

The Evidence for the Resurrection

(1 Corinthians 15:1-11 ~ Part 2)

Introduction

- It is good to remember that the biblical book of “1 Corinthians” was originally a letter written by the apostle Paul to the Christians in the church in the city of Corinth (Greece) – “*To the church of God that is in Corinth*” (1:2). The apostle planted the church in Corinth during his second missionary journey (see Acts 18; approx. 51 A.D.). A few years later, approx. 55 A.D., Paul wrote “1 Corinthians” to address disunity and immorality (i.e., sin) in the church.
- It is important to note, as we turn to chapter fifteen, that 1 Corinthians fifteen is the longest and most thorough teaching on the resurrection in all Scripture (and the longest chapter in 1 Corinthians). After spending fourteen chapters on more practical matters, the apostle Paul shifted to that which is essentially doctrinal.

This is neither random nor accidental. Paul intentionally drew his letter to a conclusion with a vitally important doctrinal teaching – the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is clearly not a peripheral or shallow truth. As we saw last week, and will again see this morning, the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is among the greatest – most important and most sacred – teachings in all of Scripture. It is foundational to the Gospel, and foundational to every Christian. It is not only a doctrine that every Christian must believe, but also a doctrine affects how every Christian behaves.

Without Christ’s resurrection there is no salvation, no hope, and the Christian life is not worth living. Furthermore, if Christ did not rise from the dead, God is a liar, God’s Word is erroneous, and God character cannot be trusted. The miraculous birth of Christ is meaningless apart from the resurrection. The sinless life of Christ is meaningfully apart from the resurrection. The substitutionary death of Christ is meaningless apart from the resurrection. And the Christian life is meaningless apart from the resurrection.

1 Cor 15:14-19 ~ “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ... ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

1 Cor 15:20 ~ “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead ...”

- Writing words inspired by the Holy Spirit of God (2Pet.1:20-21; 2Tim.3:16-17), the apostle wanted to “*remind*” (vs.1; *gnōrizō*; make it known/clear) Christians of the truth concerning Christ’s resurrection. Lest they forget the vital importance of the fact that Jesus is alive; risen from the dead – which occurred some 20 years prior to this letter! Lest they fail to have Christ’s resurrection as the driving force, and guiding truth, of their Christian lives. Lest they doubt the truth of the resurrection, or supplant it which something infinitely less important.

Perhaps even more, about 2,000 years after Christ’s resurrection, we (like the Corinthians) need to be instructed, and regularly reminded, concerning the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (no just once a year). We need to be told and retold of its veracity and primacy. We must not allow the resurrection of Christ to be anything but preeminent in our lives. We desperately need to believe and persevere in the truth of Christ’s resurrection.

✓ **Illust:** “There is no fact, in all history, that is so well attested as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. ... as to whether Christ rose from the dead, no candid mind can entertain a doubt. He was seen by great companies of believers and by various individuals who had long known Him most intimately, and who had many opportunities of judging whether they were deceived or not. Christ’s resurrection is not only well attested, but it is also the most important fact that ever happened in the history of the world, as Paul goes on to show” (C.H. Spurgeon; sermon: “He Must Reign”; Exposition on 1 Corinthians 15:6-8;

1 Cor 15:1-11 ~ “Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But 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. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”

➤ From this passage, we can identify four major proofs concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

A. The proof of the SAVED (vs.1-2)

➤ Paul goes back to the beginning – when the Corinthians first heard the Gospel – *“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand”* (vs.1). The word *“gospel”* (*euangelion*) means “good news” or “good message.” It is used to describe the virgin birth, the sinless life, the substitutionary death, and (more specifically) the supernatural resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Gospel refers to the saving work of Jesus Christ – whose life, death and resurrection paid the penalty for all the sins of everyone who would ever believe.

Paul knew the Corinthian Christians heard the Gospel because he was the one who preached it to them. Here is an interesting play on words. Paul wrote, *“I want to remind you of the “gospel [euangelion] I preached [euangelizō] to you”* (vs.1) [loose translation: “I want to remind you of the Gospel I gospelized to you”]. Paul was a good news messenger (“evangelist”) of the good news.

➤ Notice the language of this passage. Paul *“remind[ed]”* (vs.1) them of the Gospel that he *“preached”* (vs.1) to them, and that they *“received”* (vs.1) it and took their *“stand”* (vs.1) upon it and were *“saved”* (vs.2) by it. That is, they heard the Gospel, the believed the Gospel, and they were saved by the Gospel. Their Christian testimony was evidence of the power and veracity of the Gospel (Rom.1:16; 10:16).

However, Paul reminded these Christians that truly salvation is much more than merely professing Christ – just saying you believe in Christ does not mean that you are truly a follower of Christ (Matt.7:21-23). True believers persevere in Christ: *“if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain”* (vs.2; *“vain”* [*eikē*] means without reason, cause, or purpose). Those who are truly saved will ultimately, though not perfectly, persevere in their faith. Those truly belong to Christ – who are in Christ and Christ in them – will not, indeed cannot, lose their salvation (see Jn.10:27-30; Phil.1:6; Rom.8:28-30; 1Jn.2:19).

