

Church Gone Wild: Week 15

## Gospel & Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15

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### **The Gospel of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1-11)**

"Gospel" means "good news." It is the central message of the Church. The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. (v.3-4)

#### **1) The gospel must be preached with passion**

The gospel is how we find God. It is how we see God. It is how we connect with God.

The gospel is not the way to become a better person. It is not a way to build your self esteem. It is not a way to build security for your future.

The gospel is not about us at all. The only reference to "us" in verses 3-4 is "our sin." The gospel is the remedy to our problem, which is sin.

The gospel is God's way of bringing his creation back to himself. Every other benefit of the gospel is secondary. We have to preach it with passionate humility. We don't need to be angry or beat people over the head with it. The best way to preach the gospel is by telling God's story through your story.

#### **2) The gospel must be received by faith.**

The gospel is God work in redeeming, saving and transforming people. You cannot save yourself. We don't "get people saved."

The gospel is God's work alone. God the Father sent his Son Jesus into the world he created, a world that had gone wild with evil, hatred, and perversion.

He died a horrible, torturous death because of your sin and mine. Our sin has incurred the wrath of God and we deserve punishment and death, but Jesus took our place. He jumped on the grenade and sacrificed himself for us.

*Simply knowing that story means nothing!*

You will be judged on whether or not you act on the gospel. If you choose to dismiss it from your life or if you choose to ignore it, Jesus says, you will be condemned (John 3:17).

The alternative is to believe, to accept it by faith. To believe is to radically change your entire life by making Jesus the boss.

We receive the gospel by confession and repentance.

#### **3) The gospel must be held onto through grace.**

The gospel is not just a doorway to God, but it is the way we walk with God through our entire lives. The gospel is not for those who want a "Get-out-of-hell-free card."

The gospel is given for us to live our lives knowing, loving, and praising God, not merely to get into heaven, but to live in an eternal relationship.

Jesus spoke the most terrifying words in Matthew 7:23. He said that not everyone will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will claim to have done spiritual and religious works, but he will say, "I never knew you, depart from me, you workers of lawlessness."

The gospel is an act of grace.

Grace is God's power to act kindly when we do not deserve it.

To treat the gospel as a ticket to heaven is "cheap grace" (Bonhoeffer). What the Bible talks about here in 1 Corinthians 15 is "costly grace." The gospel is costly grace because it cost Jesus his life and it is a grace that calls us to give our lives.

We hold on to the gospel through grace, God's grace (v. 10).

Confession and repentance throughout a lifetime is how we hold on to the gospel and allow God's grace to make us into men and women of character, integrity, strength and love.

### **The Resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:12-22)**

You have to settle whether or not you believe that Jesus literally, physically rose up from the dead (v. 14).

If Jesus did not literally and physically rise up from the dead, then he is a liar, the early church leaders were frauds, and we are wasting our time here on Sunday morning.

We believe with convincing evidence and proof that Jesus did rise up from the dead. He is alive and well and he will return one day to establish God's kingdom in fullness on the earth.

The gospel is God's story.  
The kingdom is God's plan.

### **The Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:23-31)**

God's purpose for you me, the Church, and all creation could be aptly called "the kingdom of God."

When Jesus came, he declared that the kingdom of God had come.  
*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.* (Mark 1:15 ESV)

The kingdom of God is not a place. It is not heaven or the local church. The kingdom of God is God's master plan, his eternal purpose.

God's kingdom is his rule and reign. So to inherit the kingdom of God means that you make Jesus the boss and he rules over your life.

Jesus has been made King and will remain so until the end when he hands over the kingdom of God back to God the Father. The handover at the end of the world will not take place until all enemies are destroyed, including death (v. 26). Death is the last enemy.

Death is an enemy, but it is an enemy that every one of us will fall victim to. Even though Jesus' resurrection defeated death, we still have to face it. The kingdom is here, but not in totality. The kingdom is still coming.

### **Our Resurrection from the Dead (1 Corinthians 15:32-50)**

God has included healing for our physical bodies as a part of his kingdom plan. However, not everyone we pray for will be healed in this life. God chooses to heal some people now and he chooses to heal some people at the end when he returns and raises our bodies from the dead.

Heaven seems to dominate our conversations about death. Heaven is good and to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, but heaven is not the end. If you die in this life, your physical body will be resurrected and you will have a body like Jesus does after his resurrection. It will be a body that is imperishable; a body that never breaks down.

### **The Coming of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:51-58)**

The return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead is a mystery. It is a secret that God is keeping to himself. Jesus said that nobody knows the day or hour when he will return (Matthew 24:36).

Every century since Jesus died has had at least one wacko claiming to know when Jesus was coming back. (See *Pocket Guide to the Apocalypse* by Jason Boyett, Relevant Books, 2005)

The last 100 years or so has especially been rich with end-time doomsdayers. We have seen everything from a grocery store owner in England who declares October 1908 as the end of the world to all of the Y2K end-of-the world talk in 1999. The twentieth century has also seen its share of potential antichrists.

The talk about end times in the Bible is not about the antichrist and it is certainly not about the rapture. It is about the return. It is not that we are going, but that he is coming.

When he returns we will be changed. Death will be defeated forever. Jesus will give us ultimate victory over sin, evil, sickness, pain & death.

So what are we supposed to do while we wait for his return? (v.58)  
We are called to continue to work as servants.



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