

Being Tested ■ God Is Faithful!

by James Jennings

This sermon focuses on 1 Corinthians 10:13, highlighting God's faithfulness in allowing trials in the lives of believers, ensuring they are not beyond what they can bear. The speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting God in trials, avoiding rebellion, and finding strength to endure through God's grace. Various examples and insights are shared to encourage believers to rely on God's faithfulness in facing trials.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 1:8, Psalms 90:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:24, Hebrews 10:23, Job 23:10, 1 Peter 1:6, James 1:2, Job 1:21

Topics: "God's Faithfulness", "Endurance in Trials"

Description

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Transcript

My hope in this time together right now is to give you some thoughts specifically from verse 13 on God's faithfulness to the Christian in the midst of their trials and their times of testing that you and I face. So, 1 Corinthians 9. Can you shut that door, David, right there by chance? Thanks, brother. 1 Corinthians 9, verse 26.

So, I do not run aimlessly. I do not beat box as one beats air, but in contrast to that, I discipline my body. I keep my body under control lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

And then again, you have a chapter break that is not necessary because he starts with a connecting word, for. For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers. So, we think of this whole topic of people being disqualified, people not making it, people being apostate and abandoning the Lord.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. So, there's these things they all had in common. All were baptized, immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink.

So, they have a whole lot in common. That's what, five, six things they all were a part of. They all partook in that, yet we're going to see something.

Nevertheless, with most of them, these people who partook of all these things, God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. And as you know, first Corinthians 10 is a massive church history chapter, you could say. It's giving history, biblical history, for our own hearts application right now in 2023.

Verse six, now these things took place as an example for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did. And 23,000 fell in a single day. And note here, that falling in a single day, what is that fall that they had happen? They were destroyed.

All right, death. We must not put Christ to the test. And that's going to be something to think about this morning.

Putting Christ to the test. Are you enduring in the test faithfully? Are you testing God? And the way they test God, it's right there. How did they put Christ to the test? And they were destroyed.

Same thing, not just the sexually immoral people who were destroyed, but those who put Christ to the test. And how did they put Christ to the test? Nor grumble, as some of them did, and they were destroyed. So amazingly, grumbling and sexual morality both led to destruction.

That's somewhat shocking for people. But these sins are both significant offenses against God. Verse 11, Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

So this is for us. Verse 12, Therefore, in view of this, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed, lest he fall. We need to think about how to define that word fall in view of how it was just used, how the idea used above.

And then we've got this verse interjected, verse 13, which is really what I want to focus on in the second half of the message. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. And then he goes on, but we'll stop right there. So let me pray, and then we're going to consider some thoughts from God's Word right here.

Father, Lord, I think about the biographies we've read. We think about the Old Testament that we've read again and again, and we think about these examples that are given to us, and even how Paul pulls them in right here, and he applies them for us. And so, Lord, I pray that we would learn from you, that we would learn from history.

Lord, we don't want history to repeat itself in any way. We want to be those who really take heed to what has happened, and that we wouldn't live in ignorance, but we'd live in your wisdom. And, Lord, I just pray you would encourage the brethren today.

I don't know what trials and tests that different brethren here are facing or have faced this week, but, Lord, I pray that if any are being even tempted to grumble in the midst of that trial, Lord, that you'd use this very sermon that highlights your faithfulness, as Paul highlights it here. Lord, that you'd use that to strengthen

that dear brother or sister. And so, Lord, would you be with us right now at this time.

Lord, help my stammering tongue and exhausted spirit. Lord, I ask for your grace, your power, your spirit. In Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Well, Paul's encouragement to the believers, I really believe, is verse 13.

It highlights God's faithfulness for a believer in a time of testing and trials and temptation. So, I want to get there, but first let's consider the context, because verse 13 tends to be quoted a significant amount of time. In verse 12, but often maybe the context has not been considered as much as it should be.

Now, according to chapter 9, which is where we started, because all this is connected, we must exercise self-control or we will be disqualified. And I think, Craig, or I forget who, someone dealt with that passage not too long ago, or referred to it, and that disqualified is not a ministry disqualification, because the very things he goes on to talk about make you realize this is really with apostasy, people abandoning the Lord completely. And so, right after stating what he does in verse 27, Paul decides to give an exhibit of those who failed to obtain the prize.

He basically takes us into a museum, and he shows what all got dug up. And he says, look at this and hear what happened. And under one of those labels, you know, you've got these people right here who were bitten by serpents, and these people who perished over here, and it says they grumbled and tested Christ, right? And Paul's putting that before us.

He's taking us on this tour to see these deceased people that have been uncovered who didn't cross the finish line, right? They were in the race, they didn't finish. That's pretty important for you and I, because that's kind of where we're at, right? We're in the midst of the race right now. And then we get to this point in verse 12, and I want to think about verse 12 for a moment.