B. The proof of the SCRIPTURES (vs.3-4)

➤ All Scripture is ultimately about the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the main theme and the very fulfillment of all Scripture – both Old Testament and New (see 2Cor.1:20). A person cannot truly believe the Bible and not see Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God, and the Savior of the world.

As we saw last week, the New Testament is the continuation, interpretation, and fulfillment of the Old Testament. The New Testament does not replace or contradict the Old Testament. The New Testament does not represent God’s change of plans or change of character. A person cannot accurately say that they believe the New Testament (or like the New Testament God) and say they do not believe the Old Testament (or like the Old Testament God). For the New Testament explains, illustrates, and proves the truths (e.g., prophecies) found in the Old Testament (see Matt.5:17; 26:51-56; Lk.16:28-31; 24:25-27, 44-47; Jn.5:39-40, 45-47; Acts 26:22-23).

- As these verses plainly indicate, the *“Scriptures”* (vs.3, 4) refer to the Old Testament – all three sections of the Old Testament in our Bibles – the Law (or books of Moses), the Psalms (or poetry/wisdom literature), and the Prophets (both major and minor prophets). The culmination of the entire Bible is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – the Old Testament foretold it, and the New Testament describes it. The Old Testament looks ahead to the cross of Christ, and the New Testament looks back at the cross of Christ.
- Paul’s ministry and preaching was Bible-saturated and Bible-centered. Paul did not preach what was “politically correct” or “socially acceptable, and he did not preach himself – his views, his opinion, or his “gospel.” Paul preached the Gospel *“in accordance with the Scriptures”* (vs.3, 4)! It is what he himself *“received”*, and what he *“delivered”* (vs.3; see Gal.1:11-12; 1Cor.11:23; Hag.1:13).
- Notice also that Paul referred to this *“as of first importance”* (vs.3; *prōtos*). This word can mean first in order or first in priority, or both (oftentimes what is first is also foremost). Paul is declaring that the Gospel – the virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, and supernatural resurrection of Christ – is of the utmost importance. All this is in absolute *“accordance with the [Old Testament] Scriptures”* (vs.3, 4). These are indispensable truths of the Gospel, truths that every person must believe in order to be saved.

C. The proof of the EYEWITNESSES (vs.5-10)

- Christ’s resurrection was not an apostolic fairytale or deception. Nor was it an event witnessed only by a handful of people. After Jesus rose from the dead, He did not immediately ascend to heaven.

Acts 1:3 ~ “He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.”

As we harmonize all of Scripture, we discover that Jesus appeared some (at least) eleven different times over a period of forty days to hundreds of people (most of whom were still alive as Paul wrote this letter; see vs.6). Paul states that he could have called hundreds of eyewitnesses to testify to the truth of Jesus’ bodily resurrection. In verses 5-10, Paul gave six prominent examples.

1. *“Cephas” / Peter* (vs.5a)

- First, Paul cited that Jesus *“appeared to Cephas”* (vs.5); which is the Aramaic name for Peter (see Jn.1:42; 1Cor.1:12; Gal.2:8-9, 11). While we do not know that exact time or occasion when Peter first saw the resurrected Christ, we know that it occurred after His appearance to Mary and before His appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (see Lk.24:34). Peter was the first of the apostles to witness the resurrected Christ.

We can only speculate as to why Christ chose to reveal Himself to Peter (either first or alone). We know that an angel told the women to *“tell [the] disciples and Peter”* that Jesus had risen from the dead (Mk.16:7). Perhaps it was because Peter was the leader of the apostles, and would be a leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem. Perhaps Jesus wanted to alleviate Peter’s guilt and remorse for disowning Him after he swore he would not do it. On the night of Jesus’ arrest and trial, in Caiaphas’ home, Peter denied Christ three times. After the rooster crowed, *“... the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.’”* ⁶²*And he went out and wept bitterly”* (Lk.22:61-62). It seems likely that Christ would graciously, and specifically, appear before Peter in order to ease his pain, to restore him, and to encourage him to be bold as the Lord’s spokesman (see Jn.21:15-20).

2. “the twelve” (vs.5b)

- The second resurrection appearance, as recorded by the apostle Paul, was “to the twelve” (vs.5). Even though Judas had betrayed Jesus, abandoned the disciples, and hung himself (Jn.13:26, 30; 18:2-5; Matt.27:5), the disciples were still referred to as “the twelve” (as a title). We know Jesus appeared to the remaining eleven of the disciples. This happened twice as Jesus appeared before the “the twelve” with Thomas absent (Lk.24:36-43; Mk.16:14; Jn.20:19-25), and (eight days) later when Thomas was present (Jn.20:26-31).

