

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
1 Corinthians 10:1-5 and 11-13 EHV.
August 16, 2017
10th Sunday after Pentecost (WELS B.)



For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and they were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them – and that rock was Christ! Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them. He had them die in the wilderness...All these things that were happening to them had meaning as examples, and they were written down to warn us, to whom the end of the ages has come. So let him who thinks he stands be careful that he does not fall. No testing has overtaken you except ordinary testing. But God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability, but when he tests you, he will also bring about the outcome that you are able to bear it.

Children of our Heavenly Father, precious in His sight for Jesus' sake:

Peanut butter! I love peanut butter – creamy or chunky or extra chunky – I like them all. You know what's good for breakfast – some oatnut bread – smeared with peanut butter! If you were going to try and trap a small grey little church mouse – about as round as a 50¢ piece with little black beady eyes and little whiskers and tiny little feet – you could get one of these little round church mouse traps. Turn it over – and on the bottom pull back this little sticker – and smear some peanut butter in the little hole – then pull the sticker back over it! Now – very very carefully twist the top of the trap while holding on to the edge of the bottom – about a $\frac{3}{4}$ turn. Feel the little click? Then *very* carefully put the trap on the floor – with the little round opening beside the wall – right in the way of a little church mouse – running along the baseboard. In the night – in the dark comes the little church mouse – *cautious* – careful – he approaches the little hole. Sniff! Sniff! Smells like peanut butter – just inches away. Through this little hole – just a few steps – and your whiskers will be covered with peanut butter! In he goes! The outside spins – the mouse is pinched. And you don't even have to look at his little broken body. Into the trash he goes! Again it's tempting to think – I am *not a mouse* – I'm a thinking reasoning human being with an immortal soul. And yet time and again we stumble and fall into sin! Today God's Word is exceedingly practical as it warns us of the terrible danger of sin. And then the amazing grace of God that means we are forgiven by grace alone through faith alone based on Scripture alone! Today God's Word reminds us:

God is Faithful!

- I. Learn from the painful past...
- II. Trust in the present outcome!

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on is from the Apostle Paul's first letter to the believers in the Greek city of Corinth! Reading from the WELS Lectionary – series B – we are reading some 15 times this year – from letters to the Christians in Corinth! Pastor Gartner's farewell sermon--**Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!** was from 1st Corinthians! Paul preached

God's Word in Corinth on his second missionary journey. President David Vallesky – president of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary – wrote The People's Bible Commentary on 2nd Corinthians. "Location! Location! Location!" Corinth was located on a strip of land between two seas. To the East was the Aegean Sea – then Asia Minor – present day Turkey. To the West was the Adriatic Sea – then Italy. East/West trade passed through Corinth! Ships were unloaded on one side of town – then reloaded on the other side of town. If the ship was small enough – they were pulled and dragged through Corinth – and pushed back into the water – cargo and all – on a system of rollers! The city of Corinth was destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. and then reestablished by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. She was extensively rebuilt by Caesar Augustus! Remember him and his decree that **all the world should be taxed**? Corinth came to be the 4th largest city in the whole Roman empire – with some 200,000 to 250,000 people. There was a lot of sin in Corinth. There were no less than 12 heathen temples – the most famous of all the temple to Aphrodite – the goddess of love. She was worshiped by means of some 1,000 priestesses who sold "hugs and kisses" at the Temple. Corinth became a synonym for buying/selling "hugs and kisses" much the way Las Vegas is called sin city!

There were lots of troubles in the congregation in Corinth! There were cliques – factions. This group of people didn't get along with that group of people. Some people liked one pastor – some people liked another. The rich people were self-indulgent – having all the ribeyes and loaded baked potatoes and expensive wine for supper at 4:30 while the poor people had to work overtime – and so they ended up with their canned soup and bags of Cheetos that they brought to share. Then came Lord's Supper and some people had had way too much to drink and then came to Holy Communion – without realizing how important and serious the situation was. It was to people exceedingly lax in appreciating right and wrong – then slow in announcing forgiveness to the painfully repentant that Paul wrote some of the most personal letters of his whole ministry!

Today we hear Paul write: **For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and they were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them – and that rock was Christ!** The cloud! What does that mean to you – **under the cloud**? This is the Glory of the LORD – the cloudy/fiery pillar! It blocked the army of the mighty Pharaoh – dark on their side – while lighting the way for the children of Israel as they passed through the Red Sea on dry land! Was there a refreshing little spritz on your head – as you walked through the Sea? Did people put their hands into the water – little children touch the wall of water beside them – held up by the power of the Great I AM – as they walked to freedom in the wilderness – as many as a million people saved by grace alone – because their Heavenly Father loved them! Do you think of your baptism? Last Sunday about 10:45 a little baby named Easton Matthew was baptized. The Holy Spirit made water out of the faucet in the altar guild room powerful to wash away all his sins, plant saving faith in his tiny ♥ and adopt him into the family of believers! After the small drops of warm water ran down the back and sides of his head – you take a little cloth with a sea shell and three little drops of water on it – to dry the soft little wisps of hair. Then a word of blessing! A prayer that Jesus would keep this littlest lamb safe from all harm and especially spiritual danger – and the benediction! Hold him and rock him gently in your hands. I always pause for just a moment! Maybe – just maybe this was the last little one to get ready for Heaven – and Judgment Day will start?! Nope! Not yet! More people will be called to saving faith – and then the end will come! If you are a young man and wondering – what do I want to be when I grow up? There are not nearly enough Pastors to go around. Maybe you could go to