Paul reiterates his point by again referring to this category of professing believers who, to me, he's saying they thought they were above falling. They thought they were above falling. And it's important, I think, to realize here the falling in verse 12, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

I really used to take that as a new Christian, this idea that, oh, if you're proud and self-confident, then you might go fall into sin. That's a true reality. But in the context, is that really what he's getting at here? Because he's already described people earlier on in the chapter who've had all these blessings, right? And what ends up happening? They have these blessings, they're testing Christ, and Christ destroys them.

So their type of fall was being destroyed, right? This wasn't just a Christian who was proud and self-confident, and oh, you know, he fell in the lust because he was too self-confident in himself. I don't think that's what verse 12 is aiming at here in his context. I don't think this is about some fall into sin.

I think it's about those who are currently in sin, and they think they're okay. And he says, you think you stand? You think you're okay, currently living in sin, practicing pagan idolatry? You better take heed, lest you be destroyed. I think is really what Paul is hitting at right there.

And he connects it, you know, verse 12, therefore, so he's connecting it with what is previously stated in the chapter. And people often quote the fall here just being an individual fall into sin. Well, these people, they're already in they think they're okay.

And Paul's, you know, conclusion to them in verse 14 is flee from idolatry, right? And you had a problem at Corinth where individuals were partaking of idolatry and of Christianity, and they think it's okay. They think they're okay in this type of situation. And we have a similar idea in the book of Jude, in Jude 1-5.

Now, I want you to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who didn't believe. And so there, Jude kind of describes 1 Corinthians 10, those who got destroyed, the real issue was they weren't really believing. They didn't really believe and continue on with the Lord, and the Lord destroyed them.

Now, what would lead someone to think they're above falling, right? What would lead someone to think that? And if you look a little further, you kind of get a good definition in verse 21. He says, right before verse 21, I do not want you to be participants of demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.

You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? You can see right there, Paul sees this is a mindset of those in the church, right? They've got this idea that we can partake of the Lord's supper here on a Sunday, and then we can go over there to a temple, and we can partake of some manifestation of demon worship. But because we partook of the supper, because we were, as he says right at the start of the chapter, all baptized into Moses, all ate the same spiritual food, verse 4, all drank the same spiritual rock.

It's like the Corinthians had this idea, because we've partaken in these rituals, because we've partaken in these ordinances, we're okay, even though we're over here engaged in idolatry. I was baptized. I partake of the Lord's supper, right? I've done these activities.

I've done these ordinances, thereby people wrongly reason that their attendance at an idle temple cannot affect or is not an indicator of their true standing with God. And Paul's whole point is, no, no, no, it's not it at all. If you say you're one of the people of gods, and you think that you're standing, look at these other people who had the same idea.

They thought they could stand. They could go and make this golden calf. They could go do all of these things.

But because they partook, because they were baptized into Moses, they're okay. And Paul is adamantly saying, you're not okay. So Paul's trying to tear down this wrong idea of security in sin and idolatry that these people were finding based upon the fact that they were part of the church, right? And so that's, is that some new idea? Or do we find that same thing happens in 2023? Right? The same idea happens all the time in this very year we live in right now.

People will try to serve two masters and embrace some form of Christianity while at the same time embracing some form of paganism. And you know, it gets to the point where what's pagan is now actually being called Christian, right? Things, views on sexuality and all of this. It's like now it actually ends up being under the banner of Christian.

They don't even call it pagan anymore. And so in the midst of this, Paul's reminding the Corinthians that they too are susceptible to falling away under the divine judgment of God, just like those Israelites did. He's showing them, you guys got something in common, right? Yeah, they were baptized into Moses.

Yeah, you were baptized, not by Paul, but you were baptized by Cephas and these other people. Great. What happened to those people who were baptized? They didn't make it.

What's going to happen to you all if you continue partaking of the demons and the fellowship and all of this and you're trying to serve two masters? Paul's telling them, if you think you stand, you're not. You're going to fall. The same thing is going to happen to you.

You're basically putting Christ to the test. You're testing God. And he says that in verse 9, we must not put Christ to the test.

And I think if someone says, what does it mean to put Christ to the test? I think verse 22 that we already read kind of helps you. When you put Christ to the test, what happens? Verse 22, you provoke the Lord to jealousy. And then look at Paul, he puts a question, are we stronger than he? I mean, what's the answer? No, you're not.

And Paul's point is, why would you test him who you're not stronger than, and you can wipe 23,000 people out just like that, or you can send serpents and wipe all these individuals out. So this is almost a description of what it means to test the Lord. You conduct yourselves in a way that prompts and arouses God to jealousy.

And remember, if you're new, new Christian, you might hear the word jealousy and always associated with some sinful response. That's not how the Bible uses the word. Often the Bible talks about a jealousy as a righteous response.

And so clearly that's the type of response from God right here. It is righteous. God does not sin.

And by doing so, provoking him, defying the one who is stronger than they are. Paul says, you know, are we stronger than he? In other words, is this a fight you really want to pick? And he's saying, look at the history of it. If you guys want to pick a fight at Corinth and say, it's okay to take the Lord's supper and be baptized.

