Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Learning from Bad Examples
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Code: 80-379

There are so many ways in which we can prepare our hearts for a time around the Lord ’s Table. The cross is the focal point of the whole of Scripture and therefore there are a lot of places you can go to choose for that heart preparation that looks at the provision of Christ.

One that you might not consider, however, is the tenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and so I want you to turn to that…the tenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. I really had prepared something else, but this afternoon I think the Lord gave me a little bit of clarity on what might be most helpful to you as we enter into a brand new year. Of all churches, we are the most blessed in many ways. We are so highly privileged. We have been given such immense blessing, so many gifted people, so much ministry, so much provision to feed our souls and to build us up in the knowledge of Christ, so many opportunities for service, we stand as a highly privileged congregation of people. And I know you know that very well.

And on the one hand, we have been celebrating that privilege all through last year. I feel last year was, from my standpoint, the greatest year in the history of this church and I don’t expect next year to be any less than that, but I will always look back on 2011 as one of the greatest, if not the greatest in my own assessment and my own experience in the life of this church since I came here in 1969, for many, many reasons. And I think as we look at the future, we have no reason to assume that God is going to bless us any less as we remain faithful. But the more highly privileged we are, the more careful we need to be because I think the Lord is gracious and the Lord is merciful and the Lord is kind and the Lord is good but He is selective about whom He blesses. And what you have in 1Corinthians chapter 10 is a kind of a warning to a very blessed people, a warning to a very blessed people.

The Corinthians were such a church. They had the privilege of being founded by the great apostle Paul who spent an immense amount of time with them building the foundations of that church and then even after he left continuing to shepherd and nurture that church with several visits there, and quite a number of letters of correspondence back, he kept a rather direct hand on that church. In that sense they were a highly privileged church, a church born in the midst of paganism at its apex. To think about Corinth was to think about the ultimate kind of idolatry, the ultimate forms of false religion and the very ultimate life of sexual immorality. And right I the midst of that paganism came the Apostle Paul and the Lord planted a church there that became a remarkable church and a powerful church and yet a church that in the midst of its privilege was living on the edge of danger and had to

receive exhortation after exhortation lest it have to forfeit its privileges. That does happen. You know the letters to the churches in the book of Revelation were warned by our Lord to change, to deal with the sin in their midst or He would remove their candlestick, or He would fight against them, or He would spew them out of His mouth. I suppose this would be the greatest fear of pastor, greatest fear of people in a church that they would be the unblessed who had once been the highly favored and the highly blessed. And that is why chapter 10 is in the New Testament, to give us fair warning about the possibility of falling from a place of blessing.

Let me read the first half of this chapter, less than the first half, down through verse 13. “I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, 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, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not well pleased for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were, as it is written the people sat down to eat and drink and stood up to play, nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day, nor let us try or test the Lord as some of them did and were destroyed by the serpents, nor grumble or complain as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example and they were written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore…and here’s the key verse…let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall, no temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also so that you will be able to endure it.”

That is a very dramatic portion of Scripture and it refers back to an entire nation, the nation of Israel, privileged with the blessing of God that fell under divine judgment. And it can happen to the most privileged. It happened to the people of Israel. Paul knew that he lived, in a sense, in the imminent reality that that could happen to him. If you back up one verse into chapter 9 and verse 27, you read Paul’s testimony that I discipline my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I, myself, will not be disqualified,” *dokimos,* tested and found inadequate, unacceptable. Paul didn’t overestimate his spiritual powers. He knew that he needed to discipline his body, to bring it into subjection so that he didn’t forfeit his ministry by falling into sin.

And that is essentially the key to the passage before us that I read and it’s verse 12, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.” The danger of being so blessed that you become overconfident, so blessed that you feel the privileges will never end, so blessed that you feel there’s something about you that is impervious, or invulnerable, you cannot flaunt your privileges without living in serious danger.

