

# “THE CLIMAX OF THE GOSPEL”

*1 Corinthians 15:1-5*

**Theme:** The resurrection of Jesus Christ provides power to the Gospel of grace.

**Introduction:** Few moments in the church's life are more meaningful than this—when we gather on Easter morning to remember not only that Christ died, but that He lives. It truly is the dominant joy every Sunday we gather. The hope we hold onto isn't wishful thinking or mere tradition. It is rooted in a living Savior.

When the apostle Paul writes in [1](#) Corinthians 15, he speaks with the tenderness of a shepherd and the certainty of someone entrusted with truth.

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved...”

Do you hear the care in those words? *Brethren... received... stand... saved.* This is not distant theology — it is the very ground beneath our feet and the hope inside our hearts.

Paul gently reminds them—and us—that the gospel is not something we outgrow. It is something we live in. It is the message that steadies us when life is unsteady, that assures us when doubts arise, that saves us not just once but secures us forever.

And at the very center of that gospel is this unshakable truth:

“Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures.*”

Beloved, the resurrection is not just a detail of the gospel—it's its power. Without it, there's no guarantee that sin has been paid for, no victory over death, no true hope. But because Jesus rose, grace isn't just offered—it's effective. It reaches sinners like us and genuinely saves.

As we come to this passage, we will see that the resurrection strengthens and steadies our confidence in the gospel in three ways:

- It reminds us of the **Constraints of the Gospel**—this is the message we have received, the message in which we stand. It is not ours to reshape; it is ours to hold fast.
- It punctuates the **Communication of the Gospel**—Christ died for our sins and rose again, just as God promised. This is grace, not earned, but accomplished for us.
- And it assures us through the **Certification of the Gospel** - that the risen Christ was seen. This is not a fable, but a witnessed, living reality.

So, as we start this morning, let me ask you directly: are you standing on this gospel? Not just familiar with it—but resting in it? Because the same risen Christ who confirmed this message still calls sinners to Himself.

## I. THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE GOSPEL – *15:1-2*

### A. *THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE BELIEVER* – **v. 1**

1. The Gospel of grace stands apart from all other beliefs through one unmatched, unprecedented feat: the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. It is the truth of the resurrection that explains the constancy and conviction in the lives of those who obey the Gospel of Christ, serving as the reason for the life-change that occurs in the believer – *“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand.”*
3. The Gospel is fixed truth – and objective reality that is revealed, not invented – *“... make known ...”* [γνωρίζω] – “to cause information to be known.”
  - a) All of us have heard the same message – unaltered throughout time, which has caused us to be “born again” – *1 Peter 1:23*.
  - b) This is the message that Paul declares, *“the gospel which I preached to you ...”*
4. The truth that compels us is not merely that Jesus died on the cross, but it is the truth of the resurrection that causes men and women to *“receive”* the Gospel message centered in Christ Jesus.
5. The gospel is not something that is discovered; it is delivered – proclamations of God’s Word concerning Jesus and His work that turns the heart from infidel to believer – from rejection of God and His righteousness to a receiver of the truth.
6. *“In which also you stand”* - The believer’s ability to stand is derived from the power of the truth of the resurrection.
7. “Belief in the resurrection, the truth that this life is only a prelude to the life to come for those who trust in Jesus Christ, could not be obliterated by ridicule, prison, torture, or even death. No fear or dread in this life can quench the hope and joy of an assured life to come.”<sup>1</sup>

**B. THE CONSTANT CHARACTERISTIC OF THE BELIEVER – v. 2**

1. The Gospel is that *“by which also you are saved . . .”* – a reference to the believer’s deliverance from the power of sin and the condemnation attending it.
2. Because of the resurrection, we possess the power over sin and death and are no longer its slaves.
3. Paul’s strong wish is to experience the *“power of the resurrection”* in

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, p. 398.

his everyday life – cf. *Philippians 3:10*.

