

Radiant Church, Easter Sunday, March 27, 2016
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1 Corinthians 15:1-11

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 *now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you - unless you believed in vain*

Be reminded of the gospel - Christians, in addition to people who are not Christians need to be reminded of the gospel, daily

Receive the Good News

Reaffirm what you believe

Stand (hold fast) in that truth

Live like Jesus is the dominating factor in your life

Because we who believe have been saved:

Saved by Jesus, the Son of God, from the wrath of God

Saved from the rule and control of Satan, the enemy of God

Saved from ourselves, which is the false idol we worship that blocks our view of God who deserves all worship

Saved from our own, self-initiated sin, which destroys our relationship with God

Saved from death, the penalty for sin

Saved from Hell, the result of sin - eternal separation from God's love

His being God, his divinity was proved and resulted in the resurrection

And my acquittal from a death sentence is achieved

As Christians we make the "decision" to believe the gospel everyday

Otherwise we "believe in vain"

Then it just ends up being a truth we do not truly believe

It becomes just facts; not what transforms our own lives

The gospel is not the beginning of being a Christian - it is the whole life of a Christian

1 Corinthians 15:3A *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received...*

More so than in Paul's first century day, information in our world doubles every 2 years

Paul says of everything we may hear, find ourselves interested in or compelled by, this one thing is the most important

Paul shares this truth, because he had already received this central truth himself
If we are Christians, than death and resurrection of Jesus are central

Charismatics want to make the Day of Pentecost central

Calvinists want to make TULIP central

Liberals want to make social justice central

Fundamentalists want to make moral behavior central

Jesus says, "It's about Me." Jesus is the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:3B-6 *that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep*

Christ died for our sins

Our past sins, our present sins and the sins we may commit in the future
He paid the price for our redemption with his own life, his own blood

He was buried in a donated tomb, guarded by Roman soldiers

It was a borrowed tomb - only to hold his body temporarily

The tomb was cut out of rock - it holds my sin

His body was laid where no dead body had been laid before

-no confusing that it was in fact Jesus who had died and been
buried

He was raised to life on the third day. He defeated death.

He was seen, and therefore his resurrection was substantiated by eye-witnesses

Peter and the other apostles

Over 500 different people saw Jesus after the resurrection with their
own eyes

Some of these eye-witnesses were still living when Paul wrote this

It is the resurrection of Jesus that gives us any hope of ourselves being freed from the grave.

If not for Jesus being resurrected from the dead, he would remain nothing more than a good man, a teacher or a life coach who died a martyr for what he believed and taught

It is the resurrection that gives us any courage to trust Jesus and follow him now while we still live out our days on this earth, because we know that this life on this earth in this time is not the end.

It is the resurrection of Jesus that puts power behind the words of the gospel message

For non-Jewish people living in a Greek culture, the resurrection of Jesus didn't make sense. They saw the physical world, our bodies included as bad, and the spiritual world as good. They body was only a cage that we could escape from at death. They didn't understand why anyone would want to be resurrected, to return to the bodily cage.

Jewish people believed and still believe in a resurrection, but at the end of history, and for everyone. They couldn't believe that a resurrection would happen in the middle of history, and only one man come to life.

To change their secular or Jewish world view took a radical reorientation. The proof had to be that dramatic, that clear, that undeniable.

1 Corinthians 15:7 *then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles*

James was a brother of the Lord - a younger son of Mary and Joseph
He came to see and believe that Jesus, his older earthly brother was in fact
God

And James went on to be a leader in the Church
And wrote a book - the Book of James in the New Testament
And he died a martyr for his faith in Jesus

Only the resurrection could convince someone to worship his brother as God
(My three sisters, nor my wife nor my kids have ever been motivated to
worship me as God)

Paul states all this as the gospel - the truth that is more important than anything else he could possibly say or write

Why? Because it changed Paul's life! He offers himself up to his readers as "Exhibit A"

1 Corinthians 15:8-11 *last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed*

Paul was in his own estimation the least likely person to worship Jesus

Paul's life had been changed by the resurrected Jesus

The empty tomb had a message for first century witnesses as it has for us:

It says to science and philosophy "Explain this event, if you can"

It says to history "Repeat this event, if you can"

It says to time and memory "Blot out this event, if you can"

It says to skeptics "Ignore this event, if you can"

It says to faith "Believe this event, if you want to live and know God's love"

I hope you do believe. I hope you have experienced the gospel change and reorientation in your life

I hope and pray you view the gospel of Jesus as the first and most important truth you keep in your head and the thing that drives your heart.

There is no sin that God cannot forgive
There is no life so messed up that God cannot repair
There is no estrangement from God that he cannot break

We serve a Risen Savior! And his resurrection from death is what gives power and validity to the gospel, and to our faith.

I pray you will believe the truth about Jesus, the gospel story of God coming to earth to save you from a certain death sentence and replace that with a new life in His care.

I pray you will not be held to living a life of despair, but will experience what real hope is - trusting Jesus, instead of trusting yourself or this world

I pray you will believe and thus become a joyful member of God's Kingdom people.

I pray you will believe in the sure hope of forgiveness and a reconciled relationship with the God of the universe that will last forever and ever.

Jesus died on our place, and we can be saved!

Mark 1:15 Repent and believe, for the Kingdom is at hand