

3rd Sunday in Lent – Year C

March 7, 2010

Faith Lutheran, Radcliff, KY

1Corinthians 10:1-13

Pastor Paul Horn

You have a Rock Solid Savior

I. In the past...

II. ...and for the future.

¹For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ²They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

⁶Now these things occurred as examples^[a] to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷Do 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 pagan revelry."^[b] ⁸We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

¹¹These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. ¹²So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 stand up under it.

Do you know which company uses this symbol as their business logo? It's the symbol for Prudential, an insurance company. I have not ever owned their insurance nor am I endorsing their product, but I do like their logo; a big, imposing rock... a picture of stability. I can't speak for this company's past promises or what they promise to do for the future of their clients. But I can speak about another rock... your rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. I can speak about his past

promises and what he promises for the future of his people.

In our lesson this morning, Paul uses examples from the past to teach the Corinthians and us a lesson. That lesson is: You have a rock solid Savior; rock solid *in his promises*, in the past and for the future.

George Bernard Shaw once said, “We learn from history that we learn nothing from history.” Isn’t that true? For example: in 1812 Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Russia while still at war with Great Britain, contributing to his downfall. 129 years later Adolf Hitler invaded Russia while still at war with Great Britain, contributing to his downfall. The history of the church, as recorded on the pages of Scripture, teaches us a lesson, and gives fair warning so that we do not fall. Paul writes in vs12, “**If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall.**” A literal translation of the Greek would be: “**The one thinks he is standing, let him look, lest he fall.**” Let him look to the past, for the past speaks for itself. The Apostle says in vs6, “**These things, (the events from history that he is about to share), these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.**” Paul uses four examples.

1) idolatry

vs7 “**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 pagan revelry.”** Can you guess which incident Paul is referring to? The golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai. After which, the men from the tribe of Levi strapped swords to their sides and went through the camp killing 3,000 of their own brothers as discipline. We might object and say, “This warning does not apply to us. We do not bow down to golden images.” But history repeats itself as we bow down to our money, our homes, cars, computers, gaming and entertainment equipment, even our own family members. Then we, too, have raised up in our hearts something or someone as more important than our God. This has been the downfall of many a Christian.

2) sexual immorality

vs8 a warning against sexual immorality, and 23,000 died in one day. What could the Israelites possibly have done to deserve this? As the nation marched closer to the Promised Land, they camped east of the Jordan River, near the nation of Moab. Scripture tells us that Moabite women came to the camp of Israel and enticed the men away, committing gross sexual sins in pagan worship practices. The LORD burned with anger against his people, and a plague descended on the camp and people started dying. Moses and the leaders of the Israelites all came out of their

tents and knelt before the tabernacle in repentance and mourning and pleading for God's mercy. But while they were all assembled, a leader of a tribe of Israel, waltzed into camp with a Moabite woman on his arm and brought her into his tent, in front of Moses and the people. But Phinehas, grandson of Aaron the high priest, grabbed a spear, rushed into that man's tent, and plunged his spear through both of their bodies. At that moment the plagues stopped.

Is such blatant sexual immorality still a temptation today? Sure it is. With the internet and pay-per-view television, folks do not need to sneak off into the middle of the night to the adult book store. More and more couples are shacking up before they get married. Casual sex is the topic of most primetime television sitcoms. **“These things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.”**

3) Impatience

Vs9 We should not test the LORD, as they did and were killed by snakes. What had the people of Israel done to deserve this? Numbers 21 tells us that as they continued their final approach to the Promised Land the people grew impatient, **“We detest this miserable food! There is no water! Why did God bring us out of Egypt?”** Today believers are still tempted to become impatient with the Lord when things are not going so well and troubles stack up in their lives. It's another sin that has led many a believer to turn away from the LORD.

4) Grumbling and complaining

vs10 “And do not grumble, as some of them did, and were killed by the destroying angel.” This was after Moses had sent the 12 spies to look over Canaan. Ten of the spies brought back the report of how powerful the Canaanites were. The Israelites grumbled and complained against Moses and against the LORD, and the LORD sent a plague and put many of them to death. It's not uncommon for Christians today to grumble and complain against the LORD and against His servants. For example, when a pastor has to confront a member about some sin, it sometimes results in grumbling and complaining against that pastor or even the members themselves and perhaps that individual even leaves the church. Another sin that has been the downfall of many a Christian.