The Apostle Paul has many warnings to the church in his writings, this is a very general one but it is a very, very important one. Apparently the Corinthian church ignored self-denial. They ignored self-control. They were beginning to exercise undisciplined liberty. They were living on the edge of disaster and the forfeiture of divine favor and divine blessing. And so, the apostle Paul draws the illustration from Israel to warn churches, all churches, including ours, of the danger of being greatly blessed and greatly privileged and taking that for granted, pastored by the Apostle Paul, familiar with the ministry of Peter, familiar with the ministry of Apollos. They give testimony to that, as you read in 1 Corinthians, recipients of divine revelation, recipients of the gifts of an apostle, and yet they were in danger of serious judgment.

In fact, back in the fourth chapter, verses 18 to 21, Paul was already warning them at the beginning of this first letter that if necessary he would come with a rod and he would deal with them. So the message here is a very, very important message. Verses 6 and 11 tell us that what happened to Israel was an example to the Corinthians, but not only an example to the Corinthians, but for all of us, verse 6, “These things happened as examples for us, verse 11, These things happened to them as an example for our instruction. Who’s…all of us upon whom the ends of the ages have come. All of us living in the Messianic era, the time after the Messiah has come. So what Paul draws out of the Old testament experience of Israel is not only for the Corinthians but for all of us, to learn the lessons of warning about thinking you stand when you may fall.

Now I want to break this up, just briefly, as we prepare for the Lord’s Table, by talking, first of all, about the blessings of the assets in verses 1 through 5, let’s just get a little idea of what he’s talking about here. “I do not want you to be unaware, brethren that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. “All” is the key term, it is repeated five times in the opening verses, stressing the fact that the whole nation of Israel received the privileges of divine blessing. They all were a part of it. They all, who belonged to that nation, were under the cloud, all who belonged to that nation passed through the sea, all were immersed into Moses, all ate the same spiritual food, all drank the same spiritual drank, drinking from the spiritual rock that followed them.

Now what is he talking about here? Well he’s simply talking about the tremendous privileges that came upon the people of Israel when they were led out of Egypt and they were led to the land of Canaan, all the fathers of Israel experienced great spiritual privilege in being led out of Egypt, all were under the cloud. What is the cloud? Exodus 13:21, “The Lord went before them by day I a pillar of cloud to lead them, and by night, of course, it was a pillar of fire. The whole nation was under that divine miraculous leading by God. The whole nation passed through the sea, the Red Sea, the basic touchstone of deliverance from Egypt. They all experienced that. So they were all called out by mighty power. They were all delivered through the sea, they were all led by God daily, and even nightly.

Verse 2 says, “They were all baptized into Moses.” That is a simple concept. They were immersed into his leadership. They were identified with him. It was Moses’ people, it was Moses crowd. They were one with their leader, that’s what that is saying. They were united as a community with one leader. So there was not a division of leaders and Moses was God’s chosen man. They all had then this divinely appointed and divinely prepared and divined prepared and divine gifted leader and they were led as a united community. They all enjoyed that union with that great leader.

Now these are all analogous to the experience of salvation. We have all been delivered from the domain of darkness which is like our Egypt; we have all been led through the waters of escape. We have all been brought to a place where we’re under the direction of God. WE have all been baptized into identification with our great leader, the Lord Jesus Christ, that’s the imagery here, that’s the picture here. We are all together as one people in Christ. And the Israelites, verse 3, they all ate the same spiritual food, they all drank the same spiritual drink. In other words, God provided water for them in the wilderness. God provided food for them in the wilderness. You remember the manna from heaven and the birds that would hover off the ground and provide nourishment for them for the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness. They were privileged then, to be rescued, to be delivered, to be guided, to be united, and to be fed and nourished. And that’s analogous to the salvation experience of the Corinthians and us as well. We have all been delivered, entered into guidance under the direction of our Lord, united with Him as one and our souls are constantly fed.

And then a most interesting statement in verse 4, they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them and the rock was Christ, a spiritual petra, cliff, rocky mass. What was this? This is Christ, the rock was Christ. You know we’re going to start a series on finding Christ in the Old Testament, well here’s one of the places, Exodus chapter 17, Christ was the rock in the leadership that we find that Christ extended to them in their wilderness wanderings in the Old Testament; He is often appearing as the angel of the Lord. That is a preincarnate appearance of Christ. He never allowed them to thirst. He never allowed them to hunger. He was there assessing their needs and meeting their needs. And, in a way, we could say the manna and the water were evidence of the presence of Christ who followed them. He was the rock that followed them, he was the rock that followed them, that He had not yet been incarnated into this world but the internal Son, the second member of the Trinity was the caretaker of the people of Israel, all the redeemed are His both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

So what are we talking about here? And just giving an overview, being led through the sea, that’s emancipation. Under the cloud, that’s guidance, baptism into Moses, that’s identification with a new assembly and one leader, manna and water, sustenance. And all of this provided for them and for us by Christ Himself. This is to talk about how blessed they were and how blessed we are.