And it's okay to also have my hand over here. Paul's just saying, look guys, look at history. I mean, look at the fight you're picking.

You're going to be destroyed. You guys have lost your minds if you continue on like this. And so then he calls them flee from idolatry in verse 14.

Right? So that's, that's what's happening here around this verse, verse 13 that I really want to really want to look at. Um, but some, some here might need to take heed to verse 12 that we just considered. And in Psalm 78, it says they provoked him to anger with their high places.

They moved him to jealousy with their idols. When God heard he was full of wrath and he utterly rejected Israel. Right? Paul is also showing here that God right there in Psalm 78, he's the same God today.

If you're going to, you know, you hear people say, don't take God's name in vain. When we, how do you even define not taking God's name in vain? People tend to think it's don't say his name like verbally, you know, you can take God's name in vain by saying you're a Christian and then going and living in a contrary way. You're, you're bearing his name in vain.

It's useless. It means absolutely nothing. And that's clearly what was happening here at this church.

And Paul is strongly admonishing them. They think they're okay. Serving two masters.

Paul says, no, you're going to fall just like those in Israel. Doesn't matter if you've been baptized, doesn't matter if you partook of the Lord's supper. So this is a really a strong warning from the apostle Paul.

And, and again, you and I might say, well, I would never provoke the Lord to anger, but remember you might not do it with idolatry, but what was another way they provoke the Lord to anger grumbling, right? I think that could be more of a place you and I could fall nor grumble as some of them did. And what ultimately is grumbling? When you grumble against God, what are you saying to the Lord? You're challenging the Lord's authority, like a child who rejects the parent's command. And then they kind of look at the parent out of the corner of their eye.

They're challenging, not only did they disobey the parent, but then give the parent the eye. And they're basically saying to the parent, I don't have to obey you anymore. And that's basically what those at Corinth are doing.

They're expressing dissatisfaction, unhappiness towards God. And that rightly provokes God to jealousy based on their response because God has not failed them, right? And if God was not moved in righteous anger at their sinful response, that would be wrong of the Lord. The Lord has to respond in this way to be consistent with His divine character.

So, if you look back at this grumbling and impatience in Numbers 21, don't turn there, but it says they became patient along the way. All right, you notice that phrase along the way? Not at the beginning, right? We tend to not fall into impatience and grumbling at the beginning of the trial. It says we're getting further along, that's when it enters in.

And that's really going to matter because the verse we're going to look at in verse 13, if you notice the end of verse 13, he says the way of escape that you may be able to, to what? Endure, right? So, this really, verse 13 is not some promise that the trial vanishes in a moment. It's promise for grace in the midst of enduring in the trial. And if you notice in Numbers 21, that's where they started to mess up along the way.

They weren't initially impatient, they became impatient in the midst of their present trial. When is it going to end? Let's go back to Egypt, the food, you know, all of that. And it led to them making this statement, which is evidence of grumbling at God.

They said, why have you brought us out of Egypt to die? Right? Unbelief, we're going to die, questioning God, saying why. So, when it comes to you and the Lord, we're kind of transitioning here. Are you, there's a helpful way to think about it.

With whatever trial you're in, or burden you're bearing, are you testing the Lord or trusting the Lord? Are you trusting the Lord, or in the midst of the trust, is it transitioning into testing and challenging God through your grumbling? Or even in a greater way, and maybe it's wrong to say greater way, because those who grumbled got the same judgment in 1 Corinthians 10. But you get to the point where you've been adding in some false religion to your Christianity and maintaining it's okay to group them both together. Because we saw there in the chapter, Paul's saying you can't do that, you can't partake of the demons and you can't partake of the Lord.

You think you're going to stand while embracing that? And Paul's like, no, you think you're going to stand, you're going to fall, flee from that idolatry. But am I testing or trusting? Paul's really warning us against this

deliberate acts that a professing believer does. Deliberate, willful acts that happen because there's a false security from chapter 10 verses 1 to 4 of all the things you could say that they partook in, and they're putting God to the test.

They dare to judge God. It's not going to do anything, and they're okay because they were baptized and partake of the Lord's Supper. That's the idea.

And so that's a strong warning. We want to take heed to that, but that's not the main thing I want to look at in this message. So you and I don't want to be that person.

Because you know what it implies if you're that person? Is Paul promising divine aid? This is really important here. Paul puts verse 13 that we're going to look at. He interjects it here.

But is there a promise of divine aid for those who are partaking of the temple of demons and partaking of the Lord's Supper and saying that it's okay? Was there divine aid for Israel who he pulls in for this example when they were partaking of all of these things? No, there was judgment that came. We don't want to approach verse 13 in a wrong way, right? The judgment is very firm and strong that Paul's asserting is going to come upon people who are at this point. These people are beyond being tested and tempted.

They're fully indulging willfully in rebellion against God, and there are pronouncements of judgment upon them for this treatment of the Lord. So then we have verse 13, which I love this verse. I've loved this verse for 15 years.

