

March 23, 2025 - Lent 3 Pastor Ventura  
**We Are What We Eat and Drink** 1 Corinthians 10:1–13

Dear friends in “a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour. (Titus 1:4b)

Our meditation this morning is based on the epistle reading from 1 Corinthians 10. Where Paul is basically saying “You are what you eat and drink!” And what you do after, because that reflects the reason of your eating and drinking.

He writes: “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play” (v 7). Now, there’s nothing inherently wrong with eating and drinking—in fact we are going to do that shortly after the service, with burgers and fries, and water, juice and coffee. And yes, we will see some of the children rising and going to play. It is the natural thing to do in children, and adults when we have social gatherings, after we eat we play, we play cards, or tell stories, or even go to the fields and play a ball game of some sort. Now, if there is nothing wrong with playing after a meal, why then Paul seems to say is a bad thing? And since Paul tells us that all of this was “written down for our instruction” (v 11), what does it have to teach us in our life of faith today? That’s what we’re going to be talking about this morning. Yes, it has a lot to do with us as we shall see.

First, I suppose it is true what they say, “You are what you eat and drink!” It was true for the people of Israel, the first Church. By their eating and drinking we know they belonged to God. Listen again what Paul says, “They were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup> and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup> and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them...”

We remember their history. When they were journeying to the Promised Land, they found themselves starving and thirsty. Yet God himself provided them with food, Manna, and from a rock water came (Ex 16:13–15, 31; Ex 17:1–7). They ate and drank what God himself provided. By that we know they belonged to God, because God provided for everything they needed on their journey.

We certainly agree that that journey to the promised Land, wasn’t an easy one, they had to walk there, and you know what is like. Think of the pioneers in

our area, and their stories of hardship and difficulties to get here on foot. But unlike the pioneers, the Israelites were guided by God himself, through a cloud column by day and of fire by night. Now if so, it meant then that the Israelites were in the presence of a God who is holy. And because they belonged to God and were constantly in the presence of a Holy God, then the natural response is to act in a certain way, a proper way, a way that denotes who they were. It is a given, they would have understood that God would expect them to act in a certain way. It's the natural thing to do.

But just so that in case they didn't understand what that natural thing to do would look like, God gives them instructions. Several of them in fact, like avoiding sexual immorality (Ex 20:14). They shouldn't test God (Deut. 6:16) but trust him instead (Ex 20:2–3). And more.

Now, here is the thing, those instructions, and requirements for living in such a state that denoted they belong to God. Became a burden to many, even injustice. It went against the freedom they thought were enjoying already. After all they were free from the Egyptian slavery. As slaves all they knew was restrictions, regulations, rules, and they need to obey them or face the consequences, whipping, punishment and so on. So here they are, they are now free, no more whipping, no more hardship imposed by the slave master. So, hearing that there were things they could not do, or that they must follow rules and regulations, it probably felt like they were coming out of the frying pan into the fire.

It didn't take long for the Israelites to complain and accuse God that his ways were not right. "The way of the Lord is not just" (Ez. 33:17) they said. They begun to rebel against God and God's servants, their leaders.

Now, to be sure, God gave those instructions, not to burden his people with rules and regulations. Do this, don't that! Like someone who just wants to make life miserable. Rather it is to safeguard their sanctity. To safeguard their hearts and minds, from the consequences of living an uncaring lifestyle, that whatever a person please. Instructions regarding sexual immorality for instance, is not to prohibit a good and healthy natural sexual relationship and pleasure, rather is to spare the person of the consequences, mentally, emotionally and physically. And because it is easy to fall into those things, God instructs his people so that Satan doesn't use a wonderful gift God provides to deceive them and fall in his traps.

That's the reason God prescribes those instructions and gives his commandments.

Now, we know the Israelites were God's people because of their eating and drinking, they ate and drank what God provided on their way to the Promised Land. But Israel forgot that they forgot who they were, and that they belong to God (v 7).

This is where what comes after food, Paul refers too. He writes: "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."

This playing wasn't like "after lunch, let's go kick the ball for a bit, or play cards." No, again the Old Testament clarifies this. The Israelites were having a pagan celebration, and at the center of their game was the worship of calf made of gold. Imagine that a golden calf! That sounds attractive, doesn't it? A golden calf will be a sign of progress, making their nation great again! A sign of the prosperous freedom. A sign of their good fortune in the promised land. That's my conclusion, but in reality, they wanted a physical god, a god they can touch and see, and why not made out of gold.

