

Lenten Devotional March 10, 2018

Scripture

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

¹I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." ⁸We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹²So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Devotional

Jane Larson '17, Co-leader, Sanctuary Missional Fellowship, Lawrenceville, Pa. / Assistant to the Registrar

Although writing to a primarily Gentile audience, Paul frames this passage by remembering the ancestors whom Moses led out of slavery in Egypt. These Jewish ancestors became inherited ancestors of the Gentiles through their "ingrafting" into the Hebrews' faith community. Paul acknowledges the unity of all these people through their eating "the same spiritual food" and drinking "the same spiritual drink." More importantly, Paul identifies the spiritual rock, the source of this unity, to be Christ.

As Christ unites the community in Corinth, Paul offers guidance on how to live in community and warns against the mistakes of the past. As a finite people living in a broken world, the Corinthians will inevitably experience trials in striving to maintain this unity. People are coming from diverse backgrounds and social locations, so coming together as one collective will require preparation by the entire community. Despite the difficulties, however, Paul calls the community to remember that God will provide them with the same kind of strength and perseverance as God has provided in the past.

In this season of Lent, when we practice self-examination, let us not forget that our faith is inherently communal. We are called to live with one another in beloved community united by Christ. So let us examine ways in which we can grow as a communal body. How might God be calling us to refine our relationships and heal our divisions? As we encounter adversity, let us remember God's faithfulness and walk together in times of trial.

Prayer

Steadfast God, we give you thanks for your faithfulness. Guide us through this season that we may not avoid the hard work of seeking peace in our communities. Teach us to serve one another with justice and mercy. In your grace, strengthen us to walk together in times of adversity and to remember Christ as the source of our unity. Amen.