I've been a Christian, and I hope if you haven't had a relationship with this verse where it's one that you run to that maybe after this message you'll kind of be put in that repertoire for you to have as a friend, right? That's what Proverbs 7 says. Call wisdom your intimate friend. And we want to have certain verses that are like close friends that we go to when we're in the midst of a trial, and we remember those truths, and that encourages our faith to not quit in the midst of the trial.

So verse 13. And I was surprised by this, and I guess it kind of showed how much I didn't understand the verse in this context. But many commentators, they start off by saying they don't know why Paul even put the verse here.

They don't know why Paul even put it here. Because if you, it's true, if you remove verse 13, verse 12 to 14 flows perfectly, right? Therefore let anyone thinks he stands take heed lest he fall, therefore my beloved flee from my valety. Right? That makes total sense in the context, right? And so many would say, commentators would make this statement.

They say in typical fashion, Paul cannot bring himself to the end of all of this on such a strong word of threat. And I appreciate that thought there. If you do actually survey the apostle Paul, I mean, he makes really strong threats, right? Rightly so.

But it's amazing how he will bring in their encouragement. And he's bringing in even this encouragement here about the faithfulness of God to these Christians in the midst of the church at Corinth. And so that, I think that is, if that assertion is right, there's definitely encouragement there.

That'd be something to think about. All the places Paul gives a warning and what does he follow it up with? That could be something we could learn, right? In your counseling, do you just warn people all day? Or do you follow it up with some sort of encouragement in the midst of it? I'd also think there's something to

consider, commentators who say that Paul here in verse 13 speaks to a different category of people than he's thinking about above. He's now speaking to those who are in the midst of true testing, not those who have tested God.

He's already made it clear what's going to happen to them and that they've got to flee from idolatry. And so some would say he's actually interjecting verse 13 as an encouragement for those at Corinth who are in the midst of true testing. They've not given in.

And he's encouraging them in the midst of all this giving in that people are doing. He's wanted to encourage those brethren, don't quit. Don't quit.

God is able. God is faithful to you in the midst of what you're going through. Now either way, however you might take that, clearly it's a verse of encouragement to the believer.

So let's consider verse 13. You know, if you think of it this way, if the test is from God, right, which he speaks about in verse 13, and it's not you testing God, what's verse 13, let's read it again, make you come away with no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful.

He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, the test, He will provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it. I mean, if you're right now in your life, you're not out there willfully testing God, trying to partake of the demons in the Lord's Supper on Sunday, guess what? As you leave this building today, it doesn't matter whatever trial you face, because you're not trying to keep two feet one foot here and one foot over there. You can live this week with a sense of security that whatever you face is going to be okay.

God will give you the grace for what you're going to face compared to the person who thinks they're okay while they're partaking of the table of demons and coming and being baptized and partaking of the Lord's Supper. And they think this is okay. You know, I've done these rituals.

I'm now safe. That person, they're not going to have a promise of divine aid. They've actually got a promise of judgment from Numbers 21, hovering over them.

And so we want to be in this camp, the people who are facing ordinary trials and temptations. And we're finding that the Lord is helping us to endure through those one by one. You can really say, if that's you, you're not in danger of falling away.

If you're not testing God, if you're not willfully rebelling against Him, and in that stage of moving in a negative direction, and you're just facing trials, there's a sense of security there. This verse should leave you with that type of confidence in the Lord. All right.

So first, we need to consider a specific word in this verse. And it's the word temptation. No temptation has overtaken you.

Does anyone have a version that doesn't have the word temptation? Just shout out what word it has there. Maybe everyone has an ESV here, right? What's the NESB say? Okay. Yeah.

If you search that word in the Greek, and when we say Greek from the pulpit, the majority of the New Testament is written in that language. The original language is what we're referring to. The Greek word, it's the same word as trial.

And all these other places it's rendered, you've got the word trial, test. And so you find temptation, trial, test. So multiple versions don't even use the word temptation in verse 13.

They use the word no trial has overtaken you that is not common to man. And so it can depend on the context of where it's used, on how it should be rendered. And obviously those in the ESV committee in this chapter felt like the word temptation would convey it more.

And there's, you could do a whole sermon on this, but we do need to remember a few things about temptation. Temptation is a test in that you might, you know how we say, I felt tempted. Well, if you're actually using that language appropriately, is that you admitting to sin? No.

If you're saying you felt tempted, it meant that there was a, is temptation sin? In and of itself. And we could, we could go to what Hebrews four, where it talks about the Lord Jesus Christ. And it says he was tempted in every way as we are yet without sin.

So clearly you can be tempted and it not be sin. It says in Matthew four, that Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy spirit to be tempted by the devil. Well, I think a better word there is tried, but in the midst of trials, there are temptations, which we read in first Corinthians 10, you could describe the temptation.

Something is coming upon you that your desire is wanting to, to give in and go and do something or believe something about God that is not right. That is a sinful response in the midst of your trial. And so there's different nuances.

