

## What's the Deal with Eating and Drinking?

3<sup>rd</sup> Sun. in Lent – 03/23/25 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 1-4a, [Paul says,] **“For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.”**

v.6, **“Now these things took place as examples for us....”**

### **Introduction**

✘ In verse seven here from chapter 10 of Paul's first letter to the Christians in Corinth, he makes what seems like a very innocent, even unimportant statement about our Old Testament ancestors at the time of the Exodus. He says, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.”

→ I mean how many of us here right now, don't intend, at some point later today, to sit down and eat and drink? And for all of those that have ever had small children, you know that it's only natural for little people, after they have sat down to eat and drink, to “[get] up to play.”

✘ But Paul talks about these things as if they are bad; that somehow when the people sat down to eat and drink and got up to play, they were doing something wrong.

→ So, what's the deal? What's wrong with this eating and drinking? Paul does, after all, tell us in verse 11, that all of this was “written down (in God's Holy Word of Scripture) for our instruction.” So, my dear Christians, it seems obvious, that you and I would do well here for a few minutes, in the midst of our time in Worship, to open our hearts and minds to God's Holy Spirit and see what He has to teach us, through Paul, so that we can grow in our life of faith here today, right? Then let's get to it.

### **I. Israel belongs to God.**

✘ When Paul is talking about our Old Testament faith-ancestors, he calls them “our fathers” in verse one; that is our fathers in the one true faith; the original believers in Yahweh. It's the people of Israel.

→ Remember, Israel was originally a man before he became a nation. Jacob was his birth name, the grandson of Abraham. But after he spent an entire night wrestling with God, Yahweh changed his name to “Israel” to highlight that unique relationship. Martin Luther commented on this name change saying this: “Israel means...God's fighter; that is he who wrestles with God and wins. This happens through that faith which holds so firmly to God's Word, until it overcomes God's wrath and obtains God as the gracious Father” (*Luther's Works*, Weimar Edition, V. 8, pg.137) .

→ From that point forward Israel's descendants, who likewise confessed Yahweh to be the only true God, belonged to Him as His people and were/are called the people of Israel.

✘ And now Paul shows us in verses three and four of our text that the way you can tell whether or not someone belongs to God is by what they eat and drink. As they left Egypt, being rescued out of slavery by God, Paul says they “all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.”

→ What he's talking about is the food that God miraculously provided for them as they wandered 40 years in the wilderness; the manna from heaven that they found on the ground each morning when they awoke. (Ex. 16:13–15, 31).

- And when they needed water, Israel drank the water that God miraculously provided from the rock at Horeb (Ex. 17:1–7) and later from the rock at Meribah (Num. 20:10-13).
- And in verse four, Paul says something astounding, “For they (i.e. our ancestors wandering in the wilderness) drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.” Why is this such a big deal? Because it confirms what we confess in the Nicene Creed, that Jesus is “begotten of His Father before all worlds...begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.” As God then, Jesus has been actively providing for His people Israel ever since Creation.
- ✘ And because Israel belongs to God, Paul makes it clear in verses six through ten that God expects them to act in a certain way. He points to five “examples for us” all to learn from regarding their blatant, sinful disobedience and the many times that they forgot that they belonged to God.
- First, Paul says we must not “desire evil as they did” (v.6) which was shown by their continuous discontent with the way that God provided for their every need. Notice I didn’t say their every “want”.
- Second, He says, “Do not be idolaters as some of them were...” (v.7). This is referring to the golden calf that they created and then worshipped when Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments from God.
- Third, “We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did” (v.8), referring to an incident in Numbers 25 where they worshipped the false gods of the people in Shittim; leading to more than 23,000 Israelite men having improper relationships with the women there and then dying by God’s wrath.
- #4, “We must not put God to the test” (v. 9) as they did in Numbers 21 when they complained about God’s care and provision, even saying, “we loathe this worthless food” (Num. 21:5). This caused God to send fiery serpents that bit and killed all those who would not believe and trust in Him alone.
- And finally, the fifth example in verse 10; those who grumbled against God and God’s representatives Moses and Aaron. This happened numerous times throughout their wilderness journey; whenever they didn’t like the message God’s ministers had to convey to them from God.
- ✘ Did you notice in a number of these examples from the Israelites, that their disregard and rebellion against God was expressed either in what they ate and drank or how they behaved after or around their eating and drinking?
- For example, it was immediately after they had worshiped the golden calf as their god for the first time, that Exodus 32:6 gives us the quote that Paul places in verse seven, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” You see, they basically snubbed their noses at Yahweh and said that they now believed it was this dead, golden idol that was providing their food, drink and enjoyment in life.
- And as we saw earlier, they said that they “loathed” or despised the food that God was providing and no longer wanted to “play” by God’s established rules that He had so lovingly given them in the Ten Commandments or the guidance He provided in faithful leaders like Moses and Aaron for their well-being and protection. They didn’t want to be God’s “holy people”, but instead they wanted to eat and drink and play by their own self-centered and worldly-based set of what was right and what was wrong.

