

## Paul's Gospel – Part 2

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

#### Introduction:

1. Paul was very adamant that he had received a gospel message from Jesus Christ and his mandate and commission was to proclaim that good news to every man.
2. Paul explains this gospel in synopsis form here in our text.
3. This text looks very basic and simplistic on the surface, but when you begin to really read the words slowly and carefully, you begin to understand that there is a lot here.
4. In these four verses, Paul is going to answer several questions about the gospel. Where did this gospel come from? What did this gospel contain? What should be our response to the gospel? What does the gospel do for us after we believe it?
5. In this lesson, we will see each of these questions answered from God's Word.

#### First, where did this gospel come from?

1. Paul says in verse 1, *"I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you..."*
2. This gospel came from Paul to the Corinthians. But where did Paul get it from? Verse 3 declares, *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received..."*
3. But where did Paul receive this good news from? **Galatians 1:1, 11-12**
  - Paul makes it very clear that his apostleship and his gospel did not originate out of man's authority or out of human instrumentality.
  - It came directly from Jesus Christ and His instrumentality. The resurrected Christ personally appeared to Paul and taught it to him by revelation.
  - Paul later would travel to Jerusalem and explain his gospel message to the twelve apostles. **Galatians 2:2**
4. The gospel we preach today came from the resurrected and ascended Christ to Paul, and from Paul to the Gentiles and to the church. **1 Timothy 2:6-7; 2 Timothy 1:8-13; Titus 1:2-3; Ephesians 3:6-9**

#### Second, what did this gospel consist of?

1. There are three elements to this good news in verses 3-4:
  - Christ died for our sins.
  - Christ was buried.
  - Christ rose again the third day.
2. The **facts** of what Christ would do were prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures, but what the facts would **mean** to this sin-cursed world and all that would be accomplished was kept secret by God until the *"due time"* arrived.
3. You will hear people define the gospel as "the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ." This is not really accurate. Our gospel that we preach today was kept secret until God saved Paul and revealed to Him all that was accomplished through the finished work of Christ. Our gospel is more than just these facts.
4. The **facts** of His death, burial, and resurrection were proclaimed by Peter to Israel on the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2:23-24**. Yet Peter did not preach the facts the way Paul did or we do today.

- He preached that the cross was a dastardly deed done by wicked hands and that the resurrection meant judgment upon Christ's foes. Repent of crucifying Christ.
  - There is no mention of the blessedness of the cross or that Christ died for sins so that His enemies could be reconciled by faith alone in His cross-work.
5. So, our gospel today is more than just the **facts** of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Our gospel is that Christ died **for our sins**. He did not just make atonement for Isaiah's people (the sins of Israel - **Isaiah 53:5-6**).
  6. Our gospel is that Christ made a full atonement for the sins of everybody (Jew or Gentile), and that any person in any country can come to Him on an absolutely equal basis. He gave Himself a ransom for **all**, but this message was to be testified in due time, when God saved Paul and sent him to the world with this message.  
**1 Timothy 2:6-7**
  7. Our gospel contains special information (redemption, immediate forgiveness, justification by faith, reconciliation, oneness with Christ) that Paul received about the cross and the meaning of Calvary and the empty tomb for this world.
    - You will not find any of these elements of the gospel explained before Paul. Why is this? Simply because it was not revealed yet. Paul was the "due time" testifier.

### **Third, what should be our response to the gospel?**

1. When the gospel is delivered to us by a faithful ambassador, our response should be to receive the gospel.
  - The word "receive" carries the idea of embracing, believing, accepting the gospel as your very own.
  - The opposite of receive would be to **reject** the gospel.
2. Paul readily received it from the Lord (vs. 3), he delivered it to the Corinthians, and then they received it from Paul (vs. 1). cf. **Galatians 1:9; Colossians 2:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:10**
3. Once somebody received the gospel, Paul's desire was that they would stand in the truths of the gospel (vs. 1). cf. **Romans 5:1-2**
4. Once a person is saved, Satan desires to confuse that person with false doctrine in order that he might hinder him from being an effective witness. This happened to the Galatian believers. **Galatians 1:6-7, 2:4**
5. The entire book of Galatians was written for the purpose of defending Paul's gospel of grace and encouraging the Galatians to **stand** in the truth of the gospel. 5:1

### **Fourth, what does the gospel do for us after we have believed it?**

1. Verse 2 has confused a lot of people, and the answer is to look at the verse in the context of this chapter.
2. There was a realm of false doctrine being propagated to the Corinthians. It involved the truth of the resurrection. People among the Corinthians were teaching that there was no resurrection of the dead. vs. 12-13
3. Paul is going to refute this false doctrine in this chapter and he begins by reminding them of the gospel that he had preached and they had received.

- They were justified, sanctified and placed in Christ when they received the gospel. This issue was already settled. 1:2, 4, 6, 8-9, 30, 3:1, 23, 6:11
4. Paul wanted them to "*keep in memory*" (continue to embrace, to stand in) the gospel truths that he had delivered to them, namely the resurrection.
  5. Why is this? Because these truths would "save" them.
    - The word "save" simply means "to deliver, to protect."
    - The word "save" does not always mean to deliver from hell. You must look in the context to see what the person is being saved, delivered or protected from. Examples: **Matthew 8:25, 14:30; Acts 27:20; Romans 13:11; 1 Timothy 2:15; Jude 1:5**
  6. In context, what would Paul's gospel save the Corinthians from? It would deliver them from a realm of false doctrine about the resurrection that would lead to despair, hopelessness, misery, and vanity. vs. 14, 17-19
  7. The Christian's hope is all based upon and rooted in the resurrection. That hope is what saves us from a life of despair and hopelessness. No matter how bad things may get down here on earth - no matter how much suffering - we have a hope that extends beyond this brief life. There is coming a day of resurrection, a day of redemption.
    - This is the point of **Romans 8:18-25**. These people were already children of God (vs. 15-17). Yet Paul said they were "*saved by hope*." Hope in what? The future resurrection and redemption of our bodies.
    - As we look around and see human suffering and pain, we are saved or delivered from the despair of a fallen creation. Why? We know there is a future resurrection!
  8. As we stand in the truth of the resurrection (keep it in memory), it delivers us from the despair of the nay-sayers who say that the idea of a resurrection is all bologna. They say, "You live, you die, and that's it." What utter hopelessness!
    - As we keep it in memory, it saves (delivers, protects) us from this false doctrine.
  9. Paul says, "*Unless ye have believed in vain*." Paul is not talking about **how** they believed (did they believe enough, did they have enough faith,) but rather the **content** of their faith (what they had believed in).
    - To believe in vain is to believe in something that isn't true. vs. 14
  10. Paul is basically saying that they need to stand in the gospel that they first received from him. If they do, it will protect them from the false doctrine that was being promoted and save them from the despair and hopelessness that the false doctrine produced.
  11. The only way it wouldn't, is if they had believed in vain (something not true). The rest of this chapter is devoted to defending the truth of the resurrection and demonstrating its validity and historical accuracy. Paul wanted to prove to them that they hadn't believed in vain, but that the resurrection of Christ was true, and therefore the future resurrection of believers is true.