Some, some right when they hear temptation, they don't, it's this point before you've been seduced to sin, right? You're being tested to be seduced into sin, but it hasn't, hasn't actually yet, um, happened. And so the point of trial, I'm in a trial and then temptations are coming in the trial. And if I give into the temptation, I'm being seduced to sin and to not bear up under it.

And, and I think I mentioned this years ago, but you could almost look at it in this way. When you're being tested, it's like being given the test by a teacher. And if you, if you give into temptation, you're basically cheating on the test, right? You're no longer trusting the Lord to help you to pass the test.

You're going outside of those given means and you're cheating. Well, that's a sin. You're sinning against God right there.

And so when you, when you look at this verse, don't just think, oh, temptation, you know, and have some narrow view about, oh, I was tempted to be impatient or I was tempted with fill in the blank. No, no. This is just trials and tests in the Christian life.

It's not just something that fits with one specific test or trial as a Christian. Uh, yes. It's one of those that you're in the wilderness as a Jew and you're, you're being tempted to grumble and complain about the treatment that you feel like God has failed.

You feel like God's failed. If you gratify that you're sinning by giving into that thought, right? So, but here's a promise to not, to be in a trial and not ever be seduced into any type of sin, which will keep you from being in the place they were at in the earlier part of first Corinthians 10, where they're now willfully in rebellion against the Lord, justifying it because they have religion, right? That's, we don't want to get to that point. And so here is an encouragement to us as we face ordinary tests and trials and temptations,

uh, that there is the grace from a faithful God for you and I to endure and you and I do not have to give in to whatever it might be that is trying us to grumble, to self pity, to sin, to be unfaithful in some way.

So let me give a few observations from verse 13 for your encouragement. And this is, this is really under the heading, God is faithful. If you look at verse 13, right after he says, no temptation is overtaking you, there's not common demand, meaning there's nothing out of the ordinary, which is incredible.

That's an incredible statement in and of itself because how many of us you're in a trial and you feel like this is really unique. You know, no one, no one can relate to me. This is so such a unique situation.

Paul's just like, you know, can't think that way. Right. Well, it's interesting if you don't agree with Paul here and you do paint yourself in a unique situation, guess what that could now make you more vulnerable to do to question God's love for you.

Why would he put me in this situation? No, I mean, no one else is in that situation. Right. And so same thing with appealing to the Lord Jesus in Hebrews four, we get this sense of God's able to relate with us in our trial and we don't have to be discouraged.

We don't have to think that this, you know, this is such an uncommon thing. Um, but that statement, God is faithful. What does it mean to be faithful? It's to be completely dependable.

It's to be true to their word, right? That God swears to his own word and you better believe it. He doesn't change. He doesn't change his word.

Uh, he's not a shifting shadow. He remains constant in his love. Uh, you know, we see his, his exemplified faithfulness and the Lord Jesus Christ and what he's done on the cross.

He's faithful to his promises. Isn't it? Well, who is it? Joshua, who said in the old Testament, not one word of all of the Lord's promises fell to the ground in return void. I mean, that's, that's incredible about the Lord.

And this goes hand in hand with you and me enduring as Christians. Um, listen to these verses. First Corinthians one, he says, the Lord will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful by whom you were called. First Thessalonians five, you'll be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful.

He will surely do it. Second Thessalonians three, but the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

Hebrews 10, let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful. What, what did almost all of those verses deal with when thinking about the faithfulness of God, say again, promises, not just, but promises of enduring to the end, to the returning of the Lord Jesus Christ. I mean, Paul knew we needed that as Christians.

We needed encouragement and hope to get from here to the end, especially as you see others not getting from here to the end. Paul recognized that reality. And so, so many of these places where Paul appeals to the faithfulness of God, it's in the end of, it's in the context of being sustained to the end and enduring.

So we see from verse 13, God is faithful in our trials. And that first, I already made a comment on that first part of the verse, but listen to the NET. I like the NET has some good ways of translating it that helped the

English reader comprehend in a clearer way some of what's being communicated.

No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others. Right? That's the idea of the first statement Paul is making there. He tears down this idea that I mentioned that we're in some unique situation.

Well, let's think God is faithful. Number, I think I have three reasons here, not 20. Someone mentioned I had like some sermon where I had 20 points and they said, don't even say the number, James.

I just kind of discouraged me at the outset. I think I have three, 30 or three. I don't know.

Um, time is okay. God is faithful. Now get this.

You know what hit me with this passage? God is faithful and yet a trial has overtaken you. Look at the verse. No is overtaken you.

That is not common. Wait, what? You're saying God's faithful and yet a trial has come upon me. Isn't that a contradiction? No, it's not.

I mean, I know we know that as Christian, but here another reminder is this morning when something comes upon you, it overtakes you. It's there at your front door, a test, a trial, a temptation. Uh, the faithful God knew that was going to happen.

