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Somebody saw on the wall it was written,

Dear God, so far today I've done alright. I haven't gossiped. I haven't lost my temper. I haven't been selfish, and I haven't been impatient. But Lord, in a few minutes, I'm going to get out of bed and from then on, I'm going to need all the help I can get

So anytime you are not tempted or sinning is you're in bed unconscious. The rest of the time you really need his help and we are in the same situation as we live in two worlds, one in Corinth and one in the kingdom of God and I want to repeat to you 1-John 5:1

We know that the true child of God does not sin

The mark of a Christian is that he does not sin. This does not is an ontological does not, it means by design you are not supposed to sin. It doesn't mean that you don't sin at all. So this is important to understand.

CONTEXT

The context is the paradox of freedom. When you become a Christian as oppose to a Jew who basically lives under the law, you have to obey the law in order to be saved and now because of what Christ has done for you, you are completely free from obeying the law in order to be saved because that way you can't be saved and you are going to be condemned. So you actually have a freedom, but the freedom is a little bit different. The paradox of freedom is not being able to do everything you like. So freedom does not mean free to do anything and everything. The paradox of freedom is that you are freed from obeying the law in order to be saved, by the same time there are constrictions where you want to use your freedom so that you be optimally living and that is inside the water.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (ESV) **Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.**

So even though you are free on one hand and free not to obey the law in order to be saved but on the other hand you still beat yourself, you basically control yourself in order that you may walk in the road of holiness, otherwise you should be disqualified.

What does disqualified means?

When you are disqualified in a sport you are no longer allowed to continue that. This implies you may not be saved. That's why we have two types of people which stems from chapter 8; the strong who think they can go into the temple, idols are nothing, food offered to idols are nothing, I can eat, no problem, I am a strong Christian and then we have got weak who says I am worried about temptation all the time, I am going to fall. Paul is still dealing with these two kinds of people that is the context

27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

A. Because of this fear of being disqualified I want you to know we cannot rely on past spiritual experiences or blessings.

For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Here you have to draw upon Old Testament history and it is very interesting. The Corinthians were actually gentiles. They are not actually familiar with the Old Testament history. These were not their ancestors, but yet Paul draws upon the Jewish experience because these early Israelites are actually our ancestors. They are our spiritual ancestors, so therefore drawing upon their experience is correct because they are our spiritual ancestors. So therefore if we look here we cannot rely on past spiritual experiences.

What does it mean to be under the cloud and passed through the sea?

There was a cloud on the Israelites when they were emancipated from Egypt. By day they were led by the cloud. The cloud is basically a symbol of God's presence. By night it was by fire. So that is they were all under the cloud. This generation is called the Exodus Generation. This generation saw the cloud and they all pass through the sea. They were all baptized into the Moses. They were part of the special exodus generation.

When you are baptized, you are immersed into Christ, you are identified with Christ, you are united with Christ. For them their leader was Moses who led them out of the Egypt, so therefore they were united with Moses and they were baptized into Moses. So he is using New Testament language to describe an Old Testament phenomenon. So it is a metaphorical language.

3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

What is this spiritual food and what is this spiritual drink?

The manna that comes down from the sky was the spiritual food as it comes from God. This was the water that they get from the rock, they hit the rock and the water comes out. Every single day they got water, every single day they got manna and they got quail.

There was this Jewish myth, wherever they went there was a rock and the rock will provide the water. What Paul is reading backwards is that rock is actually Christ. There is a Jewish myth that say that as the people of Israel walking there was a rock that come and roll next to them and the rock has many holes and from the holes all the water was gushing out, but nobody believed that Jewish myth, but it is a fact that it was a rock that supplied the people of Israel all the time. We identify rock with God

“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he. Ex 32:4

then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation. Deut 32:15b

So in this situation where God is a rock and God extrapolates and it is Christ that actually supplied them with water. So this is a generation that were led directly by God with his glorious crown, fire at night, miraculous salvation through sea, supplying them with spiritual food, spiritual drink throughout the entire time of 40 years. So this is a parallel, the Jewish experience of salvation with Moses, the Christian salvation experience with Jesus Christ. So there is a parallel. So we have been saved by Christ, Christ is our Moses. He has cross the divide with a cross, just like the Exodus generation and yet

5. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

What happened to that generation?