## II. Christians frequently forget that they belong to God.

- ✘ And why did they forget they belonged to God? What was at the foundation of all of this sinful behavior? Think about it. It all came from improper eating (Gen. 3:6).
  - Adam and Eve; they fell prey to Satan's evil temptation; getting them to believe they could be like God if only they would eat of the one fruit that God forbade.
  - And that caused all of their children after them to naturally think of themselves before God.
- ✘ Now today, when we Christians, whom Scripture describes as the New Israel (Gal. 3:28-29 & Eph. 2:11-15), forget that we belong to God, we too can fall prey to the same temptations as our forefathers. Examples abound, but here are a few:
  - Our culture is replete with all kinds of sexual perversions and temptations, from same-sex attractions and activities, to improper relationships outside of or before marriage, to pornography and being unfaithful to one's spouse. So, when we Christians give in to sexual temptation, it's most often because we forget that our bodies don't belong to us. But as Paul declared a few chapters earlier in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own. For you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."
  - Another temptation that we Christians still struggle with is that of anger when things don't go the way we want them to go and we think then that it's our place to make things "right". But God says through Paul in Romans 12:19, "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"
  - And just as it was with those Israelites of old, we Christians give in far too often and quickly to the temptation to grumble against God and His servants. Why? Well, usually it's because we forget we belong to a God that knows perfectly what we truly need, rather than what the world and our emotions tell us we "want". So we grumble and we complain at God's gracious and generous provision of all that we need for this life and our eternal life to come.

### **III. Jesus reminds us that we belong to God.**

- ✘ But Jesus, He is "the same spiritual food" and the "same spiritual drink" today as He was when He brought our faith-"fathers" in the Old Testament out of Egypt and led them through the wilderness of their day into His Promised Land.
  - And in much the same way that He reminded them that they belonged to God, so He reminds you and me that we belong to God today; by what we eat and drink.
- ✘ Just as He saved the people by bringing them through the water of the Red Sea to make them His beloved family of believers, so He has brought you and me through the waters of baptism; saving us from sin, death and devil to be His children in His body of believers. Now as the Rock of our Salvation, Jesus still saves; still nourishes us every day with Himself as the Living Water that cleanses and quenches our souls of all of sins impurities; giving us the promise of eternal life with Him.
  - Likewise, under the natural element of bread, Jesus feeds us freely with His body that was broken on the cross along with His blood that He shed there under the natural element of wine, forgiving us again for all the times that we have forgotten we belong to Him, and even more, giving us the strength that we need to stand firm and say, "No" to those temptations that the devil shoots at us over and over each day.
  - You see, it's in this eating and drinking; the sacrament that Jesus desires us to receive "often" that He gives us "the way of escape, that you may be able to endure" temptation as Paul promises in verse 13.

✘ It matters then, what we eat and drink, and then how we rise up and allow our Lord's food and drink to do its work within us as His people.

→ So, for example, if we feel tempted to abandon God's design for the human body and sexuality, it is in His baptismal work and through His body-and-blood food that He has redeemed us from the world's perversions; that He strengthens us to abandon the temptation and instead to celebrate God's design for our lives each day.

→ And if we feel tempted to react in anger at those who have done us wrong or are tempted to grumble against God's ways or His servant's faithful guidance and teaching, then again we should look to the Lord's body and blood, as well as His baptismal cleansing, to remind us who we are now and to strengthen us to endure the temptation.

## **Conclusion**

✘ At this point, we are almost half-way through the season of Lent; a season when we focus on the temptations we all face as we try to live faithfully in our Christian lives as God's people.

→ And we sang earlier in the Sermon Hymn, that we all "walk in danger all the way" (LSB 716:1) through this world, because we still face the fallout of Adam and Eve's eating and drinking in the Garden. But even as "walk in danger" and we struggle in our own sinful desires with the allure of so many temptations, the good news from Paul today friends is this: you can endure it.

→ You can make it through. Because you have God's promise in verse 13, that even as you are tempted, God "will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." And what is that escape hatch? What enables you to endure? It is right here on this altar in the body and blood of the only One who overcame all temptation for you! It is right there in the living water of Christ's baptism; the Rock of forgiveness that never leaves you nor forsakes you.

✘ Yes, by feeding us His body and blood and by quenching our souls in His water of salvation, Jesus reminds us whose we are today and into eternity. So take, eat; take, drink and remember that you are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ. He is with you forever! Amen.