

## Exodus 32:1-6 New International Version (NIV)

### The Golden Calf

**32** When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

<sup>2</sup>Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup>So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup>He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

<sup>5</sup>When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD.” <sup>6</sup>So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

## 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 New International Version (NIV)

### Warnings From Israel’s History

**10** For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. <sup>2</sup>They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup>They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup>and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup>Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.” <sup>8</sup>We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. <sup>9</sup>We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were

killed by snakes. <sup>10</sup> And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

<sup>11</sup> These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup> So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! <sup>13</sup> 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.

## Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. <sup>15</sup> I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup> Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup> Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

<sup>18</sup> Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? <sup>19</sup> Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup> No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. <sup>21</sup> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. <sup>22</sup> Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

## The Believer's Freedom

<sup>23</sup> "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. <sup>24</sup> No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

<sup>25</sup> Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, <sup>26</sup> for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

<sup>27</sup> If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. <sup>28</sup> But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one

who told you and for the sake of conscience. <sup>29</sup> I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience?

<sup>30</sup> If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

<sup>31</sup> So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. <sup>32</sup> Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— <sup>33</sup> even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. **11** <sup>1</sup> Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

## **Learning from History (Exodus 32:1-6 & 1 Corinthians 10:1-11:1)**

**10-May-20**

We're looking at **1 Cor chapter 10** - please have your Bibles open.

Let me ask God to give us understanding of His Word; Let's pray...

### **Intro**

**Unless** you've been **hiding** in a **cave** for a few months

**You're aware** that we've been **experiencing** the **effects** of the **COVID19** virus for a **couple of months** now.

**I wonder what we've learnt** from this **time of isolation** and from the **restrictions** that the **government** has put in place?

**[PowerPoint 1-COVID19?]**

**What** would **you** write down as your **lessons learnt**?

- **Perhaps** you've learnt **what's important** to you and **what you can live without**?

- Perhaps it's been a **time to get closer to God** - in **prayer and Bible study and meditation**
- Perhaps it's helped you **realized how important your family and friends are** - and how **important your church family is**
- Perhaps you've learnt the **church is the people** - not the building
- Perhaps it's helped you to **identify some idols in your life** - that you've been **worshipping and over investing time in** - rather than loving God and loving others
- Perhaps it's helped you **realize how fragile life is** - and that our **time on Earth is quite short**
- Perhaps you've learnt **what you miss** - and you'll be **more grateful** for what you have **when it comes back**
- I'd love to hear what you've learnt through this COVID19 pandemic?

(pause)

- What have we learnt as a nation?
  - Perhaps we've **seen how far away from God we've** become as a nation
  - Perhaps we've learnt **how awesome our doctors, nurses and frontline workers are**
  - Perhaps **God's telling us to look upwards to Him** - and **look outwards to others** - instead of thinking just about ourselves
  - Perhaps we've seen how **obsessed we are as a nation** - about sport - now that there isn't any?
  - Perhaps the **bush fires, drought, floods, storms and this virus** - are God's way of saying - **hey you're not in control** - come to the one who is in control and who is sovereign in all things

(pause)

I asked the youth group on Friday night - what lessons they had learnt from COVID19 - they told me:

- We take for granted what we have until we don't have it anymore
- Shopping is much harder - some shops don't have what you want - like toilet roll, disinfectant, sanitizer and disinfectant wipes - and it takes longer to shop with social distancing and limits on numbers in shops
- School is harder on-line - there are different apps to use for each subject - sometimes they get sent the wrong links - or the links are late being sent

When we look back on the year 2020 in years to come - will we remember any lessons from this COVID19 period?

Learning from history is the Apostle Paul's topic in 1 Cor 10 this morning.

It seems to me we can learn lessons only from our own experience - and learn everything the hard way.

OR we can learn from other people's experiences and mistakes.

The Bible - has lots of stories in it - about God's dealings with His people.

Paul's point in this chapter - is that God put these stories in the Bible - so we can learn from Him and learn from the experiences of His people - whether those experiences are good, bad or ugly.

So first up, Paul gives 5 ways that God helped His people - the Israelites - that's in verses 1 to 5.

