

# The Spiritual Rock

Lent 3

Pastor Josh Frazee

1 Cor. 10:1-13

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Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

This winter our ground got plenty soggy. Highway 51 was covered, and route 185 was almost drowned by the water washing over the turf on its north side between Bluff City and Vandalia. It is a fact of life that when dirt gets damp, it becomes squishy. Just try walking across the way between the church and the parsonage some afternoon after a storm has passed through. Squish, squish, squish!

Dirt can be easily moved when it becomes wet. Soil, but not rock. It takes a lot of water to move a rock, depending on its size. While the soil is easily changed by the elements, rocks will remain where they are without some kind of great force.

For that reason, when it does rain or get muddy, it's best to find a series of stones to jump from one to the other across rather than to try to dash through the mud. That and so that you don't track it inside and get mommy angry with you.

In our closing hymn, *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*, every line ends "On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand." While this world has been deluged in sin, there is a firm foundation on which to stand.

That is the very idea Paul was conveying to the Corinthians in our Epistle text for the morning. He wrote to them of the Rock that was, and is, our Lord Christ Jesus. As we rest on this text, we'll find that all other grounds are indeed sinking sands of idolatry.

1

Verse

He begins this section directing the Corinthians back to their forefathers in the faith, namely the Israelites. Referring back to their wandering in the wilderness from the end of Exodus to the end of Deuteronomy, Paul points out how the Israelites may have been walking on the sands of the desert, but they still had a rock on which to rely. They were "all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

Yes, you heard correctly, the Israelites were baptized into Moses. But as John the Baptist's baptism pointed to a greater one, so did that of Moses. In each case, those being baptized were passed through water to safety in anticipation of how it would be done more fully through the work of Jesus Christ, and the baptism into Him. In addition to being passed through water, the Israelites had special food to eat—food which was spiritual. It was food and drink which was from Christ Jesus Himself, just as we now have communion, which is food which is Christ Jesus Himself, offered at this table for you.

But Paul points out that even though the Israelites were given the Rock on whom to stand, they left His safety to find ground elsewhere, whether back in the slavery of Egypt or in listening to their own fear, thinking they knew better whether God could lead them into the Promised Land than God Himself. In trusting these idols, they found themselves on sinking sand; and they sunk.

God had done a lot of miracles in the presence of the Israelites; but "with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." How many miracles have you seen, brothers and sisters

in Christ? You may not have seen a cloud and a pillar of fire, but has God not promised to be with you, despite your sin? You may not have seen the waters of the Red Sea parted and gone through it, but have you not been baptized into Christ, and seen many more baptisms since then? You may not have found manna on the ground in the morning and seen Moses bring water from the rock, yet do you not have spiritual food offered here every weekend—of which many of you have partaken already? You may not have seen Moses lift up a bronze serpent and watched as your friends were bitten by golden serpents only to look to the bronze one and live, but who have you seen lifted up every Sunday morning if not Christ Jesus on the cross of Calvary?

2  
Verse

In each of these, we have seen the spiritual Rock, Jesus Himself, at work in our own lives. Paul warns us, then, that we should not stray from Him, because what happened to the Israelites “took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.” He wrote to the Corinthians, “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.’”

Now this does not mean that we should not have days off. Remember, God rested on the Sabbath as an example that we need time off. What it does mean is that the people eat and drank in their idolatry, and that they rose up to play in it. Time after time the Israelites chased false gods. Even when they were at Mount Sinai, in God’s very presence, they made the calf out of their golden jewelry. They had problems with following Baal and Ashtoreh, and numerous others. While we might know that these gods are not gods, or real at all, the other gods they chased we might find more close to home.

“We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did...put Christ to the test, as some of them did...nor grumble, as some of them did.” We may not have “idol time” with an “i-d-o-l,” but in our “idle time” “i-d-l-e,” do we find ourselves being led astray? In down time on the computer, do sites tempt us to view things we should not? In break time at work or at home, do we use it to badmouth our bosses? When the boss is away, do you have much to say? Or what about the president? Granted we have the right to make political cartoons and we don’t have to agree with everything the president does, but this is the year we can elect a new one. Are you spending all your time thinking how you dislike this president so that you don’t spend any listening to the debates so that you might vote for one you will follow happily? That is your civic duty, after all—and a blessing. All government has been set up by God, including ours where we can elect a new leader, rather than receiving the next one by next of kin, where we have no choice.

How many ways do you put Christ your Savior to the test? Do you not remember the examples of the Israelites, many of whom were destroyed by serpents or the Destroyer? Are you leaving the security of Christ your Rock, your solid ground, for that which sinks as fast as the barriers to the fields last winter?

3  
Verse

“(L)et anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 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.”

Brothers and sisters, you already know how to endure temptation. Christ has given you the example for resisting using God’s Word as He did. You know that Christ went to the cross of Calvary to take away the guilt for when you have fallen. And you know what was left off from our text: that Christ Jesus has given you spiritual food from the Rock as well.

If our text would have gone one paragraph further, you would have been reminded that “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.” Paul continues that we cannot partake of the table of demons, false gods, and idle time, and the table of Christ and expect to remain safe.

Again, remember the end of our text: “God is faithful.” He is the solid ground one whom you stand in Christ Jesus. In Christ, you know where Jesus was heading this Lenten season, to the cross. And you also know what He gave you the night He was betrayed: His very body and His very blood given and shed for you for the forgiveness of all of your sin. This spiritual food will help keep you on the solid ground. That’s why Jesus left it for you. “(W)ith the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” In Jesus’ Name. Amen.