

Sermon Summary | Sunday 17th May 2026 | 1 Corinthians 10.1-22

In 1 Corinthians 10.1–22, Paul continues to help Christians think wisely about life’s grey areas — the decisions where the Bible may not give a simple yes or no, but where our choices still matter deeply. His question here is: **what is this doing to my soul?**

Paul begins by looking back to Israel in the wilderness. God’s people had been rescued from Egypt, led through the sea, fed and sustained by God, and given remarkable spiritual privileges. Yet many of them still turned away from God. Paul’s warning is clear: being close to spiritual things is not the same as trusting and obeying Christ.

That is a sobering thought. It is possible to attend church, know Christian language, receive communion, and still be careless with sin or ruled by other loves. This is not meant to unsettle tender consciences or discourage struggling believers. But it is a loving warning to anyone who thinks, “I’m fine. I can handle this. It won’t affect me.”

Paul then shows how easily desire becomes disordered. Idolatry is not only bowing down to a statue. It is what happens when a created thing becomes ultimate — when money, comfort, success, romance, sex, reputation, family, control, or anything else takes the place that belongs to God. Good things become dangerous when they become ruling things.

The examples from Israel are still recognisable today. They wanted a god they could manage. They gave way to sexual immorality. They tested Christ by walking close to danger while assuming God would rescue them from the consequences. They grumbled, which slowly made God seem ungenerous and obedience feel unreasonable.

Paul’s point is not that Christians should be frightened of everything, or unable to enjoy God’s gifts. It is that our choices form us. What we feed, excuse, celebrate, consume, or repeatedly return to will shape our desires. So the question becomes: is this making Christ more precious, or is it making sin feel normal?

Paul then gives both a warning and a comfort. The warning is: “Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.” Self-confidence is spiritually dangerous because it makes us stop watching. Sometimes the faithful thing is not to prove how strong we are, but to step back, seek help, and flee from what is drawing us away from Christ.

The comfort is: “God is faithful.” Temptation can make us feel uniquely ashamed, as though no one else could understand. Paul says temptation is common to humanity, and God provides a way of escape. Often that way is very ordinary: turn off the device, leave the room, end the conversation, call a Christian friend, confess the truth, refuse the invitation, pray honestly, or ask for help.

Finally, Paul points to the Lord’s Supper. To come to the Lord’s table is to say, “Christ’s blood is my peace, his body given for me is my life, and I belong to him.” That means Christ cannot simply be one loyalty among many. He has bought his people with his blood and calls them away from idols, not into emptiness, but to himself.

So the call of this passage is simple and serious: do not negotiate with idols. Flee from whatever weakens your soul, and run to Christ. He is faithful, sufficient, forgiving, and better than anything that promises life but cannot give it.

Questions for personal reflection

1. What habit, desire, relationship, resentment, or pattern might be quietly weakening my love for Christ?
2. Where might God already be giving me an ordinary way of escape — and what would it look like to take it this week?