[PowerPoint 2-5 helps]

### 5 ways God helped the Israelites in past (vv1-5)

1. **1<sup>st</sup> way God helped the Israelites** - in **verse 1** - refers to **Exodus 13** - When **Moses led God's people, the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt** - **God provided a guide** for the people to follow - a **cloud by day and pillar of fire by night** - to **guide** them and **protect** them from **Pharaoh** and his **army** - they were **under God's protection**
2. **2<sup>nd</sup> way God helped them** - also in **verse 1** - refers to **Exodus 14** - God provided an escape through the Red Sea - they passed through the sea on dry land
3. **3<sup>rd</sup> way God helped them** - in **verse 2** - also refers to **Exodus 14** - Paul says that passing through the Red Sea on dry land - was a **kind of baptism of the Israelites into God's family**. It wasn't a **water baptism** [because the only people who got wet that day - were **Pharaoh and his army**] - No! it was a **spiritual baptism** (Romans 6:1-4) - they were **baptized or immersed into Moses** as their God given leader - in the same way we are baptized or immersed into Jesus through the HS when we believe in Jesus' death for our sins to be forgiven and believe in His resurrection for eternal life
4. **4<sup>th</sup> way God helped them** - in **verse 3** - refers to **Exodus 16** - God provided spiritual food for them. Why is it spiritual food? Because, it's **food from Heaven** - God provided manna for them each day to eat. In the same way God has given us **spiritual food in Jesus** - who described Himself as the **Bread of Life**. As Jesus says in John 6:35 "**I am the bread of life – whoever comes to Me, will never go hungry**". Just like

the Israelites were blessed in the wilderness with bread from Heaven which kept them alive - we as Christians are blessed with Jesus - the bread from Heaven - which leads to eternal life.

5. 5<sup>th</sup> way God helped them - in verse 4 - refers to Exodus 17 - When the people were thirsty - God provided spiritual drink from a spiritual rock which Moses struck in the wilderness - and water poured out. Again, this points to Jesus = who is our spiritual rock that we can build our lives on - and to the spiritual water that He provides. Jesus described Himself as living water which wells up into eternal life (John 4:14). When we eat and drink Jesus - so to speak - by having a close relationship with Him in feeding off God's Word in the Bible - we are spiritually fed.

By these 5 examples, Paul is saying - The One who was there at the beginning and was the agent of creation (John 1:2-4) and the One who upholds all things (Col 1:17) - that's Jesus Himself - was actively involved in the life of God's people in OT times - AND He is just as actively involved in the lives of Christians today.

So, Paul's saying, God did all this for the people - saved them from slavery in Egypt, led them out of Egypt, gave them a guide both day and night, helped them cross the Red Sea safely. They even received two sacraments in the wilderness - Baptism and Lord's Supper.

And yet despite all of these blessings from God

See V6 - Most of the Israelites (apart from Joshua and Caleb - Num 14:30) died in the wilderness - because of their disobedience.

How do we **apply** that to us then?

Application:

**In Jesus we have:**

- a. Forgiveness
- b. Eternal life
- c. The Sacrament of Baptism into Jesus - born of HS - born again
- d. Sacrament of Lord's Supper - one in the body of Christ
- e. The Spiritual food of His Word - the Bible
- f. Daily blessings
- g. Answered prayer

**I wonder though** - if we can be a bit like the Israelites?

**God blesses us in so many ways**

**But we fail to appreciate it - and fail to be obedient - fail to please Him - and do the exact opposite to what God wants**

That's what the Israelites did - **despite** all their **blessings**

So, Paul lists **5 examples** of how the **Israelites set their hearts on evil things** - that's in **verses 6 to 10**.