- a) **PATTERNS:** Old patterns of sin lose their dominion and are replaced by the new pursuits for Christ and His righteousness – *Romans 6:17-18*.
  - b) **PURITY:** Sin is no longer excused or rationalized but resisted and confessed – *1 John 1:9*.
  - c) **PASSIONS:** Our affections move from this world and its pleasures to heaven, and its glories – *Colossians 3:2*.
  - d) **PERSEVERANCE:** Suffering no longer is seen as something endured alone, but a place where Jesus' presence and fellowship are experienced – *2 Corinthians 4:10*.
  - e) **PRIORITIES:** Our will is consistently subjected to the will of God, and we willingly “take up our cross” to follow Him – *Luke 9:23*.
  - f) **PROGRESS:** Christlikeness is noticeably attained – albeit incrementally, yet progressively through humility, love, and obedience – *2 Corinthians 3:18*.
4. *“hold[ing] fast the word which I preached to you . . .”* – is the result of and evidence of their genuine salvation, without which, *“you have believed in vain.”*
  5. Such a statement is not teaching the loss of salvation, but that one can possess a form of godliness, but deny the power of it – *2 Timothy 3:5*.
  6. “Some believed only as the demons believed (James 2:19), i.e., they were convinced the gospel was true, but had no love for God, Christ, and righteousness”<sup>2</sup>.
  7. People who are genuinely saved by the grace of God have:
    - a) *“received”* the truth (our past response),
    - b) *“stand”* in the truth (our present stability),
    - c) *“saved”* by the truth (our constant experience),
    - d) *“hold fast the word”* of the truth (our hope for the future)
  8. What exactly is that *“word”* to which we *“hold fast”* – what truth?

**That Christ Jesus** *“died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed.

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## II. THE COMMUNICATION OF THE GOSPEL – 15:3-4

### A. **THE PAYMENT FOR SIN – V. 3**

1. *“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”* – a reference to the substitutionary role that Christ filled when he received the wrath of God on Himself because of our sin – cp. 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:5; Psalm 22:16; Daniel 9:26.
2. This was necessary because of the righteous judgment of God for sin – a sentence that required death – Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:20.

### B. **THE PRODUCT OF JUDGMENT – V. 4A**

1. *“and that He was buried”* – a reference to the totality of the separation between the Son of God and the Father – cp. Mark 15:34.
2. The grave is the final conqueror, the trump card of Satan – Hebrews 2:14-15.
3. Yet, Christ, having yielded to the chains of death, knew the full consequence of sin – complete separation from the Father.
4. The burial of Christ is the proof that His death was real, His payment was complete, and His victory over the grave would be undeniable.

### C. **THE POWER OF LIFE – V. 4B**

1. However, the clutches of death could not keep Him – *“and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scripture.”*
2. God had promised that He would not allow “His holy One to see corruption” – cp. Acts 2:22-28, 30-32.
3. Now, death and the grave are a defeated foe, an emasculated enemy – no longer the victor, having met a greater power – cp. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.

## III. THE CERTIFICATION OF THE GOSPEL – 15:5

### A. **THE EMPHASIS ON GRACE**

1. *“and that He was seen of Peter”* – this is a picture of grace – the unmerited favor of a loving God.
2. Peter is presumably mentioned first to emphasize the tenderness of Christ in healing Peter’s wounded heart following the denials.
3. This again demonstrates that we do not receive from the Lord what is deserved, but that which He determines is best for us through His grace.

## B. ***THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH***

1. Finally, it is mentioned along with a host of others in the following verses that He appeared *“then to the twelve.”* – [Acts 1:3; 10:40-41](#).
2. This is really where you see the power of the resurrection begin to transform the lives of those who receive the salvation promised and confirmed by the Holy Spirit of God at the birth of the Church.

## **So What?**

1. How does holding fast to the true gospel confront areas where you may be drifting spiritually or becoming casual about sin?
2. How is the reality that Jesus lives calling you to deeper trust, fuller obedience, and greater joy?
3. In what ways am I minimizing sin or excusing it—and how does the cross call me to deal with it more honestly and biblically?
4. Where do I need the power of the resurrection to bring change—whether in a pattern of sin, a strained relationship, or a weary heart?

**The resurrection of Jesus Christ provides power to the Gospel of grace.**