

PLEASING GOD WELL – LESSONS FROM THE ISRAELITES – PART TWO

This is your Friend and Minister, Dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Welcome back, friends. Let's go straight to what we have for today, which is a continuation of the message we had last week: Pleasing God Well – Lessons from the Israelites. And we took our text from 1 Corinthians 10:1-13. I'm not going to reread the whole thing today because of its length. But I read...you know...when we get to the sections that pertain to what we're discussing.

So, let me start from verse 5.

1 Corinthians 10:5

⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

This experiment of Israel makes this lesson or this discussion pertinent to those who seek to please God. And everyone should seek to please God, and especially those who have given their lives to Christ – and not just pleasing Him, but pleasing Him well. With most of them, God was not pleased. And they were destroyed.

We looked at the privileged experiences of the Israelites, and the preventable blunders of the Israelites.

Principles for pleasing God well

But we couldn't go beyond the privileged experiences that Israel had. And that is from verses 1 to 4. We said that Israel went through the cloud – or they went under the cloud; they passed through the Red Sea. They ate the spiritual food, and manna, described as angels' food – bread from heaven; and they drank spiritual drink, and they drank from the Rock that followed them – the mysterious Rock that followed them. And that is in verse 4 of 1 Corinthians 10. And it says, that Rock was Christ.

And we said that by way of application, that every true Christian, every true believer, has experienced this – has experienced the greatest miracle that God has ever performed in the history of man: And that is the transformation of a sinner into a saint. And every Christian has come under the canopy – umbrella of God: protective umbrella of God. And that every believer has also eaten the bread of life. And Jesus says, I Am the Bread of life. And every Christian has also drunk from the ever-present waters of life. Jesus says, if you drink from Me, you will never thirst again.

But unfortunately, like Israel, some of us Christians have blundered, in spite of the glorious experiences we have had with God and Christ.

This leads us to five preventable and painful blunders of the Israelites. And that is from 1 Corinthians 10:5-10. They lusted after evil things – 1 Corinthians 10:6. And some of us have developed strong desires for things we know are evil: those things God forbids. They participated in idolatrous worship, and that is verse 7:

⁷ *And do not become idolaters as were some of them [the scripture says]. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”*

We have participated also in idolatrous worship, even in church, by way of personality cult. Today, in a number of Christian circles, people tend to worship men instead of God. Today, even in Christian circles, many have placed material things on the altars of their hearts. And those altars of their hearts are reserved exclusively for God. And we have justified such idolatry theologically, some, by preaching unbalanced self-serving prosperity messages that make the preacher richer and the giver poorer. God prospers His people. But if you are going to preach prosperity, preach it in a balanced way, not from a self-serving motive.

Thirdly, still talking about the preventable blunders of Israel, they engaged in sexual immorality. Verse 8: ⁸ *Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell...*

Twenty-three thousand died. Many of us have committed immorality more on the beds of our hearts than on the beds in our rooms or in hotel rooms. Spiritual immorality is yet another blunder manifesting itself in the form of giving to the

things of this world the love that belongs to God and God alone. Even today, a number of Christians, especially young people, are engaging in immorality: mental immorality, by going to pornographic sites, with their phones, and many parents are not aware of it.

Fourthly, the scripture says in verse 9, 1 Corinthians 10, that they tested Christ, nor let us tempt Christ or test Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents. We sometimes question if God is able to do that which He has promised to do with a view to seeking out some other alternative.

We test God when we go contrary to His explicit command or principles, and yet expect Him to perform a miracle. An example would be: neglecting our health, by not eating right, by not resting, by not relaxing sufficiently, failing to check the status of our health; and yet we decree, in Jesus Name, that this or that would not happen to us. And we say very loud amen. Testing Christ.

They also complained or murmured. And that is verse 10: ¹⁰ *nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.*

Israelites were dissatisfied, not only with the leadership of Moses, they were suspicious of his motives. Worst still, they extended all that to God, also. Many Christians today do not see murmuring and complaining as serious sins. They see them as their Christian right and privilege. It cost the Israelites dearly. No complaining, and murmuring Israelite entered the Promised Land.

Recently I became convinced that I cannot give thanks to God for the food I'm about to eat and immediately I finish giving thanks I start complaining about the food. (Husbands you need to take note). For all these preventable and painful blunders of Israel God was not pleased. And He is not pleased with us if we engage in these also. But in His love and mercy, God has given us principles for pleasing Him well.

Let's quickly go through the principles of pleasing God well. And we find it in the rest of that, from verse 10 to 13.

- i. You need to know what displeases God. We see the word – examples in verse 6 of 1 Corinthians 10. We see it also in verse 11. The word literally means *type*, from the Greek Word *tupos* – a strike or blow, that leaves an indelible mark as in typewriter. It conveys the idea of objective lesson, a reminder. And it says that these are written for our admonition. The word for admonition there is the Greek Word that means warning. They are written for our warning so that we do not repeat these painful experiences. Experience is a good teacher; but it doesn't have to be yours especially if it is a bad experience. See now, we are learning from the experiences that Israel had: painful experiences! And God says He has preserved them for our warning. So know what displeases God.
- ii. Guard against presumption. In verse 12 it says: ¹² *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

This warning strikes at the heart of the matter, for presumption is the opposite of faith. And without faith, Hebrews 11:6 says, it is impossible to please God. You have presumption, not faith, when you think, speak and act out of your own will, and not out of the will of God.

Some Christians today have become so spiritual as to think that Heaven takes orders from them instead of the reverse. They command God; they prophesy at will; they make pronouncements without bothering what Heaven thinks or says.

- iii. And finally, trust the faithfulness and ability of God. Trust the faithfulness and ability of God. Verse 13: ¹³ *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

The devil, through temptations, not force, seeks to make the Christian displease God. In his temptation, the devil will want you to meet your legitimate needs through illegitimate means. Like Israel, we have desired to meet our legitimate needs through illegitimate means: paying in cash or kind to get a job, get a good grade, a contract, promotion and so on. But those who have the ambition to please God well should know that whatever temptation they face is a common temptation, and that God is faithful and powerful enough to provide a way of escape.

Friend, isn't it true that many at time our problem is not the temptation per se, but we are not looking for the way of escape that God has provided.

PRAYER:

Father, we have come to the end of our discussion: pleasing You well – lessons we've learnt from Israel. May these lessons sink deep down to the hearts of all who have heard me, to the hearts of your people, so that we do not repeat the errors of Israel that caused them dearly; instead, learning from them, we please You, and please You well, to the glory and praise of Your Name, and for the blessings of heaven that would come down upon those who please You. Let it be the case with my friends, now and always, in Jesus Name. Amen!!!!