**5 Examples of Israelites disobedience (vv6-10)**

[PowerPoint 3-5 examples]

1. **1<sup>st</sup> example** of disobedience in **Verse 7** - refers to **Exodus 32** - Whilst

**Moses** was up the **mountain** with **God**, **getting** the **10 commandments** - Aaron

allowed the people to make an idol of a **golden calf** (from the people's jewelry) so they had something to worship - the calf just fell out of the fire (Ex 32:24). They worshipped the calf - which is **idolatry**

2. **2<sup>nd</sup> example of disobedience in verse 8** - refers to **Numbers 25** - where the **Israelite men committed sexual immorality with Moab women and worshipped Moab gods**. So, **God sent a plague and 23,000 died**
3. **3<sup>rd</sup> example of disobedience in Verse 9** - refers to **Exodus 17** - the people **complained against Moses and Aaron because they were thirsty** and said '*why did you bring us out of Egypt to the wilderness to die*' - and **God** in His **grace allowed** Moses to strike the **rock** and bring forward **water** for the people
4. **4<sup>th</sup> example of disobedience also in Verse 9** - refers to **Numbers 21:1-5** - They **complained** again "*why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness - there's no bread - no water - and we detest the miserable food*". How **ungrateful** - remember they were **slaves in Egypt** and were **treated disgracefully**. How soon they forgot **God's** salvation. So, **God sent venomous snakes to bite the people** - and **many died**. The **people repented** and said they had sinned and spoken against Moses and God. The **Lord showed mercy** and made Moses make a **bronze serpent on a pole** - when the **people looked** at the raised **bronze serpent** (a picture of **Jesus on the cross**) - the **people bitten by the snake** (picture of **Satan**) were saved and lived. In the same way - if we look on **Jesus on the cross** and believe we will be **saved and live in eternity**. Jesus everywhere in the OT
5. **5<sup>th</sup> example of disobedience in Verse 10** - refers to **Numbers 16** - where again the people complained against Moses and Aaron - "*you've killed the*

Lord's people" - God sent a plague - Aaron made atonement for the people's sin and rebellion. 14,700 died from the plague.

### Application

Applying Israel's examples of disobedience to us...

- What idols do we have? Sport, material wealth, entertainment, sex and pornography, self-indulgence? We need to turn away from them or suffer the consequences
- Despite God blessing us with forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus - despite his daily blessings & answered prayers - will still complain about Him - and we can be very ungrateful? We need to repent of that too.

### Purpose of these Examples from History (v6, 11-13)

So, what's the purpose of Paul's History lesson.

#### [PowerPoint 4-Purpose]

- a. As V6 says - to stop the Corinthians and us - from setting our hearts on evil things - which disobey God. We can choose to learn from Israel's mistakes - and not make the same mistakes they did. Wisdom says - we would be better to learn from their history.
- b. And as V11 says - those examples in OT - were written down for the benefit of the Corinthians and for our benefit - as a warning not to get embroiled in idolatry, sexual immorality, complaining against God and being ungrateful - all these will bring punishments upon us

So, Paul's point is...

**Don't be like the Israelites** - who thought to themselves - *'hey we can do no wrong - God's on our side - he saved us from Egypt - we are His privileged people - we can do what we like'*

And the **Corinthians** they might have thought similar *'we've been baptized and are one in Christ; we have taken part in the sacrament of Lord's Supper and are one in the body and blood of Jesus; we are in Him and He is in us; therefore we are quite safe; we can eat meat offered to idols and can't be harmed'*

And perhaps we might think the same?

So, Paul warns them and us - in v12 - of being **over confident**.

Paul says - no! no! no! Don't think you can't be tempted to be unfaithful and disobedient to God - don't think you're standing so firm - you can't fall!

Paul reminds the **Corinthians** and us (v13) that temptation will come - that there's no temptation that's new.

Any temptation that can happen to us - has been **experienced** by people throughout history - the **Israelites** can tell you all about temptations and have given in to most of them - they're **masters at it**.

Paul says - learn from their temptations - and don't fall for it like they did.

The **good news** - Paul says - is that (v13) - **God is faithful** - *he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear*

**AND** - **God will** provide a way out of that temptation - so that you can endure it.

So, as we face a temptation - look closely there will always be an exit sign we can follow.

[e.g. When Eve gave Adam the fruit to eat - the way out was for Adam to say "No Eve, God said we must not eat fruit from that tree"

When the Devil tempted Jesus - the way out of each temptation - that Jesus used was - God's Word - "man cannot live by bread alone" (Deut 8:3) - "do not put the Lord your God to the test" (Deut 6:16) - "worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only" (Deut 6:13)

There is a way out of every temptation - we just have to take it.

Speaking of a way out -

Paul gives three "ways out" for the Corinthian's as they are tempted - which are also helpful for us...

