

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
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**Seventeenth Sunday After Trinity, September 27, 2026**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 356, 23:4. 402, 417, 417:7.

Lessons: Exodus 16:1-18, Acts 24:22-26, Matthew 14:22-34.

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 10:6-13.

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Fellow redeemed in Christ our Savior:

The Lord has graciously given us many warning examples from the history of Israel in the Old Testament. Paul tells us what God's purpose was in doing this: ***"Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."*** Rom. 15:4 In the words before our text we are told of the many blessings the Lord gave to the Israelites as they were delivered from Egypt. Especially important is the fact that Christ, the eternal Son of God, was with them as they went through the desert as the Rock of their salvation. But most of them did not believe in the coming Christ, and because of their unbelief we are told: ***"God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert."*** I Cor. 10:5 By their unbelief and disobedience they provoked God's displeasure and brought upon themselves God's punishment. Of all the people who were delivered from bondage in Egypt, only two adults, Joshua and Caleb, ever reached the promised land of Canaan.

God wants us to learn a lesson from that history. The lesson is this: Even though Christ died for all of us, and even though we have been baptized and confirmed and made a fine beginning in our Christian life, there is the possibility that we through neglecting the Word of God may fall away from the faith in Jesus before reaching the goal of eternal life. We, therefore, need what our text gives us:

**WARNINGS AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THESE LAST DAYS**

- 1. Warning examples from the history of the Israelites;**
- 2. A warning against false spiritual security; and,**
- 3. Encouragement from the promise of the ever-faithful Lord.**

The apostle Paul refers to several examples from the history of Israel and says: ***"Now these things occurred as examples, to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did."*** The Israelites set their hearts on evil things. It wasn't long after the Lord by his almighty power had delivered them from Egypt when they told Moses and Aaron: ***"If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."*** Ex. 16:3 They didn't appreciate all the bodily and spiritual blessings the Lord was preparing for them by delivering them from the heathen land of Egypt. They complained all the time and treated the Lord with contempt, lusting after evil things.

Specific examples are now mentioned in our text as warning examples for us: ***"Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.'"*** This refers to the time when Moses was up on Mt. Sinai for 40 days receiving the 10 Commandments. The people became impatient and had Aaron make a golden calf for them. They worshiped this thing as though it were their God. They then acted like heathen, going through all the festive gestures of idolatrous worship. Three thousand people were put to death that day as punishment from the Lord.

Another warning example is given: ***"We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did - and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died."*** The occasion was when the Moabites and Midianites

invited the Israelites to their heathen festivals. At these festivals the most shameless sexual immorality was practiced. The Lord showed His displeasure by putting to death 23,000 in one day.

A third example is given in our text: ***“We should not test the Lord, as some of them did - and were killed by snakes.”*** The Israelites tested the Lord by voicing their dissatisfaction with what God had given them and by challenging the judgments of God. They were saying that what God had given them in the desert and what he was doing for them was not good enough. They complained especially when they had to go around the land of Edom, a long journey. We are told: ***“Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died.”*** Num. 21:6

The final warning is this: ***“Do not grumble as some of them did - and were killed by the destroying angel.”*** A characteristic of the Israelites was their continual dissatisfaction with what the Lord had given them. They grumbled and complained. That same sin is committed by those today who are dissatisfied with the preaching and strict stand of those who want to be faithful to God’s Word. Many become dissatisfied and look for a more liberal church where they can do as they please. They so easily forget their confirmation vow in which they promised to be faithful to God’s Word. The apostle Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit foretold the evil times we are now experiencing in the Church. He said: ***“The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.”*** II Tim. 4:3

These warning examples, our text tells us, are ***“to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.”*** Is it not true that we are often tempted to follow the ways of the world? Young people especially are tempted to indulge in the worldly ways of celebrating. Sexual immorality is a characteristic of such celebrating. Should not our way of living be altogether different from the way unbelievers live? The Lord tells believers: ***“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*** Rom. 12:2 We should not conform to the pattern of this world because the Lord has separated us from the ungodly world. Our customs, habits, practices, are not to be like those of the worldly-minded unbelievers. The Holy Spirit has brought us to faith and made us new creatures in Christ. Through the renewing power of the Gospel he can also enable us to live a new life pleasing to the Lord.

