

# *Listening for the Promise*

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Third Sunday of Lent – March 20, 2022

*“For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”*

*- 1 Corinthians 10:4b-5-*

Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes sobering words to the church in Corinth (and to us). This church enjoyed the grace God lavished upon them. They “were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge” (1:5) and lacked no spiritual gift (see 1:7).

They, like the Israelites to whom Paul refers in chapter ten, partook of Christ, the living water (see v. 4). They, like the Israelites, experienced union with God through baptism (see v. 2). They, like the Israelites, enjoyed God’s provision and guidance. Yet God was displeased with most of the Israelites and, as a result, all but two (Joshua and Caleb) in the first generation died in the wilderness rather than entering the Promised Land.

So, Paul warns the Corinthians and us, using Israel as an example (see v. 6). It can be easy to assume God’s pleasure in us when he envelopes us in his grace and provision. We must not, however, take these blessings for granted and allow ourselves to slip into sin. We must not begin to cultivate a sense of entitlement that leads to grumbling against God (see v. 10). We must not become so confident in our ability to stand strong in the faith that we fall (see v. 12).

Even Paul knew he needed to “exercise self-control in all things” (9:25) and discipline himself, or risk falling (see 9:27). He knew that obtaining the prize necessitated running in such a way as to win it (see 9:24-25).

The same is true for us. No, we cannot do anything to earn salvation. But God calls us to walk in the newness of life that Christ bestows upon us (see Eph. 4:22-24). He tells us that, if we walk in darkness, we do not have fellowship with him. So, he calls us to walk in the light as he is in the light (see 1 Jn. 1:6-7).

But God knows that, on our own, we cannot do this. So, he walks with us and gives us everything we need to obey him as we depend on him. He assures us, “I am faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond your ability. I will provide a way out” (v. 13).