[PowerPoint 5-Way Out]

Way Out 1 - Flee from idolatry (vv14-22)

Way out 1 - is in verses 14 to 22

Paul compares the Lord's Supper with the Idol feasts that take place in the Corinthian pagan temples

The Lord's Supper - Paul says - is a thanksgiving feast for Christians - where Christians share in a cup of wine together - and that wine represents Jesus' blood poured out for sins to be forgiven. As the Christians join and drink from this shared cup - they become one with Jesus' blood.

And when **Christians share in the one loaf of bread** together - they become one with **Christ's body**. Christians are joined together as the body of Christ - when we **celebrate the Lord's Supper**. It is a **glorious sacrament**. Paul says to the Corinthian Christians - you can't join together in the Lord's Supper one day - and become one with Christ. And then the next day - go to a worship meal and sacrifice in one of the Corinthian pagan temples - where sacrifices are made to idols - because when you go to that worship service you are participating in their false sacrifice to false gods - which is like sitting at a table with demons - not table with Christians. If you take part in both worship practices - you're mixing God with demons - and you can't serve two masters. That's idolatry!

So, Paul says - v14 - the way out is to flee from idolatry - run away from it - have nothing to do with it.

### Application

DO we have something in our lives which we are worshipping and devoting so much time to - it's taking our focus and attention off God. Paul's saying if we do - repent - flee - run away from it.

### Why?

Because (v22) - **God is a jealous God**.

**God wants a faithful loving relationship with us - He is always faithful and loving to us - He demands the same in return from us - and when we're not faithful - He is **rightly jealous** - and there will be consequences for that unfaithfulness - as we learnt from **Israel's history**. And we don't want those**

consequences - **they're painful**. And Paul says - do we think we'll be stronger than God - when He's jealous - and that we'll survive such a confrontation

### Way Out 2 - Seek the good of others (vv23-30)

The **second way out of temptation** is in verses 23-30

Paul says to the Corinthians - v23 - you might think now that you are Christians "*you have the right to do anything*" you like - "*but not everything is beneficial and constructive*".

For example, as humans we have the ability and science to clone people - but that **doesn't mean we should do it** - because then **we are taking over God's role as creator**

Paul says the **overriding principle** in deciding whether we should do something or not - is v24

*It's not to seek our own good - but the good of others.*

So, Paul's advice is - before we decide to do something (or say something) - ask ourselves whether it would be good for others - or is it purely something **self centred** that only benefits us.

I think **one thing we've learnt** from this **COVID19** pandemic - is to think about how others might be coping - and **putting ourselves in their shoes**.

Paul gives an **example** to the Corinthians of **looking out for the good of others**.

He says (v25) - The **Corinthians can eat anything from the local meat market** attached to the temple - **without doing an idolatry check** on it. You have that freedom - **because everything belongs to God** (V26 & Ps 24:1) (V27) **If an unbeliever in Corinth asks you to dinner - you can eat whatever is put on the table - don't start worrying about whether it's been offered to idols.**

**But (V28-29) if someone is concerned about that the food - that it's been offered to idols - for that person's sake - because you're looking out for the other person - then don't eat it.**

The **third way out** is in verses 31 to 33

### **Way Out 3 - Do all for the glory of God (vv31-33)**

Paul says in v31 -

In everything we eat or drink or whatever we do - **ask ourselves the question - will this bring glory to God?**

**If it won't bring glory to God don't do it.**

Paul says **we bring glory to God when we**

- a. **Don't cause anyone to stumble and sin**
- b. **When we seek the good of others**
- c. **When our goal is - with the help of the Lord - to enable as many people as possible to be saved and brought into a personal saving relationship with Jesus**

**THAT BRINGS GLORY TO GOD**

**[PowerPoint 6-Conclusion]**

## Conclusion

We could **simplify all** of what **we've said** this morning by saying

All those **history lessons** we've seen **from the Israelites** and all our own **history lessons** - all amount to doing one thing

That's in 11.1 - **Follow Paul's example** - as Paul follows the example of our **Lord Jesus Christ**.

**If we follow Jesus example** throughout His history - we will indeed learn from history and bring glory to **God**

Let's pray...