You see, God can be truly faithful and let you be tried. I mean, that's incredible. And if you heard the, if you heard what I quoted earlier from Matthew four about Jesus, Jesus is led into the wilderness by who, by the Holy spirit for what happened to be tempted by the devil.

The spirit of God was not doing the tempting, but just like in the book of Job, the permissions for the event to take place and allowing it to be happen is under the umbrella of the sovereignty of God. And so when you view that about your trials, like in Job, where God is giving the devil permission without which Job can affect or the devil can affect Job. See, so this is big theology about who God is.

And we, we need to get it because it's really going to help us when something overtakes you and comes upon you in your own life. God lets you get tried and he controls the permissions of those trials, right? There's, there's not one thing of this. There's not, there's not a trial where if you're, if you're walking with the Lord and a trial comes, God had some involvement in allowing this to be brought about.

That's where you can say all things work together for good. If you're, if you're trying to partake of the demons and you're trying to partake of the Lord, like we looked at earlier, you're not going to find comfort here. You're finding judgment.

You need to flee from that. But for you and I, if we're not testing God and we're just facing the ordinary test and the trials as severe as they might be as Christians, we've got great confidence here. And so if God will not let me be tried beyond what I'm able, well then that implies he has control over what trials that I get.

And we're called to endure trials of various kinds. And so trials coming into your life should not make you question God's faithfulness. It should encourage you to be faithful to God because God in some way you might not see at the moment is being faithful to you and to me by allowing that trial into our life.

That's the first thought here. The second one, God is faithful. He will not let you be tried or tempted beyond your ability, tried beyond what you're able to bear.

So how do we take encouragement from this? I mean, it's basically the Lord is telling you and me that there is a cap, there is a cap on your trials that it won't go beyond a certain point. Now, if anyone knows where that meter is at in the Bible for you to look at, where I can see what that cap is, let me know. I think it just tells us, number one, for the Lord to not give you beyond what you can bear means he knows what you can bear.

You hear that? The Lord knows what you can bear. Who knows what you can bear more? You or the Lord? The Lord, right? The Lord knows more what you can bear than you know what you can bear. I mean, if you sit around thinking, well, what can I bear? That's a really, you don't want to, you don't even want to go there.

Right? If he, if he allows it, you're going to find his grace is sufficient. So, and, you know, in a way you could think of it this way, the Lord's not giving my 10-year-old's math test to my one-year-old because my one-year-old doesn't have the ability to bear that math test. The Lord isn't going to give that trial to that one-year-old.

And so God is faithful to have designed you to have a bearing limit, and he knows what that limit is, and that should make you trust him. As it says in Psalm 90, you know, remember our frame, we are but dust. I mean, if anyone knows the, the, you know, if anyone is the engineer and the designer of you and how you are as a Christian and where you're at and however long you've been saved, and they're trying to judge, well, if we put this much weight on, on James, is that going to crush and destroy his faith? You know what it is? We actually need to put some lesser weights on at first to get him to a better point where he can take that later on.

I mean, the Lord's, he's the designer. He knows what he's doing. Secondly, under this second thought of God is faithfully not let you be tempted beyond your ability, it also speaks to me that there are certain trials some do not have the ability to bear up under, at least not yet.

And therefore, the Lord does not put them through that. Now, this is really important for you to get, Christian, because you, you know, you know what one of the dangers Christians fall into? They fall into thinking about the what-ifs. Well, what if that happened to me? How would I handle it? That often does not prove to be beneficial.

If you sit there looking at the trial, you think I would never make it through, well, guess what? You might actually be right. At this point in your life, you might not make it through that, and that's why the Lord hasn't put that test and trial in your life, because it's beyond what you can bear. And so either way, you gotta, you gotta trust the Lord rather than think about what's off in the horizon.

What am I going to face? Is this going to happen? If you face it, God's allowing it, and He's promised to give the grace to bear you up in the midst of it. You've got to trust the Lord. A third point under the second heading, uh, thirdly, this means whatever trial it is that I'm about to face, the Lord is allowing it to come about.

He's giving permission because He knows I can bear it. He knows by His power I can bear under it, and it's not beyond my ability, and so that should give me great confidence with whatever trial that I face. If it's at my door because God's allowed it to be there, and this God has allowed it to be there, He knows that He, what I can bear, and He's promised to not give me more than I can bear, then this thing that's right before me, oh, you know what? I can actually have confidence in God that I'm going to endure.

I mean, He's already going to help me in this because of these other truths. So imagine that. Imagine going into your trial at the beginning already believing that God will give you the grace to endure in it because He's brought the trial about.

Wouldn't that, I mean, doesn't that all the more stir your faith up if you start out with the trial like that? That, oh, this is from my Father, and He's given me this trial, and He said He won't give me anything more than I can bear. Therefore, He knows that I can bear this even though I don't know that myself, so I'm going to look to Him by faith, and He's going to help me, and I'm going to endure in the midst of this. I mean, remarkable.

