

Week 3 | “The Whole Gospel Pt. 2”

I. INTRODUCTION

A. 1st Corinthians 15:1-7

II. FIVE GOSPEL PIECES (1ST CORINTHIANS 15:3-4)

1. **1st Corinthians 15:3-4** *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures...”*
- B. Paul is now going to do something very common in Jewish history, and that’s passing on to others, what he himself was given, or received. The idea is that he’s passing on the trusted apostolic tradition that was given to him, both through Christ Himself, and the other apostles.
- C. But this isn’t his first time preaching the Gospel to them; he was with them for 18 months preaching this very Gospel, and now, four years later, he’s back to the basics reminding them of what they originally received.
- D. And though many things would take shape, and change inside the early Church through Paul’s hands, the Gospel, what he received, was there long before He was, and would be there after him.
 1. **1st Corinthians 3:10-11** *“According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay that that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.”*
 2. Paul’s not out there building custom homes to his own liking, or his own desire. He’s building homes, ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN that he’s received, that was given to him.
- E. Gospel Piece #1—Incarnation—Though it’s not stated explicitly in these verse’s, it’s certainly implied. God took on flesh, and became a man, and lived life like us. This doesn’t mean that God didn’t lose what He was, it just means that God added to what He was not, humanity (Hypostatic Union).
- F. Gospel Piece #2—Christ’s life—Again, it’s not said here in this passage, but even the most radical revisionist historians throughout history have all confirmed that Jesus Christ was a historical Person. Among Christianity’s most vocal opponents, Jesus Christ is seen to be a real figure throughout history.
 1. But the Gospel claims that Jesus was much more than a historical Person. The Gospel claims that Jesus lived in perfect obedience to God’s law, living up to a standard that no human could ever do on their own (*He was the only One qualified to represent fallen man*).
- G. Gospel Piece #3—Jesus’ death—Paul is clear, here in 1st Corinthians 15:3, *“...Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures...”* Jesus’ death was a death on purpose, not a death on accident. Jesus was dying FOR something, namely, OUR SINS;
 1. **2nd Corinthians 5:21** *“For He made Him who knew no sin, to be sin FOR US, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

2. **Galatians 1:4** “...who gave Himself FOR OUR sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father...”
 3. **Galatians 3:13** “...Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse FOR US...”
 4. **Romans 5:6,8** “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly...But God demonstrated His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died FOR US.”
 5. It’s not uncommon today for Christians to create a false dichotomy as to the intended message of Christ’s cross. They will say, “*The cross doesn’t demonstrate how sinful we are, it demonstrates how much we are loved.*” Or they will say, “*The cross doesn’t demonstrate how much we are loved, it demonstrates how sinful we are.*” This is a false dichotomy, an unneeded contrast...**BECAUSE BOTH ARE TRUE.**
- H. **Gospel Piece #4—Jesus’ Burial**—One commentator rightly said, “*The grave was to Jesus, not the destined receptacle of corruption, but an apartment fitted for entering into life.*” Paul is intentionally mentioning this facet of the Gospel story because it’s central to the message he’s already preached at Corinth.
1. Paul making clear, “*Guys, Jesus physically died on the cross. Remember the executioner who came to break bones if needed to finish off these crucified individuals? Well, as you know, to fulfill prophecy, and a statement of Jesus’ physical death, he didn’t need to break any bones cause He was already dead. And remember the rock hewn tomb that He was laid in, wrapped in a 100 pounds of burial spices, and sealed up for three days, without any medical treatment? Church of Corinth, Jesus was dead!*”
 2. Paul was making sure they understood Jesus’ death **WASN’T** a spiritual one, but a physical one, a real one, which was teeing him up to crank the resurrection outta the park, the very thing they were now denying.
- I. **Gospel Piece #5—Jesus’ resurrection**—Paul tells the Corinthians, “...that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures...” A Human, in history, on a particular day was raised from the dead. The idea is that the historical nature of the Gospel, as told through the whole of the Bible, hinges on resurrection of Jesus, **AND IT HAPPENED!** The very thing they were denying, the resurrection of the dead, was the very thing that Paul **ALREADY TOLD THEM,** and was now **TELLING THEM AGAIN!**

III. FURTHER PROOF OF JESUS’ RESURRECTION (1ST CORINTHIANS 15:5-7)

1. **1st Corinthians 15:5-7** “...and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles”
- B. Well, just as Jesus’ burial verified Christ’s death, that He really died, so too His appearances demonstrated that He was raised from the dead. This isn’t the same as the scriptural account, which Paul just gave previously, but it’s equally important to the proof of both His divinity, but also of His physical, bodily resurrection from death. *But as a good preacher, he started with the Bible, then went onto first-hand accounts.*

1. “He was seen by Cephas”—Cephas is the Aramaic name for the Apostle Peter (**Galatians 2:8-9**). This was a later documented event, from **John 21**, when Jesus appeared to Peter on the sea of Galilee, once again while he was fishing.
2. “After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep”—Well Paul makes clear, “Guys, if Jesus appeared only to the 12 apostles, then you might have reason to keep this claim in suspect. But He appeared to over 500 people, AT ONE TIME, not individually. Certainly, you can’t fabricate this, or assume that this crowd was hallucinating.”
 - a. Paul further states that many of these people were still alive, so that the Corinthians could go back and talk to them about it and hear for themselves WHAT these people saw and heard.
3. “After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles”—James is the half-brother of Jesus, who wasn’t a follower during the time of Jesus ministry (**Mark 3:31-35; John 7:2-4**), but later not only became a disciple, but also one of the most significant leaders of the early Church in Jerusalem (**Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 2:9, 12**).
 - a. Beloved, this is among the greatest proofs of Jesus’ divinity, and His resurrection, that His own brother would be faith in Him as His Savior?? You might fool some disciples, you might even fool a crowd, but your own family??? Not happening!

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. The power of the Gospel is that it de-centers non-believers from the center of their own life. In the Gospel, you can clearly see your sin, your separation from God, and the need for something outside yourself.
- B. And for the follower of Jesus, the Gospel provides the needed foundation upon which to build our lives. The Gospel establishes that we can live guilt-free lives and be loosed from the internal craving to earn the approval of others, because we are free to live before God, and now with others, not for others.
- C. The Gospel is central—it’s the very heart of Christianity. The only foundation upon which you can stand!
 1. **Matthew 7:24-27**