Every single one of them died, they never reached the promised land. The only people that reached the Promised Land were those under the age of 20. It was Caleb and then Joshua, even Moses never entered it. He saw the Promised Land but he never got in.

Jude 1:5 (ESV) Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

So we are talking about the majority of generation did not believe. That generation went through all that miracle for 40 years and they did not believe which is ironic.

Hebrews 3:16-19 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Heb 4:1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 For good news came to us just as to them, but the message

they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

So basically the Exodus Generation, they heard but they did not believe. We hear, we need to be careful that whatever we hear is united with faith. So what is faith got to do with it? So you have got this situation of the whole bunch of them who basically did not believe and probably were not saved, some people say they were disciplined by death, but they were still saved. Other say there is loss of salvation, but the text seems to move towards they were not actually believing in God because Jude describes that they had unbelief. You will never have a person with unbelief in heaven that means basically you are saved by faith.

Matthew 7:22-23 **22** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' **23** And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, **you workers of lawlessness.**'

Important thing is basically righteousness, living a life. Pastor Kevin Conner from Melbourne has written many books. He is a charismatic and I remember having a nice conversation with him about being slain in the spirit. He told me, I don't care how many time they slain in spirit as long as after they slain in spirit when you get up you walk straight, because if you don't walk straight then there is something wrong with you. So it is not experiences that are important, it is the way you live that is what Paul is trying to get at. So therefore Paul is saying that

So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. **27** But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

So it does not matter how fleshy you run, it is like you have to finish. It is just like the hare and the tortoise race, the one who perseveres till the end in terms of spiritually walking according to the Word of God. So the true son of God does not sin.

B. We need to deal with idolatry in our own lives.

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not **desire** evil as they did...v6

So the whole basis of their loss of salvation is due to the fact they have desire. Desire is actually a strong desire in Greek and our desires can be hijacked by Satan to go either way, either for God or for the devil.

Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." I Cor 10:7

This is taken from Exodus 32:6. Moses has taken just a bit of time to come down from mountain and just because he was delayed the people told Aaron, why don't you make us a God so that we could worship, so they gave him their rings, melted it down and made a golden calf and they got up and they worshipped the calf and they rose to play, which means having sexual play. So they got indulged in sexual immorality.

8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did and 23,000 of them fell in a single day

This refers to an episode in Numbers 25 when the people had sex with the Moabites. So idolatry is a sin beneath the sin. Our first commandment is to love God

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3
"You shall have no other gods before me. Ex20:2-3

Every morning every Israelites will recite

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Deut 6:4-5

So idolatry is basically coming from a deep craving and then you must have that in your life and that results in punishment. So we must realize that you we are almost never aware of our idolatry

11 Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. 12 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

When it comes to idolatry you guys would say that I am not an idol worshipper, but the trouble is that idolatry is hidden. It is a sin behind the sin. There are a lot of things that you do, it is not the sin itself, it is why you did it and that is the biggest danger.

You will always say I am perfectly okay. Most times our idolatry is unseen, you don't know you actually suffer from this until you actually go through a crisis. So idolatry isn't like this. Idols in the heart are the ones that are difficult. Martin Luther says

"whatever your heart clings to and relies upon, that is your God; trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and idol."

"Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Ezekiel 14 :4

So idols are in the heart. These are the thing that keeps us from the table. Jesus tells a parable, inviting people to the banquet

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a **field**, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought **five yoke of oxen**, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' 20 And another said, 'I have **married a wife**, and therefore I cannot come.'

All these things can be our idols. So an idolatry in the end will lead to addiction and this will actually take your freedom away. So here is a warning against idolatry.

C. We need to deal with Grumbling in our own lives

1 Corinthians 10:9-10 (ESV) We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, **10** nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.

Psalms 78:18 They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved

Num 21:5 “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.”