Your faith is now stirred. Another thing, some people have a problem with verse 13 because they think it's a contradiction in 2 Corinthians 1.8, and since we are just a couple pages away, you could look at that verse if you want, 2 Corinthians 1.8. Some versions render it, well, let me read the ESVs. We'll see this isn't, this doesn't undo our, this promise here.

For we want you not to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia, for we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. And other versions render it this way, and this creates questions. We were under great pressure far beyond our ability to endure.

You hear, so you're reading your Bible, you're not going to put anything beyond your ability to endure, to bear, and then another verse, Paul's saying he faced something where he couldn't endure, right? So people say, well, that's a contradiction there. I mean, it's not really true because look at, look at what happened to Paul. They think it really contradicts.

Well, the problem with that is, what happened to Paul in the midst of his trial? Did he endure? Did he endure? Yeah, here. So 1 Corinthians 10.13 is true, and how did he endure? What happened to Paul? What was the next verse? What did it say? This happened to make us rely not on ourselves but on God. Ah, that's interesting.

You know what? This creates another category in all of this, okay? You might go into a trial and you can't bear it at the beginning, right? And God grows you in the midst of it to allow you to bear it. So then you do get to the end of it. You do endure through it, but he brings you into it knowing that that isn't something you can take initially, but I'm going to help you in the midst of it so you will make it through and you won't abandon me.

And this is what happened to Paul. Paul doesn't abandon the Lord. He makes it through and he gets to the very end of his life, 2 Timothy 3, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, which persecutions I endured.

So he did endure, he didn't quit, yet from them all the Lord rescued me. And so no, that's, this does not contradict what we have in 1 Corinthians 10, 13. It just makes it more human in the way you express yourself because you and I might be in a trial and we feel like we can't bear it any longer, and the Lord's allowed the trial and allowed us to feel that.

So we go to him, we get his strength, we don't rely on ourselves, and then we do make it through. You see, so that might happen in the midst of it, and that you could, you could subjectively feel I can't bear it any longer, and the devil makes you doubt 1 Corinthians 10, 13. See, it's not real.

Look, you feel like you can't bear it. 1 Corinthians 10, 13 is not real. No, no, don't, don't give into that, that lie.

Well, a third thing here about God's faithfulness that we get from 1 Corinthians 10, 13, God is faithful to you while in the trial to provide help for you to endure in the trial. If you look at the text, God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, with the trial, with the test, he will also provide.

I mean, we love people who provide for us and help, and here our God does. He provides the way of escape, and you know, you almost get your heart all set, like, oh, yes, escape, I can get out of it, and then Paul says something that's kind of like, I don't know, why'd you have to say that, Paul? Provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it. Wait, I thought I was going to escape, and you're saying I got to endure.

Don't think of this promise as some idea that the trial dissolves in a moment. No, rather grace is given, and you escape from grumbling, and you endure in the trial, and at some point, the trial might come to a close. It might never.

I mean, do I have a promise that every trial I face as a Christian, and in my Christian life, by the time I get to eternity, is going to have been resolved? No, there might be trials you've got to endure for 50 years, but God will give you the grace in the midst of that to do so, and so I tend to like, I think, I tend to think it's right to think about when he says providing the way of escape, he's talking about you don't enter into testing the Lord, you don't enter into grumbling, you don't enter into what all those people earlier did. He's trying to keep people out of being categorized with those in the first half of 1 Corinthians 10. He doesn't want you to get to that place, but as far as when the trial ends, Paul doesn't say, and we can't see it, only the divine perspective, only God, only God knows, and so you and I might need to endure more before the end is realized.

So whatever test God allowed, he will pull the curtains to a close at the right time. He'll write the end of the chapter when enough has happened to move on from that volume in your life. So what this means is that as a believer, the nature of trials are such that you must not give in to them, and you don't have to.

Believe that whatever temptation, whatever trial, whatever test you face this week, if you already go into the week believing, I don't have to give in. I don't have to. The Lord will give me the grace to endure facing this.

Did he not do that for Joseph? Potiphar's wife came to him every day, so she came to him day after day, and then bam, when the temptation is all the more fierce, he says, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? But God gave him the grace. God it, the commentator, God it, I think I'm saying his name right, he wisely said this, the Corinthians must be made to understand that they run no risk of sinning and falling away from the faith if they have only to encounter the temptations God allots to them, but that they have no pledge of victory whatever in the case of temptations into which they throw themselves with lightheartedness. You understand, again, that's an important distinction we can miss.

The first, let's just restate it again, the first part of this chapter, you've got people who are willfully sinning and rebelling against the Lord, and they're holding on to their, the fact that they've been baptized and taken to the Lord's supper, and a church member, that's basically the idea. They said the sinner's prayer, whatever, fill in the blank, whatever people rely on, and they're able to partake of demons, and it's okay.

You find threats of judgment for them, but then you got another group who they're facing ordinary trials allotted to by God.