As we reflect on our sins against our sisters and brothers in Christ, our sins against the LORD, we do not expect to suddenly see poisonous snakes slither into our homes, or the angel of death standing over us nor the earth open up and swallow us alive. What we do see is that there is no wiggle room when it comes to God's law and his condemnation of sin. Sinners deserve to die, not just death, but eternal death. Hell's gates are open wide for sinners such as you and me. God

is rock solid on his promise to punish sin, your sins and mine. But God is rock solid on his promise to save you from death and from hell and your sins which is the cause of it all.

Paul uses an event in the past to illustrate a truth for the present. He uses Moses and the Israelites passing through the Red Sea as a picture of baptism (vs2). The people of Israel were saved through the water. Pharaoh's army and his chariots were drowned and the people were rescued from their enemy. It's not often that you hear of people being saved through water, but more often saved from water. There was a story last summer about a beluga whale that saved a drowning diver in a Chinese aquarium by hoisting her to the surface, carrying her leg in its mouth. Saved from water, saved from drowning.

But in baptism you are saved through water. That's the whole point of Baptism, is to drown. The rock solid promise from your Savior is that through baptism he has drowned your sinful nature with its evil deeds and desires. Through water he has washed away your sins. Through water he has created new life in you. His promise is that through water he has rescued you from drowning in your sins. Jesus pulled you up as you were about to be drowned by death and hell itself. Jesus saved you pulled in a dramatic rescue. But it cost him his very life. He sacrificed himself for you, life for life, his righteousness, his perfection, holiness, given to you. For your sins of sexual immorality, idolatry, grumbling, testing the Lord, those sins were taken on by him, and he allowed your hell and your death to drown his life on the cross. Through water and the Word His death has become your death. His resurrection has become your resurrection. A rock solid promise from your rock solid Savior.

Christ has promised all of these blessings to you through baptism. Once he brought you to faith through baptism, making you his child and heir of heaven, has he not continued to be your Rock solid Savior throughout your life thus far? We might object and say, "Well what about all the hardships and frustrations in my life? What about the temptations I still fall to? What about the pain and suffering in my body?"

Jesus never promised to make your life more comfortable, nor remove all temptation and every pain, but he does promise in **vs13** to provide you with the strength to stand up and endure those temptations and to persevere through sufferings and hardships in your life. Paul uses another picture from the past to illustrate how God continually provides spiritual sustenance for his people.

In vs3,4 Paul cites the example of God providing food and drink in the wilderness, seemingly out of nowhere. Bread fell from heaven six days out of the week for 40 years. Water gushed from a rock, enough to create a river in the desert to quench the thirst of 2 million people plus their herds and flocks. But Paul says that even more importantly, God provided for their spiritual needs. Christ was with them in that desert. Christ was there providing spiritual food and drink, through his Holy Word, to sustain their spiritual bodies. He was their rock upon which they relied in times of temptation and hardships.

Has he not also done that for you? Will he not do that for you in the future? When you struggle with the sin of impatience, and you will, you will run to eat the spiritual manna and drink the spiritual water of God's Word and his Word will lead you to pray, "Lord, forgive me for my sins of anxiety. Grant me patience." And he will. When you fight against sexual sins, you will feast on God's Word and Sacraments, and he will give you the strength to run a spear through that temptation, like Aaron's grandson Phinehas. When you grumble against the LORD and his leaders, just like the Israelites, in repentance you will turn to God, and in his Word he will say to you, "If you confess your sins, I am faithful and will forgive you of your sins, for the blood of Jesus purifies you from all sin. You, my child, are forgiven. Obey my leaders and submit to their authority."

These are the rock solid promises from your Savior. Will he not also be with you in the future? Will he not continue to strengthen you in future just as he has in the past through his Word and Sacrament? Yes he will!

He is your rock solid Savior, in the past and for the future!

We pray. When we seek relief from a long-felt grief, when temptations come alluring, make us patient and enduring; show us that bright shore where we weep no more. Jesus, still lead on till our rest is won. Heavenly leader, still direct us; still support, console, protect us till we safely stand in our fatherland. Amen.

(CW 422:3,4)