Numbers 14:2-4 (ESV) And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! **3** Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” **4** And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

So here they are actually blaming God for the uncomfortable heat, the fact that you have to go hunt for food every single day. So grumbling is basically expressing yourself in low tones of disappropriation, grumbling, it emphasizes discontent and is usually against a particular person. When you grumble it is either at a person or a situation, it reveals to you that God is not good enough, He is not faithful enough, He is not clever enough, because if God was so clever I don't have to suffer like this. We might think that God is not

- Good enough
- Faithful enough
- Clever enough
- Loving enough
- Strong enough
- Trustworthy enough

That is why we grumble. We are not grateful enough and we are not trusting enough. So we come to church same thing, preaching is boring, food is tasteless, it is unfriendly, people are messy, they drop food, they never clean up after themselves, what kind of church is this? So this is basically grumbling. So grumbling about the person and circumstance is the same thing as grumbling against God and this is a little bit different from constructive criticism.

Grumbling is not appealing to authority, expression of disagreement, praying through our pain.

Psalms 142 1:2 With my voice I cry out to the LORD; with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD.² I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.

So it is okay to come before God and complain, say God I am upset, I don't understand why you are doing this to me. I feel very angry. So it is okay to express this to God.

Psalms 140:9-11 As for the head of those who surround me, let the mischief of their lips overwhelm them! **10** Let burning coals fall upon them! Let them be cast into fire, into miry pits, no more to rise! **11** Let not the slanderer be established in the land; let evil hunt down the violent man speedily!

So he is complaining about other people, very upset. I wish they would die and then he turns around

Then he turns around and say

Psalms 140:12-13 (ESV) I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted and will execute justice for the needy.¹³ Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name; the upright shall dwell in your presence.

Every time you will look into the Psalm, he will complain, complain and complain but at the end of the Psalm it says, I will still trust in the Lord that is the difference. You are allowed to complain before God to express to pray through your pain, through your depression but at the end you should trust in the Lord. So that is how we have to deal with that.

Psalms 142:4-5 (ESV) Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul. ⁵ I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

So everybody abandons you, everybody dumps you, your wife leaves you, your children leave you, you are all alone, you can trust on nobody but in the end you end of you are my refuge. So that is the right way of complaining.

Philippians 2:14-16 (ESV) Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Which means if you don't do that, I may have run in vain. So the commandment here is very strange and it is, do all things without grumbling or disputing. That is absolutely shocking, which means in every situation. Why, because if you look at the reason here that you may be blameless. In the sight of the world you would be like lights in the world because everybody can complain but you don't complain and you stand out because the reason why they don't complain is because they hold on to the word of life that they believe in every situation God is in control. If you start complaining like God is not in control and everywhere you go you are complaining, you are grumbling, you are disputing or something bad to find you will find it. We are asked in every situation to be thankful and not grumble.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV) give thanks in **all circumstances**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you

In all situation you have to find something to be thankful about. Thanking God is God's will. So you go through life in all things it is God's will for you to be thankful and it reflects faith in God if you don't grumble and thankful all the time. Imagine a church being transformed by these commands wherever we go we would really become like actual lights, because all the rest of the world is looking for bad things but we are always talking about the positive because we have a faith and trust that cannot be overturned. Now grumbling on the other hand and not giving thanks to the reflection that you don't trust God and you are looking for all the dark side of the world. So that is a challenge for us.

In we look in the way Paul writes his epistles, he is not afraid of criticizing people. Paul is not asking the Christians to be stupid and to be quiet with all the bad things. Constructive criticism is the key to.

The Strong

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 (ESV) Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. 12 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

So some of you might think you have been a Christian for so many years, you have gone through so many experiences, take heed you can fall. Everybody can fall.

D. Rely on His power to overcome temptations

13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Most of us memorize this. It is like a lifeline to you, let's break it down. When you have difficulty with temptations or trials. Trials are things that are actually are pressed upon you from outside. Temptations are things that will draw out your desire. The Greek word for trials and temptations is exactly the same. There are things that cause you to test your faith to fail. So basically the first thing that you need to understand is that when you are actually under a trial, the first thing you think is that you are the only one. When you are suffering you are the center of the universe that is why poor me, why me. So Paul counters this and say, whatever you actually suffer is common. So the first thing Paul tells us is, whatever happens to you happens to other as well. You are not special in a sense that God is trying to torture you. So that is why support groups are important. So it is important to know that this temptation that you have and that this trial that you have is common to everyone, you are not the only one. It means that God is not singling you out to punish you.

