

THE GOSPEL

1 CORINTHIANS 15

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1

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¹Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

Introduction:

On Easter Sunday we remember the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Just as the death of Jesus Christ was for everyone, so is the resurrection. The message of the gospel is the death, burial, and the resurrection. Notice

- Paul preached the gospel consistently (1a)
- Paul preached the gospel convincingly (1b-2a)
- Paul preached the gospel by confirmation (3-8)

In our text we have a list of witnesses to the resurrection. I find it striking that the resurrection of Christ was for each witness, and each of these individuals are represented here today.

Notice:

1. THE DENIER (V. 5)

(1 Corinthians 15:5) "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:"

A. Remember it was Peter who was so adamant about his loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Matthew 26:31-35) "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. {32} But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. {33} Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. {34} Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. {35} Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples."

(Luke 22:34) "And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

B. But this adamant Peter denied the Lord.

(Matthew 26:70-74) "But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. {71} And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. {72} And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. {73} And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. {74} Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew."

(Luke 22:61) "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

C. But when the Lord arose from the dead, he appeared to Peter.

(Luke 24:34) "Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

D. Peter the denier had been forgiven and was still useful in the ministry of Christ

1. Thank goodness for our God of the second chance.

2. THE DESERTER (V. 5)

(1 Corinthians 15:5) "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:"

A. We have a group that had deserted the Lord in the darkest hour

1. They too had said that they would never deny the Lord but we find that they deserted the Lord.

(Matthew 26:35) "Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples."

(Mark 14:50) "And they all forsook him, and fled."

B. But the Lord appeared to these deserters with a message of peace and commission.

(John 20:19-23) "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. {20} And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. {21} Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. {22}

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: {23} Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

3. THE COMMON MAN (v. 6)

(1 Corinthians 15:6) "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

A. Here was a group of believers who:

1. Were not distinguished.
2. Were not deniers
3. Were not deserters.

B. Just average people, but the resurrected Saviour appeared to them.

1. One does not have to be special to go to Heaven, the Lord is concerned for all.

4. THE UNBELIEVER (v. 7)

(1 Corinthians 15:7) "After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles."

This James was the half-brother to Jesus.

(John 7:5) "For neither did his brethren believe in him."

His own half-brother did not believe on Jesus.

A. But the Lord was concerned for not only the lost but for the lost in His family.

B. We too need to be concerned for the spiritual condition of our families.

The Bible tells us that there is only one way to Heaven, and that is through the Crucified, Risen Saviour.

(John 14:6) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

(Romans 3:23) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

(Romans 6:23) "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

(Romans 10:9-10) "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

(Romans 10:13) "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

If you were to die today would Heaven be your home? The resurrected Saviour will do the same for you as He did for James His half-brother.

5. THE MESSENGER (V. 7)

(1 Corinthians 15:7) "After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles."

A. These were the men who the Lord Jesus began the church with, the disciples.

B. They were sent with the message of the Gospel.

1. The Lord commissioned them to go out and preach the gospel.

(Mark 16:15) "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

(Matthew 28:18-20) "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. {19} Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: {20} Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

C. Because they had seen and had an encounter with the risen Saviour they were effective messengers for Him.

D. A true witness for Christ must have had an encounter (salvation) and must see Him as risen or he has no message.

6. THE PERSECUTOR (V. 8-11)

(1 Corinthians 15:8-11) "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. {9} For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. {10} But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. {11} Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

A. Not only did Saul not believe in Jesus, but he persecuted the Lord's followers.

(Acts 8:1) "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

(Acts 9:1-2) "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, {2} And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

B. But the Lord appeared unto Paul on the Damascus road.

(Acts 9:1-6) "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, {2} And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. {3} And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: {4} And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? {5} And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus

whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. {6} And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

C. Thank God even those who persecute Jesus and His followers can be saved.

1. There has never been so much sin that grace could not cover.

(Romans 5:20) "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:"

2. If God would save the chief of sinners, He will certainly save you and me.

(1 Timothy 1:15) "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

Close:

The gospel that Paul speaks of in verse 1 is the death burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He died for all and was resurrected for all.

(1 Corinthians 15:1) "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;"