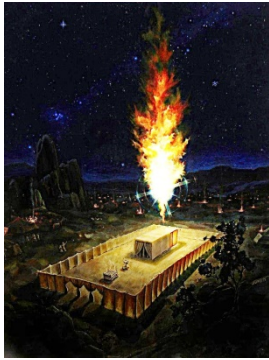
grade school and high school and college and the Seminary – studying God’s Word. You could be the one to hold a little person and baptize them – and then be with them forever by grace alone!

Nevertheless, God was not pleased with *most* of them. He had them die in the wilderness... People who were 20 years old – or older when they left Egypt – did not enter the promised land – except for Joshua and Caleb. Do you know how many people died – this close to the Promised Land – but not in the Promised Land? Very wise theologians estimate somewhere in the neighborhood of 600,000 people! That’s over ½ a million! *We who think of sin but lightly nor suppose the evil great here may view its nature rightly – here it’s guilt may estimate –* when we stand at the foot of the \dagger . See the price Jesus paid on account of my sins! The apostle Paul is warning us – be very careful. Where our soul will spend eternity is what hangs in the balance!

All these things that were happening to them had meaning as examples, and they were written down to warn us, to whom the end of the ages has come. So let him who thinks he stands be careful that he does not fall. Don’t get overconfident and reckless – overconfident and careless! Back in the day when people used to go to the circus there was a family of tight rope walkers known as the flying Wallendas! They would walk on a tight rope without using a safety net! The other day they were practicing doing this human pyramid when something went painfully wrong. People fell! There was no safety net and five people were seriously hurt! This is literally falling because they were too confident! Safety net? I don’t need one! And they did! Spiritual danger is all around. If you had met King David and told him – you will commit literal physical adultery – then arrange the death of your girl-friend’s husband – then for all intents and purposes – deny your sin for the better part of a year – I could imagine David saying, “Excuse me? Excuse me? Do you know who I am? You are familiar I assume with David and Goliath? David – the young man armed with a sling shot who brought down the warrior giant – then chopped off his head – with the giant’s own sword? That would be me. If someone is in the hospital and humanly speaking – it looks like they are going to go home to Heaven – what does the Pastor recite? The 23rd Psalm? I wrote that! And yet look how David sinned? “Before the rooster crows twice – you will deny even knowing me 3 times!” Simon Peter – the disciple who literally walked on water told the Lord Jesus this would never happen but it did! I would imagine people used to say, “If you can’t trust Judas Iscariot, who can you trust?” And Judas despaired! If you had told Thomas – you will be forever remembered as the Disciple who doubted – he would have said, “I doubt that! I love Jesus! I believe in my Savior!” But he did doubt! If you had told Saul of Tarsus – I appreciate your zeal for the glory of the LORD – but this Jesus of Nazareth that you are persecuting is in fact your only Savior from sin. You are painfully confused! He would have said, “I know the Old Testament Scriptures better than you do!” And he did! But he was wrong – wasn’t he! Some of the most gifted Pastors I ever knew have fallen into adultery, “borrowed” money, become addicted to alcohol, or drugs or false doctrine or some combination of public and offensive sins. Again and again we must all say, “There but for the grace of God – go I!” If we think we are standing we need to be very careful lest we fall!

No testing has overtaken you except ordinary testing. But God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability, but when he tests you, he will also bring about the outcome that you are able to bear it. *God is faithful!* Here is our most powerful and precious comfort – God is faithful! He always was and always will be – faithful to poor sinners like us! God is faithful! Monday night – August 7th we had the opening service for the Synod Convention. The singing was amazing hundreds and hundreds of men singing the praises of

the One True God. We sang, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God!" There were trumpets and French horns and the newly rebuilt pipe organ. And then came the verse, "Though devils all the world may fill—all eager to devour us..." And suddenly the accompaniment was all garbled and twisted and distorted and discordant! It was terrible—just the way a demon a fallen angel would like it! And then came the words, "One little word can fell him!" And it literally repeated—literally echoed—one little word can fell him...one little word can fell him!" What is that word? Any number will do. Jesus! Redeemer! Scripture! Grace! Faith! Forgiveness! We are saved by grace through faith for Jesus' sake. God is faithful. He will not fail us. Amen!



Rev. Anthony E. Schartz