Second thing is that he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability. A story was told of two men by David Watson. Both had children, one was 4 years old and one was 5 years old. One was a Christian and one was a non-Christian and they both lost their children, one because had leukemia, suffered badly and died and another son climb over the fence into the swimming pool, jumped in and drowned. The Christian got very bitter, son died, left the faith and became an atheist. The non-Christian found God and found comfort in God and went on to be saved. Now both of them had the same suffering. How can one found God and the other lost God? Their circumstances were same but their response was different. The Christian had bitterness because he drew a line in the sand. He told God, you can test me for everything, you can kill me, you can take my money away, you take my health away but you don't touch my son. Now the moment you draw a line for God, big problem because God will surely walk pass the line, never do that to God. God is God, you don't draw line in the sand. So this is a very important verse.

God will not test you beyond your ability but you don't determine your ability. God knows you and God loves you. Matthew writes he knows how many hairs are there on your head, he knows when a sparrow falls. Don't you think he knows how much you can take? So that is important thing.

God will provide a way out of it.

Now there is a word Ekbasin, it is a military word of an army trapped in a valley, no way to escape, except one tiny road out. So God provides a way out of the temptation and for you to be able to endure it. So that is the situation. Don't think that every day you wake up and the illness is still there, which means God doesn't care. Remember Paul who had a thorn in his flesh. He prayed three times for it to be removed, God did not remove it, He allowed it to be there so that he could trust God more and he says in the end my grace is sufficient for you. Your weakness is made strong in strength.

Jesus temptation Model

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. John 17:17

So when we get immersed ourselves in the truth we are able to overcome that kind of temptation.

Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. V14

Some of us flirt, we go to the temple, we eat the meat there. The easiest way to get out of temptation is to get run away, move yourself from the source of temptation.

Food Offered to Idols:

In the temple why can't you take food offered to idols. He uses the analogy of Lord Supper

1 Corinthians 10:15-17 (ESV) I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. **16** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? **17** Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

He is saying that when you take the Lord Supper, when you take it together, when we break the bread together we are all one that is why we never had the Lord Supper at home. So eating and drinking is a participation, which indicates our oneness.

Jewish Worship Meal

1 Corinthians 10:18-20 (ESV) Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?

It means you have the altar and when you eat the bread means you are part of the worship and if we look in Deuteronomy 12:23

23 And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.

So here when they give the tithing they will also eat it, so they participate eating of the tithing on the altar, means they are worshipping. So now if that is the case what do I imply that the food offered to idols is anything or idol is anything.

1 Corinthians 10:19-20 (ESV) *What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.*

So it means if you eat food offered to idols in the temple that means you are participating with the worship of demons. So there is no intrinsic demon hiding inside the meat, it is just that when you take that meat and you take it in the temple with all the pagan people taking together it is a religious ceremony we actually worship God but there is actually nothing intrinsically wrong with the meat. It is the setting; it is not the meat itself. So

1 Corinthians 10:21-22 (ESV) *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?*

So therefore these two are incompatible, you are either for God or you are not for God. So therefore the people who are strong in the Corinthians, we can go and eat, we can participate, Paul is telling them you have to decide, you either participate and worship God or you worship demons, you decide. They have to cut off, they cannot go.

Principle to Live By

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (ESV) *All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.*

This is the principle because not only in those days there was food offered to idols but today there are so many things that are not written in the Bible. How do you actually learn to live? We follow this principle. You learn two things

- We seek the things that build us up
- We seek the good of other people.

Food offered to Idols sold in Market

1 Corinthians 10:25-30 (ESV) *Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 26 For “the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.” 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— 29 I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?*

So basically if it is that person's conscience you don't eat it. So therefore the same thing applies in two different situation. Now you take these two principles and you go back to live by all things are lawful, not all things are helpful.

So when you are confronted not just with food, where anything in life, whether you are wearing short or long skirts, spaghetti strap, you have to think is it helpful, does it build you up and does it stumble other people or hurt other people.

Paul said in chapter 9, I am all things to all men that I might win them for Christ. So here is for good of other people. So when your actions are always guided about the good of other people not yours and for yourself things that build up.