

Sermon 2010 Lent 3

Text: 1 Cor. 10:1-13

Theme: "No Such Thing as Fate"

One of the best things about Christianity is being anchored to our God and not left randomly floating though a chaotic universe. Moses wrote the book of Genesis for that very purpose. Creationists and evolutionists can argue all day long about how God did it, but that is not the point. God was not giving us a handbook for creating a world. God was telling us that he was completely instrumental in our creation. We were not a random happening in a mud puddle. We were intended, and a world was prepared for us. From the very start God loved us, cared for us, provided for us and desired us to follow him.

When one reads those first couple of chapters of Genesis, one can see that God left nothing to chance. He even prepared for the eventuality of sin, for though he did not desire it, he surely knew that it was coming. Every detail was in place for our creation and eventual salvation.

This is very different from many polytheistic and pantheistic religions where humans come into being with no particular

connection to their god or as the byproducts of random acts of violence or debauchery. We did not just happen accidentally. So St. Paul wants to be quite clear with the Corinthians that they did not just happen either but that they are now part of the long legacy of God's people. These people were Greeks, coming out of a polytheistic religious system where the gods were capricious and whimsical. St. Paul wanted the people to know that they were the personal, loved creations of the one true God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The first thing he did was tie them back to the Exodus. There was no chance. There was no luck. There was no fate. God was intimately involved in bringing his people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.

Sometimes we forget that, like the Corinthians, none of us are Jewish and yet we are connected to the Exodus through the blood of Christ our brother through whom we have been adopted into God's holy family. Now what that means is that just like our forefathers in the Exodus, we do not journey randomly or chaotically but with God himself leading us. Since God has complete foreknowledge, there is no such thing as luck or fate or

chance. There is only God's path and everything else. When our lives are full of joy and peace we are on God's path and while that path can be a difficult journey (he's not a wimpy god after all and he expects no less from his children), while it can be difficult, it is always joyful, peaceful and secure.

But there are times when you and I, like the Corinthians, choose to wander off that path. We choose to journey down dark paths because they look fun or exhilarating. Sometimes God's joy, peace and security bore us. Then something awful happens. We break trust and damage a relationship. We damage our bodies. We get suspended or expelled from school. And we say well I'm just unlucky. The fates were against me. We begin speaking as though we were off wandering in the wilderness by ourselves with no help whatsoever and that is **not** true!

WE choose to walk away from God. **WE** choose to leave the well lit path to stumble around in the darkness. We are warned that there is danger, sickness and heartache out there and yet we **STILL DO IT**. Then we make up something about fate because we don't have the guts to admit that we did it to ourselves with

our own rotten choices. There is no such thing as luck or fate good or bad. Everything in our lives is either a result of God's good and righteous blessings or our own stupid choices. But here is the good news.

As God's chosen people, we have the ability to turn around. We are never abandoned because Christ was abandoned for us. Christ was left to die all alone on the cross so that we would never be alone. God is always with us and always ready for us to turn back – that is what repentance is. Never blame fate or luck – that is idolatry. When we talk about fate or luck, we are saying that some force in the universe has equal power to our God. If we say that another power can exert any influence on God, we are practicing idolatry. It is not good luck – it is God's blessing. It is not bad luck – it is our sin and the consequences thereof.

Salvation is the greatest gift we receive but second to salvation is surely repentance. You and I are never trapped on any path. We always have the ability and invitation to stop, turn around and go back to God's path. That is amazing. What freedom to know that we can turn around any time we want to

and we don't need to blame fate or chance or another person or even the devil. It really does not matter why we are on the wrong path. What matters is our Baptismal waters lead us to turn around and the body and blood of Christ strengthen us for the journey as we move back toward God.

In good old Chicago slang, we are connected people. We are connected to God through Christ. Just as the people of Israel made dumb mistakes, so too do we and sometimes we pay dearly, at least in earthly consequences, for those dumb mistakes, it can be painful when stumbling around in the dark. But we are never abandoned in the desert. As people connected to God through Christ, we are always encouraged, empowered and entitled to turn around, get back on God's path and continue the journey to the Promised Land. AMEN.