

Series: God's Life-Changing Truth – Part 15

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 ESV

## Do You Have a *Firm Grip* on the *Good News*?

Sunday, April 5 at 7:00 & 10:45

The Resurrection of Our Lord

Monday Services Resume on April 13 at 7 PM

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: You **will** die – *unless Jesus returns first*; you **will** be *somewhere* for eternity – *either in paradise or in torment*. How can I speak with such certainty? Because **it is written**:

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Romans 6:23** “...the wages of sin is death...”
- <sup>NAS</sup> **Matthew 25:46** “...these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Since such things are *absolutely true*, God is calling us to be *absolutely serious* about knowing and believing the gospel – *the good news* – to the very end of our lives! So today we focus on the importance of the gospel, the main points of the gospel, and the reality that we are unworthy and yet we are so very blessed in the *Risen Christ*!

1. **The Importance of the Gospel:** <sup>1</sup> Now I ~~would~~ remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup> and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain [to no purpose]. // Let us focus on “received,” “stand,” and “saved”:

- a. How did we receive? From *conception* we were *spiritually dead*, so, *thru holy baptism*, God clothed us with the gospel! **It is written:** <sup>NAS</sup> **Galatians 3:27** “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

- b. How do we stand? **It is written:** <sup>NIV</sup> **Psalm 130:3** “If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?” But **it is written:** <sup>NIV</sup> **Psalm 130:4** “...with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.” So *only in the Risen Christ* can we stand!
- c. How are we saved? **It is written:** <sup>NAS</sup> **Acts 16:31** “...Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved...” But saved from what? From *death* and *eternal punishment* – the very things we deserved because of our rebellion against the Almighty God!

In summary: We were on the path to hell, but now, **by the gospel**, we are on the path to heaven – if we hold firmly to His Word of Truth!

- ⇒ Is that easy? No! **It is written:** <sup>NAS</sup> **Matthew 10:22** “...you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.”
- ⇒ Has everyone done so? No! **It is written:** <sup>NIV</sup> **1 Timothy 6:10** “...Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith...”
- ⇒ Is God at work through His Word to make it happen? Yes! **It is written:** <sup>NIV</sup> **Philippians 1:6** “...[God] who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

2. **The Main Points of the Gospel:** <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: [a] that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> [b] that he was buried, [c] that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and [d] that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five

hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. // Let us focus on those four main points of the gospel:

- a. Did He die? It is written: <sup>NAS</sup> **1 Peter 3:18** “For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, in order that He might bring us to God...”
- b. Was He buried? It is written: <sup>ESV</sup> **Mark 15:46** And Joseph [of Arimathea] bought a linen shroud, and taking [the body of Jesus] down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb...”
- c. Was He raised? It is written: <sup>NIV</sup> **Acts 2:23-24** “[Jesus] was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead [on the third day], freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.”
- d. Did He appear? Today’s text includes a list of *many* of His appearances (verses 5-8)!

In Summary So Far: We were in desperate need of being saved, so Jesus did everything necessary to save us! How can we be certain? Because **it is written!** So knowing *the importance* and *the certainty* of the gospel, may God – by *His Spirit working through His Word* – bless us with a grip on the gospel that is *always growing stronger!*

3. **Unworthy, But Very Blessed:** <sup>9</sup> **For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.** <sup>10</sup> **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.** <sup>11</sup> **Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.**

- a. Paul – *the least*: Compare the other apostles with Paul: *When they were believers*, Jesus called them to become apostles. *But when Paul was a persecutor of the church of God*, Jesus called him to be an apostle. Therefore, *to Paul*, this was clear: His *membership* and *apostolic position* in God’s kingdom were completely by God’s grace!
- b. Us – *are we more*? When we were *dead and lost*, God’s action made us *alive and found!* It is written: <sup>NIV</sup> **Ephesians 2:4-5** “...because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.” So as Paul took no credit for his salvation, *neither do we.* It is written: <sup>NAS</sup> **Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”

**Conclusion:** So the gospel, *the good news* is our eternal lifeline; therefore, *by God’s Spirit working through God’s Word*, let us ever-grow up in our *Risen Lord Jesus Christ!* It is written: <sup>NIV</sup> **Hebrews 10:39** “...we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.”

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

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