Right then, they go from eating manna and drinking the water God provides to the eating and drinking that accompany idolatry (Ex 32:6). And idolatry corrupts the heart, or a corrupted heart practices idolatry, it robs you of the freedom we have in Christ.

Now, because Israel forgot that they belong to God, they fall prey to sexual temptation and corruption. The Israelites begin to have illicit relations with the women of Moab and Midian (Num 25:1–9), the Bible tells us. These relationships drove them further into idolatry. And it wasn't because they couldn't marry interracially, but that having those types of relationship meant having also a spiritual adultery. As it stands, sexual relationships are not just body and a moment of pleasure, because they are also spiritual and emotional ones. And if spiritual, it means you become one with what the other person worships.

And by doing so, they put God to the test (v 9). The Israelites despised God's provision of food and wanted God to give them different foods and drinks than what he already had (Num 21:4–9). And because they didn't get what they wanted they got angry with God and wanted to go back to where they came from, back to Egypt.

Now, sounds a talk sound too much about the Israelites doesn't it. Maybe, but remember they were the first church, and we the modern present church, still share the same DNA, so then it is about us too. We are what we eat and drink! We, present day Christians frequently forget that we belong to God. And we do that because of what happened on day one. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit on day one, in the Garden of Eden. And that caused all their children to be set against God. So, when we forget that we belong to God, we fall prey to temptation, the same temptation Adam and Eve fell to. Today, when Christians give in to sexual temptation, it's often because they forget their bodies belong not to themselves but to the Holy Spirit as Paul reminds us: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own." (1 Cor 6:19).

So, today, when Christians give in to the temptation to anger, it's often because they forget they belong to a God who will avenge any wrongdoing (Rom 12:19).

When Christians give in to the temptation to grumble against God and his servants, it's often because they forget they belong to a God who will provide for all their needs.

Paul reminds us "Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. <sup>7</sup> 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." <sup>8</sup> We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. <sup>9</sup> We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, <sup>10</sup> nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. <sup>11</sup> Now these things happened to them as an example."

There you have it, but today, Jesus reminds us that we belong to God. And his reminder is also by our eating and drinking. You are what you eat and drink!

And what we eat and drink are his body and his blood, in communion, there under the form of bread and wine, Jesus gives us his body broken on the cross, into which we were incorporated when we became children of God in our baptisms into Jesus' death. Under the form of wine Jesus gives us his blood, which he shed to reconcile us to God, even for all the times we've forgotten we belong to him and have given in to temptation.

In this eating and drinking where Jesus reminds us that we belong to God, he gives us “the way of escape, that you may be able to endure” temptation (v 13). If we feel tempted to abandon God’s design for the human body and sexuality, we should look to the Lord’s body and blood, which will enable us to endure the temptation.

If we feel tempted to take vengeance on people who have done us wrong, we should look to the Lord’s body and blood, which will enable us to endure that temptation.

If we feel tempted to grumble against God and his servants, we should look to the Lord’s body and blood, which will enable us to endure that temptation.:17)

If we think his commandments are unjust and unfair, think of who we are first. And appreciate him keeping from harm. The harm that comes from deviated lifestyles.

Now, today, we are now almost half-way through the season of Lent, a season when we focus on the temptation that each one of us experiences as we try to live faithful Christian lives. We indeed have a difficult journey ahead of us. Not only Lent, but until Christ gathers us in his presence, we will be still in the wilderness, getting to the Promised Land, and that journey is not an easy one. But think of this. We are not alone. Therefore, if you’re still dealing with the fallout of that eating and drinking all the way back in the Garden of Eden, if you feel the allure of temptation—and I suspect you do—I have good news for you: you can endure it. You can make it through.

Because, even when you are being tempted, but “with the temptation [God] will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (v 13). And what’s your escape hatch? What enables you to endure? It’s right here on the altar, in the body and blood of the one who overcame temptation for you.

So, by feeding us his body and blood, Jesus reminds us whose we Christians are. So, take, eat; take, drink. Remember whose you are. And endure. Because “God is faithful” (v 13).

In his name, amen.