They're not in willful rebellion of the Lord. Those people live life with a sense of confidence and expectation that whatever I face, whatever comes, God's grace is sufficient for me to endure. If that's not where you're at, and you're in the other place where there's all manner of compromises, Paul's words to you is flee immorality, or his words to those in numbers who are bitten by the serpents is that a serpent was being raised, right? And you look to the serpent, and you will live.

Well, that was looking to the Lord Jesus Christ. No doubt, many of these people Paul just said in chapter 6 are deceived, and so clearly their hope, what they need is not self-reformation. They need transformation that is only found in Christ.

So if you think, wait, I thought what I'm facing in my life, God has no involvement in it. Change your mind. If you see the hand of God, it's going to give you great confidence whatever you face.

Do you rejoice in your trials? In the way you're being tested? Listen, Paul might not say rejoice right here, but listen to Peter chapter 1. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while. A little while, right? Oh good, it's a little while. Well, what does that mean, Peter? If necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.

It's the same Greek word as it is right there in chapter 1. That's the idea. You've been grieved by various trials. They grieve you.

It's not like we're creatures with no emotion. So that the tested genuineness of your faith. You see that? God has a purpose.

I mean, I don't want to make the Lord like an engineer, but just for the sake of the illustration, kind of like I mentioned earlier, the Lord is building you up, Christian, and He knows how much you can bear, and it's different than what others can bear, and the Lord is careful to not put too much weight to make the whole thing fall down, but He's also careful to give enough weight to keep the building process going, and He's using various trials in your life, in my life, to get us to that point, and so if you realize that, it should help you as you approach these trials. I was reading some of the original Robert Chapman biography the other day, and if some don't know, Robert Chapman lived to be, I think, 98. Spurgeon said he was the most saintliest man he ever met.

He never got married. He open-air preached into his 90s, Papa. I think he was like 95.

He'd be street preaching. I'm not trying to burden you that you need to do that, though, but listen to this. He said, those are my best circumstances that best serve to try faith, help humility, and check my self-will.

He goes on to say, it's the greatest misfortune that can happen to a child of God to have no trials. Oh, yes, I don't want to say that. I mean, how many are sitting here, that's the greatest misfortune.

I'm just so misfortunate this week. I'm a child of God, and I have no trials. Who's the, you know, is that saying people say you're either in a trial, going out of a trial, or about to enter into a trial, or well, that tends to be true when you look back in the big perspective, but Chapman goes on to say trials are sent to lead to the Word of God, an entire dependence upon Him.

That's what 2 Corinthians 1 did to Paul. If you have no trials, how can you comfort others with the comfort wherein you yourself are comforted by God? And another time in regards to trials, he said, which do you most think of, getting out of the furnace or pleasing God in the furnace? I mean, that's a good question. Whatever trial you're in, look, there's been trials in my life.

I know it. I just went out. I went out, and I'm looking for an easy way out.

And the way out isn't like you go and do some grievous sin, but it's sin of unbelief, right? You remove yourself from some trying responsibility, for example. So yeah, what, you know, are you thinking about pleasing God in the trial, or just getting out of the furnace? Chapman said, in any trial, I always cut matters short if I only say, thou didst it. If after being provoked a little, we're ready to say, Lord, you did it, we'll never be ruffled.

I mean, what a thought. Maybe that's all I'll share, but brethren, I hope you can look at 1 Corinthians 10, 13. Christian, if you're here today, and you're walking with the Lord, no, not in perfection, but you're following the Lord, you're going to face temptations, you're going to face trials, you're going to face tests.

Guess what you should also recognize? You're facing that which your Father has allowed and given permission to happen. No, He's not the one tempting you, but He will allow trials in your life. He'll give permission, even like we read in Job, for things to be brought about.

It's for your good, and there is a sufficient grace there. And be worried about pleasing God in the midst of the trial. Ada Lee, 1936, 37 years after six children died while on the mission field, she said the furnace of trials has been, and this is 37 years after six of her kids died, you know, you think, where does someone end up like that? The furnace of trials has been necessary many times, heated often seven times more than it was intended to heat, but the form of the fourth like the Son of God was always present.

Fear not, thou worm, Jacob, as often sounded in my ear. Once when the life companion, her husband, went for his coronation, all too soon we thought, but the refiner has been the one present in every furnace of affliction. So I come forth as pure gold, that he may see his likeness in me here and now, and at last that he may be able to present me faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy that will be glory for me.

And then Evan sent me a quote from Prem Pradhan, a Nepali evangelist who kept getting put in prison. There's a mini biography written on him, but he referred to this verse, Prem did, in the book. He said, the Word of God would show me that God would not put me in situations beyond what I could bear.

This is an evangelist in Nepal, 60 years ago, being put in prison again and again. So when discouragements came to me, my heart, I simply prayed, Lord, you know my mind, you know the discouraging thoughts that come, but your Word says that you will not put me in a situation beyond what I can bear. I thank you that you know I can bear it.

If God knows you can bear it because God's put you in it, why don't you believe so too? That sounds like a good idea. If God's saying this is true, I'm going to believe it, no matter what I feel. Amen? Well, let's pray.

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