Then the shocker comes in verse 5, “Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not well pleased. With most of them, God was not well pleased. Most of them? Yes, everybody but two, Joshua and

Caleb and they all died in the wilderness except those two.

Numbers 14:16 says, “Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land, which He swore to give to them, therefore He has slain them in the wilderness and verse 5 says they were laid low, strewn…strewn in the wilderness, like corpses in the desert. They were what Paul feared being, disqualified. How tragic. Paul had sensible fear that he too could lose his approved status for service, not his salvation, but his usefulness if he didn’t track his self-denial and self-control. And I look at our church and I say we are blessed, we are profoundly blessed, we’re blessed more than any people that I know. No church has been more graciously treated by the loving Lord than this church. And yet I’m sure there are many in our church congregation with whom the Lord is not well pleased. In fact, there are many whose life and whose choices breaks His heart. We always stand on the brink of losing that blessing, and that divine favor if the Lord determines that that is so widespread as to remove us from the place of blessing.

What went wrong? What happened to the people in Israel that could happen to us? Let’s look from the assets or the blessings in verses 1 to 5 to the abuses in verses 6 to 10. This is very basic. “These things happened as examples for us so that we would not crave evil things as they also crave…there it is…in one statement. The loss of privilege is related to the craving of evil things. It’s basically the result of desiring sin, craving evil things.

What kind of things? What kind of craving? Well, he lays it out. Number one, you can look at it in verse 6, craving evil things and let’s just say that’s worldliness in a very general sense, worldliness. The idea of the verb here is to be in longing after evil things. And, of course, those are the things that define the world in which we live. I’m not going to take you back to Numbers 11 and Psalm 78 where we have the record of the people of Israel longing after evil things. But there was perpetual warning against the indulgence of the lust that rises up in the fallen heart, or the things of the world. We are warned in the New Testament, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” 1 John 2. And somebody said long ago they were sleeping too close to where they got in. They had been freed. They had been led. They had been fed. They had been united with their leader. They had been blessed and sustained by God but they became disqualified to go into the promised land because they failed to bring their hearts into full devotion to Christ. They were lusting after the things of the world.

You will notice in verse 7, “Do not be idolaters as some of them were.” Idolatry that hits the big button in Corinth. Christians there were saying, “We can go back to our idolatry festivals, we can go back to the celebrations, the social events. Paul addresses this in the letter, doesn’t he? He says “You can’t come to the Lord’s table and the table of demons.” You can’t do both of those things. Please…that’s verse 20…the Gentiles sacrificed to demons and not to God, and you can’t be a sharer in demons, and you can’t drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, you can’t partake in the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Are you going to provoke the Lord to jealousy? They were going back

to the social events and participating in the kinds of things that belonged to the kingdom of darkness. And we see that with Israel, don't they? Barely out of Egypt and already they have defected in their worship of God and created a ridiculous golden calf and are bowing down to that golden calf, not only bowing down to it but committing all kinds of horrendous sins in front of that golden calf. And so that is the warning here…idolatry. They fell into idolatry, the Corinthians lapsed into the kind of activities that belonged to idolatry. And further verse 7 says, "The people sat down to eat and drink and stood up to play," that's taken out of Exodus 32 and what it's referring to is that they literally engaged themselves in an idol kind of orgy, horrible kinds of behavior. Talking about sexual immorality and that is further explained in verse 8. "Nor let us act immorally as some of them did and 23 thousand fell in one day.

I mean, it was an ugly scene at the foot of the golden calf. Exodus tells us that the people were actually naked. It was a horrible experience. God killed three thousand of them in that one moment and in all 23 thousand perished. That would have been a good indication that God was removing favor. In fact, you can read about that in Numbers chapter 25. He killed 23 thousand, the next day God even did away with a thousand more of them, disqualified from usefulness and blessing.

