



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Third Sunday in Lent (C) – 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Focus: *Being Tested*

word of life

“... God is faithful, and [God] will not let you be tested beyond your strength...” (1 Corinthians 10:13 NRSV)

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Lent is a time when we recall Jesus spending forty days in the wilderness being tested by the devil. (See Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4: 1-13.) It may be troubling to realize it is the Holy Spirit who leads Jesus to the time and place of temptation. And Jesus is not the only one in Scripture to be tested. This passage is found in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians vividly recalls “our ancestors” being tested after they were freed from slavery in Egypt. It seems like some thought the tests ended once they were freed from slavery, but not so.

1. *What does it mean to be tested by God?*
2. *Do the words “testing” and “temptation” carry the same meaning to you? Explain your answer.*

In this passage Paul provides both a word of warning and a word of encouragement. He grounds his warning in the history of Israel, particularly in the exodus story. Paul’s reference to Israel’s exodus from Egypt is more than a history lesson. Paul adds a sacramental quality to the manna and water found in the desert. This spiritual food was a sign of God’s presence and grace. In an intriguing way, Paul connects the manna and water with the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Paul boldly proclaims the presence of Christ during the exodus, providing nourishment and sustenance on the journey.

3. *Do you agree with Paul’s view of manna and water? How so?*
4. *How might manna and water be considered spiritual food?*
5. *What evidence is there that Christ was present during the exodus?*

Despite God’s mighty acts of freeing the slaves, leading them to safety, providing daily food, and caring for them, the people do not respond as God had hoped. Most of the freed slaves will not make it to the Promised Land. Paul wants the Corinthians (and all Christians) to pay attention and learn from their experience in the wilderness.

Paul reminds us: Everyone goes through times of testing, so don’t be surprised during challenging times. Paul urges us not to chase after the wisdom and idols of this world to make sense of life.

6. *What does it feel like to be tested by God?*
7. *Do you believe that we are always aware when we are being tested? Explain your answer.*
8. *When might we get complacent?*

And now for a word of encouragement from Paul, “No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and [God] will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing [God] will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13 NRSV)

9. *Give examples of possible “ways out” provided by God.*
10. *What helps you endure times of testing?*

Word among us

The volume of the music gradually got louder while the television camera focused closely on the faces of the final contestants remaining on the reality show. Who would get immunity? That was the critical question. The contestants waited, hoped and prayed. Immunity would mean one contestant would not go home that night and he (or she) would be safe, at least for that night.

1. *Take a moment to compare immunity and grace.*
2. *What does God expect from those to whom grace is extended?*

It is important to remember Corinth was a shipping community known for its outlandish behavior. Believers in Christ were at odds with each other. Some were described as being so puffed up with their own knowledge that they do not extend love to one another. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians addresses the divisions and strife within the church at Corinth. In many ways, the church of Corinth was embroiled in a time of testing. Paul sternly warns the church about becoming complacent—of being overly confident in God’s grace.

3. *What would Paul have to say to the modern-day church?*
4. *What words of caution might Paul offer to us today?*

God extends grace to humanity and we respond with a life of thanksgiving and humility. But, we are not to take God’s grace for granted. No individual is guaranteed immunity from challenges. We will be tested.

faith practice in daily life

Live among God’s faithful people

Testing is not just a possibility, but it is a known reality. Hopefully, it is helpful to recognize that hardships, trials, and tribulations may certainly come while we live on this earth. To some degree, we can be prepared and ready to lean on the Christian community to give us comfort and perspective.

5. *How might a Christian community help you get through a time of testing?*
6. *What might you say to someone is being tested?*

But Paul offers encouraging words, “No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and [God] will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing [God] will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13 NRSV)

Paul is vague about the “way out” of our times of testing. For Jesus, his time of testing in the wilderness concluded with angels being sent to comfort Jesus. (See Matthew 4:11; Mark 12:13) May we be so fortunate to have angels with us during our time of testing. But, then again, perhaps that is another way to describe the church.

Prayer

God, you test your people, but you also provide the way out of our times of testing. Send Christ to be with us to guide us and be present to us.

last word

Each day, beware of possible times of temptation.

Daily Faith Practices

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