The apostle Paul in our text now gives a warning against false spiritual security.

## 2.

***“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.”*** We are to learn from these words that we are living in the last days of the world. The final age of this world was ushered in at the coming of Christ nearly 2,000 years ago. We should constantly be aware of the fact that we are in the last times, and that it will not be long until the final judgment on the Last Day. If the apostles in their day already said: ***“Dear children, this is the last hour”*** ( I John 2:18) then how much more should we be concerned that the Day of Judgment could come at any time!

Now the apostle gives the specific warning that we do not become lax and spiritually secure in these last days. ***“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall.”*** False spiritual security is when you are satisfied with yourself, see no need for repentance, and feel no need for the means of grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. How about us? Do we take it for granted that we will always be believers in Christ since we have been baptized and confirmed? Do we think it is quite unlikely that we will fall away from the true faith in Jesus? Do we think it isn’t so important that we go to church, daily use the Word of God, that we pray, and that we attend the Lord’s Table with due frequency? If so, then Paul says: ***“Be careful that you don’t fall!”***

In addition to these warnings in our text, we also have a comforting promise by which the ever-faithful Lord encourages us to continue steadfast in the faith.

## 3.

A fact of life is that the devil will use every trick in the book to try to get us to fall away from the true faith in Jesus our Savior. Peter writes: ***“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a***

***roaring lion looking for someone to devour.***” I Pet. 5:8 On our part we are always to be spiritually awake and alert for the devil’s temptations. But the Lord has not left us to care for ourselves. He comforts us with the knowledge that ***“no temptation has seized you except what is common to man.”*** The temptations we experience are commonly experienced by all men.

Furthermore, we are comforted in knowing that God has not forsaken us or forgotten about us. ***“God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*** God knows all about us. His knowledge about us is perfect. He knows what temptations we can stand. He also can control the tempting power of Satan. He can give us the spiritual strength needed so that we have ***“a way out.”*** Think of how God allowed Satan to tempt Job. He lost his material goods, his 10 children, and his health. Yet the Lord provided a way out. He strengthened Job and enabled him to withstand all Satan could throw against him. So God can also provide ***“a way out”*** for us when we are sorely tempted. He is always faithful to his promises. Joshua told Israel when they had settled in the promised land: ***“Not one of all the Lord’s good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.”*** Joshua 21:45 So the Lord will keep his promises to us. In him we should trust with all our heart. Isaiah writes: ***“Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.”*** 26:4

Let us not forget that the Lord does his work through the Word of God he has given to us. He gives us his Word to make us strong in the faith so we don’t give in to Satan’s temptations. Paul writes: ***“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”*** Eph. 6:13 The apostle, then, exhorts us to use this spiritual armor: ***“The belt of truth,” “the breastplate of righteousness,” “the gospel of peace,” “the shield of faith,” and “the helmet of salvation.”*** In particular, we are exhorted to use the Word of God as an offensive weapon against Satan. We are to take ***“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*** Eph. 6:14, ff. So the Lord wants us to make full use of his Holy Word in our daily life. We are to read and study the Bible and make use of every opportunity to learn. Then and only then will we be spiritually strong.

Our final comfort is that the temptations and tribulations of this life will not go on forever. God promises to finally deliver us from this vale of tears and take us to himself in heaven. May God give us the strength to put all our trust in our dear heavenly Father, in the dear Savior who suffered and died for us, earning that perfect righteousness for us which makes us acceptable before God on the Last Day, and in the Holy Spirit who by his power works in our hearts through the means of grace to keep us strong unto the end.

“All praise to God the Father be,  
All praise, eternal Son, to Thee  
Whom, with the Spirit, we adore  
Forever and forevermore.” Amen.  
(The Lutheran Hymnal 12, v. 5)

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