The next verse tells us that they tested the Lord. It says they tried the Lord and were destroyed by the serpents, that's Numbers 1. They pushed to see how far they could go before the judgment of God fell. They went all the way to living on the edge. How much could they do and get away with it? How much would God tolerate? And as they went to the edge and stayed on the edge and God didn't seem to react to it, they pushed it further and further and further and further. Matthew 4:7 says, "You shall not put God to the test." Those words come out of the mouth of Jesus at His temptation when Satan came after Him. You don't test God, even by diving off the corner of the temple to fulfill a prediction given in the Old Testament. How much can we get away with? That's the wrong question. How much can we be like the Savior, how holy can we be? That's the right question.

So, if we are to engage in the midst of our privileges and those kinds of things, craving evil things, making idols in our hearts of all kinds of things in the world and they don't have to be actual deities, they become deities to us when we bow down to them, if we engage in immorality and if we test the Lord by pushing the edges of what is allowable, we're going to experience the same kinds of things that the people of Israel experienced. And you remember what happened in Numbers chapter 21 when they tested God, the Lord sent snakes. And, of course, you remember that amazing story of that judgment.

There's another sin here that is indicated in verse 10 and that seems like an odd one to put in this category because these all seem so severe, how about this? Complaining, nor grumbling or complaining as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer. How did that get in here? The term in the original language means to give expression to unwarranted dissatisfaction. It's complaining, being dissatisfied and verbalizing it. Exodus 16:2 says the whole congregation

grumbled, murmured, complained, complained against God. They were sitting in judgment on God on the way things were. You have it in Numbers 16 and almost 15 thousand people died because they complained. And it says in Numbers 16 they were killed by the destroyer, the judgment angel, the rabbis called him *mashith(?)*, he was the one who slew the firstborn in Egypt. He was the one ready to slay in the plagues, 2 Samuel 24, he destroyed the Assyrians in 2 Chronicles 32, the death angel. And here the death angel executes complainers, complainers, grumblers, murmurers complaining against God.

So there are the abuses that came to be the experience of the children of Israel, worldliness, idolatry, morality, presumption, living on the edge and complaining. They are results of lack of self-denial, lack of self-control, lack of godly pursuits. They are abusives of freedom, and abuses of privilege, flirting with the world and its idols, flirting with the world and its morals, pushing the patience of God to the limits, complaining when you don't get what you want when you want it, will result in tragedy…tragedy.

So the admonition comes to us then in verses 11 and 12. "Now these things happened to them as an example and they're written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall." The ends of the ages, as I said earlier, are the Messianic period, the last ages before the Kingdom. The Lord has come in the ages of…the age, I should say, of the Messiah, the last day began when Messiah arrived. Again and again there are warnings in the Scripture but none is more poignant and powerful to me than this one. A number of times in the book of Revelation, as I mentioned earlier, there are warnings given to the church and one of them that comes to mind is to the church at Sardis in chapter 3 where it says in verse 3, "Remember what you have received and heard and keep it and repent. And if you don't wake up, I'll come like a thief and you'll not know at what hour I will come."

Watch, be alert. You can't live any way you want to live and continue to enjoy the pleasure of God and the blessing of God. Again and again a fortress is stormed successfully because its enemies thought it was safe. And by the way, the Acropolis in Sardis was built on a jutting sphere of rock, believed by the people who lived there, to be impregnable. When Cyrus came to besiege Sardis, he offered a reward to any soldier who could find a way to get up this parapet and destroy the city. The soldier, according to the history, says…his name was Hyeroedes was watching one day and he was trying to figure out if he could get this reward by figuring out a strategy, he saw a soldier of Sardis drop his helmet accidently over the edge of the cliff. He watched how that soldier came down to get his helmet and he marked the path how he went back.

That night he led a band up the cliff by that path, went in unhindered and took the entire city. There is a necessity to be watchful in our lives, and watchful as a church. We are concerned about sin in the church and that's why the Lord's Table is so very, very important to us.

