk?

Q4. What do you think the reasons could be why we are, at times, reluctant to learn from other's mistakes or learn from those who have gone before us?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:12-13. (NIV) IN VV.12-13 PAUL ISSUES A WARNING AND THEN A REASSURANCE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."

Q5. What do think the dangers are of thinking we are standing firm?

What a breath of fresh air v.13 is! God will provide "a way out"! One commentary put it this way: "The word that Paul uses is vivid (ekbasis). It means a way out of a mountain pass. The idea is of an army apparently surrounded and then suddenly seeing an escape route to safety." God promises that in those situations when we feel we are about to give in to temptation, He will always provide an escape route. We just need to be obedient to take it.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:14.

¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

There is a running theme of "flee idolatry" throughout the first 22 verses of 1 Corinthians 10. Monica quoted Tim Keller's definition of an idol from his book Counterfeit Gods:

"What is an idol? It's anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give."

Q6. Why is idolatry such an important issue for the life of a Jesus follower?

Q7. What are some examples of idols you are prone to direct your praise towards?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:14-22. IT IS ONCE AGAIN IN THE VOICE TRANSLATION WHICH SUMS UP THESE TRICKY PASSAGES SO CLEARLY.

"¹⁴ So then, my beloved friends, run from idolatry in any form. ¹⁵ As wise as I know you are, understand clearly what I am saying and determine the right course of action. ¹⁶ When we give thanks and share the cup of blessing, are we not sharing in the blood of the Anointed One? When we give thanks and break bread, are we not sharing in His body? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we, though many, are also one body since we all share one bread. ¹⁸ Look no further than Israel and the temple practices, and you'll see what I mean. Isn't it true that those who eat sacrificial foods are communing at the altar, sharing its benefits? ¹⁹ So what does all this mean? I'm not suggesting that idol food itself has any special qualities or that an idol itself possesses any special powers,²⁰ but I am saying that the outsiders' sacrifices are actually offered to demons, not to God. So if you feast upon this food, you are feasting with demons—I don't want you involved with demons! ²¹ You can't hold the holy cup of the Lord in one hand and the cup of demons in the other. You can't share in the Lord's table while picking off the altar of demons. ²² Are we trying to provoke the Lord Jesus? Do we think it's a good idea to stir up His jealousy? Do we have ridiculous delusions about matching or even surpassing His power?"

It is in these passages that Paul drives home the importance in why Jesus followers are not to engage in idol worship in any form. The idols in themselves are nothing. It's the demonic spirit behind these idols is the issue.

Monica in her sermon said wouldn't it be nice if life was just black and white, clear cut and tidy. Here's what's right. Here's what's wrong. Demons. We can all get that. But life isn't always monochromatic. In between black and white you have grey. And lots of life is grey, ambiguous and fuzzy.

One commentary described it this way: "Grey areas are morally neutral, Biblically ambiguous, and culturally controversial." Grey areas are all over the place. The grey area that Paul is about to get into towards the end of this chapter, and in the chapters to follow, is meat sacrificed to idols. But meat sacrificed to idols probably isn't the grey area you are currently wrestling with.

Q8. What are some grey areas that you see are currently in our culture? Music, film, TV, books, social media, clothing, exercise, body art are just a few examples to get you going for robust conversations!

In the weeks to come we will continue with the themes that Paul addresses in the rest of 1 Corinthians 10. But the very last verse that goes with chapter 10 is found in the first verse of chapter 11 and one I will leave you with:

So imitate me, watch my ways, follow my example, just as I, too, always seek to imitate Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1

Q9. If someone imitated you right now, what would their walk with Christ look like?

END YOUR TIME TOGETHER WITH PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.