**Take Heed Lest You Fall**

*1 Corinthians 10*

**Introduction**

1. “Once saved always saved” is a popular doctrine.
   1. There are many passages that refute the doctrine.
   2. Perhaps the most powerfully convincing one is 1 Corinthians 10.
2. While Christians would never advocate the full doctrine there is an apparent danger of being influenced in part by it.
   1. Some grow complacent and comfortable just because they were baptized.
   2. Baptism is not a guarantee of salvation. You must please God and endure to the end!
   3. 1 Corinthians 10 teaches such. (READ – 10:12).
3. Don’t let a liberty become a vice!

A. Knowledge without love puffs up! (Some of ch. 8)

* 10:23-24; 6:12 – Paul is addressing the problem of abusing liberties. It may be lawful, but if it is not helpful you must be willing to forgo that liberty.
* 8:4 – The liberty in the context is eating meats offered to idols.
  + Liberty because only one God. The meat is from Him (10:25-26).
* 8:7 – Some did not understand this and could not eat it without defiling their conscience and sinning.
* 8:1-3 – Knowledge without love puffs up. (Knowledge is good, but worthless without love).
  + Some thought they had a right to eat in any circumstance because they had the knowledge that it was okay to eat.
    - That is not the whole of man! *“the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”* (Romans 14:17)
  + They did not keep in mind that the purpose is to love (obey) God! (Included in that is loving your neighbor – second commandment).
* 8:9-13 – A brother with knowledge (strong) eats in front of the weak brother he places a stumbling block before him.
  + If you cause your brother to sin, you also sin against God!
  + So don’t do it!!
* Liberties should not become the object of our praise, devotion, and love!
  + When this happens we sin! Why do something just because it is a liberty if it causes trouble for your brother and yourself?

B. Paul’s example of self-denial. (Some of ch. 9)

* Paul did not exclude himself from this principle, but was already practicing it!
* Marriage (9:5) – Paul gave up marriage because he wouldn’t be able to fulfill his ministry if he partook in that liberty! (Present persecution made it impractical.)
* Support for preaching (9:6,14) – Support was a right for Paul to receive being a preacher!
  + He did not exercise this right because it would hinder his gospel effort (9:12).
  + Some in Corinth would have accused Paul of preaching only for the monetary gain! (Although false, Paul made sure that didn’t happen.)
* (9:22-23) – He was willing to forgo any liberty/personal right he had for the furtherance of the gospel.
  + He did this most importantly so that he could partake of the blessings of the gospel – salvation. (He did it because if he didn’t he wouldn’t make it to heaven!)
* *“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”* (Philippians 2:12).

1. Baptism into Christ does not permit complacency!

A. We must be willing to forgo anything (including liberties) if we want to get to heaven!

* (9:24-27) – Like an athlete, Paul disciplined his body. Why? Lest he become disqualified. I.e. sin!
  + He gave of rights/liberties when he needed to do so in order to love others and God!
  + He was doing this for his own sake that he might not fall short!
  + Self-denial is a condition for salvation! (You can fall from grace!) Perfect example 🡪

B. If not we will fall like the Israelites fell! (10:1-13)

* (10:1-4) – They were saved. (From bondage of Egyptians.)
  + Baptized – not in the exact way as the Corinthians. However, it noted the Israelites submission to God for Him to save them. Just like we do in baptism (Salvation from bondage of sin).
    - \*If baptism does not save us then Paul using this as an example is meaningless.
  + They were surrounded by water. (cloud above, water right and left)
  + God was with them and provided for them. Jesus as well.
    - Jesus = bread of life; offers water we will never thirst again.
    - *“man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord”* (Deuteronomy 8:3 – concerning their hunger, and the giving of manna)
* They did not have it any different than the Corinthians or us. (Saved, provided for spiritually, Christ watching over them.)
* (10:5-11) – Although saved and with the provision from Christ, most of them displeased God because they weren’t faithful!
  + These were written so we won’t make the same mistakes.
  + They tempted Christ by assuming they were alright to partake in these things because Christ was able to keep them from falling.
  + The complained just like the Corinthians. (It’s my liberty and I should be able to exercise it!)
* (10:12-13) – We must not grow complacent and comfortable!
  + The Israelites thought they were okay, but they were not!
  + We may think it is okay to do something just because it is a liberty, but we must be careful! We are here to serve God, not ourselves!
  + (10:13)God provides a way of escape that we can withstand doing something. He does not allow us to do it and feel comfortable about it.
    - We often turn to this for comfort and assurance. That is good, but we must make sure we don’t turn to it in an attempt to let our guard down.
    - This verse is for the opposite reason! Watch out! Be careful! Find the way of escape and take it!

C. The liberty is not in totality! (10:14-30)

* The Corinthians are an example of taking their liberty too far to the point of it causing them to sin.
* It was okay to eat meats, but not as an act of worship in the idols temple.

1. Whatever we do must please God! (10:31-11:1)

A. Liberties do not permit ungodliness.

* Even when regarding liberties all must be done with glorifying God in mind.
* If it doesn’t glorify God it doesn’t matter if it is a liberty or not. We shouldn’t do it because it is sin!

B. Liberties do not permit self-service.

* If a liberty causes us to mar our relationships with each other they should not be used.
* We must desire our brethren to be saved and act accordingly! 🡪 Like Christ (11:1). Sacrificial and selfless. Looking out for the interest and well being of others.

**Conclusion**

1. While obedience to the gospel ensures fellowship with God it does not secure that fellowship.
2. In order to secure, and further ensure fellowship with God we must always seek to please Him. Even if it means forgoing liberties for the sake of a weak brother!

* Remember, *“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful”* (10:23).
  + This can include other things that don’t necessarily involve a weak brother.
  + Just because it is indifferent to God does not mean it can’t escalate to a stumbling block for yourself!