Not only are we concerned about sin in the church for the sake of the sinner in the church, the person who will suffer the consequences in his or her own life, but we are concerned about sin in the church for the sake of the church, for the sake of the testimony of Christ. Can't think of anything worse than to have the candlestick removed and have the Lord fight against Grace Community Church, to have the Lord spew us out of His mouth because we have become complacent and we've indulged our fleshly desires.

We have been so profoundly blessed that we could think we stand in an impregnable way like verse 12 says, but we need to take heed that we do not fall, and that means personal vigilance in every life. Understand the implications in my life of any kind of a fall, I think the leaders of this church understand the implications in their lives of any kind of a fall, any kind of lapse into any form of evil craving, immorality, any kind of idolatry, any worshiping of anything other than our God and Christ and the Holy Spirit. We understand that. We understand the dangers of pushing liberties in this culture and there are lots of ways that you can push your liberties in this culture and expose yourself to things that are evil and that do not build you up. We understand all of that. We know the danger of that at every level. The Lord has been gracious to protect us as we submit ourselves to the standards of the Word of God, as we do what Paul said, "Beating our body into submission so that we don't become disqualified." We also understand, and you need to understand that it could happen at the level of the people and it can be equally devastating to the life of a church. To be highly blessed is to be put on notice to make sure you watch carefully your own life.

I say that to every individual here. One of the reasons we come to the Lord's Table is to examine our hearts and make sure everything is where it should be, all our priorities, so that we would never be the reason why God would bring disfavor on our beloved church.

Then in verse 13, the passage kind of wraps up. "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man. And God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you're able, but with the temptation will provide a way of escape also so that you will be able to endure." That's a very, very important, encouraging, final word because after you go through the first twelve verses, especially when you've read verse 12 and you say to yourself, "Wow, I don't want to be the cause of God's disfavor on this church. I don't want to be the reason that He turns away from this church. I don't want to be the reason that He fights against it. I don't want to be the evil influence. I don't want to be the leaven that leavens the lump. I don't want to be the one whose sin becomes the point of divine judgment. But how in the world can I survive in this world? How can I overpower the flesh? How can I overcome the world? How can I deal with the temptations that the devil has placed into the system in which I live?" And we are living in a wholesale, evil system at a level that has never been known in human experience in the history of the world because of what media can produce. How do I survive?

Now you don't need to live in total fear, you don't need to live in panic. You need to live warned and thoughtful and careful but not as if the system around you and the enemy of your souls and your flesh is more powerful than you, or than He who is in you, because verse 13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man."

What does that mean? *Anthropinos*, bearable for a human being. That's what it means. In other words, you're never going to be able to say, "I got into immorality, I got into idolatry, I began to crave evil things because it was too much for me. The devil is more powerful than I am. It was way too potent a temptation, it was a supernatural temptation, it was a demonic temptation, it was a multiply demonic temptation. I had no defense. I was overpowered." You know, the old Flip Wilson line, "The devil made me do it, and what kind of a match am I for him?"

No, this is saying to you, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as common to man." That is to say it is humanly bearable, it is normal. It is not super human, it is not supernatural, you cannot claim to be overpowered by anything. We all face the same things and we can deal with them. We can't blame God, we can't blame the devil."

Further, he says and this is even more wonderful, "God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you're able." Not only is any temptation you ever have normal, human and bearable, but even among the temptations that are normal and human and bearable, the Lord knows what you can tolerate, particularly you, individually you, and He will not allow you to be tempted above that you are able.

For some of us, that's the reason we don't have more money than we do…or more fame than we do, or more of whatever we don't have. The Lord knows. Nothing is super human, everything is resistible. And furthermore, God knows us as individuals and He knows what we fall easily prey to and will not allow such things to happen.

So in temptation we are at an advantage because we will never be tempted in any way that is beyond what is humanly bearable. In the midst of that temptation, God is controlling those temptations so that none comes to us for which we will not be able to win or to triumph. Furthermore, this is the next step in this wonderful promise, with the temptation will also be provided by God the way of escape so that you may be able to endure it. Nothing super-human, nothing more than you can handle and God knows what you can handle, and always a way of escape, *ekbasis*, the way out…the way out. That is God's promise, there's always going to be a way out.

We pray that, don't we? "Lead us not into temptation but…what?...deliver us from evil." Those are the two things. The Lord does not lead us into temptation which we cannot bear, and with every temptation show us the way out. And He promises here to do that.

So, having warned the church on the one hand, to be careful because we are so immensely blessed and privileged, I also want to encourage you as a church that nothing that's going to come your way is superhuman, nothing, not Satan and all his demons collectively together. Furthermore, God knows what you can handle and will make sure that you never have a temptation you cannot handle and in every one of those temptations that does come, there will always be a way of escape so that you can endure the temptation and come out triumphant. Bottom line: you're not going to have any excuses.

I know you desire for this church what you desire for your own life and that is to continue to enjoy the blessings of God. And we can do that, we don't have to fall. We can learn from the example of the people of Israel, we can learn from the example of the disobedient Corinthians, we can learn even more from the testimony of Holy Scripture that the Lord is there in the midst of all of our temptations to show us the way out.

Thinking back to Pilgrim's Progress, Christian and Hopeful wandered off the path, you remember, of the King's Highway to the celestial city and they fell asleep in a field called Doubting Castle. Remember that part of the story? And it was guarded by the giant Despair. And the giant catches them and he drags them into a dungeon and he puts them in the dungeon and he locks them in the dungeon having beaten them brutally just short of death. In fact, they are so beaten and battered that they want to die and they would have chosen perhaps to kill themselves. They languished in that place for days and days until they realized what they really possessed and then John Bunyan writes that, "Pilgrim says, 'What a fool I am, to lie in a stinking dungeon when I may be free. I have a key in my shirt called Promise that will unlock any door in Doubting Castle."

What is Bunyan saying? When the believer reaches total despair, despair for his life, despair for whether God loves him and cares for him, despair in the battle of sin, he turns to the promise of God. And the promise is that in every temptation there is a way of escape and God will provide that way.

Let's bow together in prayer as we come to the Lord's table together.

Father, the Word is so powerful, so clear, so compelling, so true, so encouraging, never lowering the standard but never generating hopelessness. The standard is so high of holiness and virtue and obedience and it could crush us under the weight of our own inadequacy, and yet You minister mercy to us in that final verse and say, "Fear not, it will never be more than you can handle, the Lord knows what you can take and there will always be a way out. That puts the responsibility clearly with us to remain in the place of blessing, to learn from the warnings of the past and the defections of the past, and the tragedies of the past. Lord, we pray that You would keep us faithful. May we do what Paul did. May we beat our bodies into submission so that in preaching to others we don't become disqualified ourselves. May we discipline our bodies. Give us self-control based on loving You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, wanting to honor You and glorify You and enjoy Your blessing. As

Jude put it, “May we keep ourselves in the love of God, in the place where love showers us, and that’s the place of obedience.” As we come to this table, we know that we face a time of the confession of the sins that are in our lives, those little sins that maybe haven’t reached an epic proportion where they would cause serious damage to our own lives, our own families, our own relationships, and our own church, but those little sins can become epic if they’re not dealt with, those sins of thought, in particular, where the heart conceives and brings forth sin. So help us, Lord, to deal with sin at its first appearance in the mind, in the heart, in the attitudes, in the thought life, to deal with it there so that lust never conceives to bring forth sin. And we never put ourselves in a place of disqualification and the forfeiture of blessing and privilege. We thank You for the centrality that the Lord’s table has always had in our church and how our people have always come and focused on this because they understand the call to holiness. Thank You that You’ve given us clarity in the matter of disciplining sinners in the midst who will not repent and You’ve used that to provide warning and purging through the years. And so we have been continuing to enjoy Your blessing, we don’t want that to change ever till Jesus comes. So now we examine our own hearts and we want You to show us anything that’s there that displeases You and may we deal with it immediately. Purify us, open up to us a clear understanding of what displeases You even in these moments and may we confess it and turn from it. We are reminded in Scripture to come to this table having examined ourselves, examined ourselves so we don’t make things worse by eating and drinking judgment to ourselves by coming to this celebration of the provision of Christ for our sin while holding on to sin at the same time. That hypocrisy will bring about a serious disciplining in our lives. So we ask, Lord, that You would lead us and guide us even now as we meditate, as we pray, and as we offer our praise to You around Your table in Christ’s name. Amen.

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