John 20:19-29 ~ “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ ²⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ...

²⁴Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.’ ²⁶Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’ ²⁸Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ ²⁹Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”

- We know that later, Matthias was chosen to replace Judas bringing the number of apostles back to twelve (see Acts 1:21-23, 26).

3. “more than five hundred brothers” (vs.6)

- After appearing to “the twelve”, Jesus “*appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time*” (vs.6). All we know of this occurrence is what is written here (some believe this occurred at the same time when Jesus appeared before “the eleven” and gave the great commission; see Matt.28:16-20). Though non-specific, the scene is very clear: more than five hundred believers saw the risen Christ at the same time and in the same place. What an awesome experience this must have been to those believers!

Clearly, Paul was acutely aware of this situation as he declares, about two decades later, that “*most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep*” (vs.6). If someone questioned the veracity of the claims of Christ’s resurrection, Paul could have called hundreds of (firsthand) eyewitnesses to testify!

4. “James” (vs.7a)

- It is largely unknown as to which “*James*” (vs.7) Paul is referring. There were two apostles named James (one the son of Zebedee and the other the son of Alphaeus). However, many scholars believe this James to be the half-brother of Jesus who most likely wrote the book of James, was a key leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13-21), and whom Paul called an apostle (Gal.1:19). If this is true, it must have been a particularly glorious encounter as James, along with his other brothers, did not initially believe that Jesus was the Christ (Jn.7:5). In fact, it could have been this experience that brought James into a saving faith in Jesus Christ, and would have been the beginning of his ministry and apostleship in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Acts 1:14).

5. “all the apostles” (vs.7b)

- Jesus then appeared “*to all the apostles*” (vs.7). This seems to refer either to all the apostles with none missing (i.e., Thomas; Jn.20:26-31), or to the larger group of apostles that included James and others. It is likely that this is a referenced to the group that witnessed Christ’s ascension:

Acts 1:6-11 ~ “So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ ⁷He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’ ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’”

- Either collectively or individually, “all the apostles” personally witnessed the miracle of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22).

6. “also to me” / Paul (vs.8-10)

- One of the requirements for apostleship was having seen the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22) The apostle Paul was “*[l]ast of all*” (vs.8) to witness the resurrected Christ. But Paul was unique in that he saw the resurrected Christ several years after Christ had ascended to heaven.

✓ **Illust:** “The Lord’s appearance to Paul not only was post-resurrection but post-ascension, making Paul’s testimony more unique still. It was not during the forty days in which He appeared to all the others but several years later. All the others to whom Christ appeared, except perhaps James, were believers, whereas Paul (then known as Saul) was a violent, hateful unbeliever when the Lord manifested Himself on the Damascus road” (John MacArthur; *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians*; 15:8-10).

- He referred to himself as “*one untimely born*” (vs.8), a phrase which gently/politely translates one word in Greek (*ektrōma*) [“*born at the wrong time*” (NET), “*abnormally born*” (NIV), “*born out of due time*” (KJV)]. In using this word, Paul intentionally chose to be graphically self-deprecating.

✓ **Illust:** “Those who are acquainted with the Greek tongue know what a despicable term [*ektrōma*] Paul here applied to himself – as though he was scarcely a man at all ... Scholars will know why I cannot exactly explain the word which Paul uses, but rather keep to the rendering of our translation, which, although it may not have the force and full meaning of the Greek expression, is perhaps none the less useful for public reading: ‘One born out of due time’ (C.H. Spurgeon; sermon: “[A Leap Year Sermon](#)”; February 29, 1880).

Let me venture to go where Spurgeon would not. This term (*ektrōma*) was used to describe the death of a preborn baby – as in a miscarriage, stillbirth, or an abortion (Sept. “stillborn child”; Job 3:16; Eccl.6:3).

✓ **Illust:** “The Greek word used here (ἔκτρομα, *ektrōma*) refers to a premature birth, a miscarriage, or an aborted child. Paul uses it as a powerful figure of the unexpected, abnormal nature of his apostolic call” (NET Bible; notes on 1Cor.15:8).

✓ **Illust:** “The Apostle refers to himself as “one untimely born” (v. 8), a phrase that translates a Greek word that refers to the abrupt death of an unborn child through abortion, miscarriage, or stillbirth. Paul seems to be stressing the sudden, unexpected nature of his conversion as well as the fact that it came to one who was spiritually dead. Jesus did not choose someone who was on his way to faith or who was merely indifferent to the gospel. Instead, He chose perhaps the unlikeliest candidate of all as His servant, one who hated Him and all that He stands for” (Ligonier devotional: “[The Least of the Apostles](#)”; 1Cor.15:8-11).

To be sure, Paul regarded his apostolic calling to be chronologically “[l]ast of all” (vs.8) the apostles – too late to be one of the Twelve. But he also considered himself to be “*the least of the apostles*” (vs.9), and “*unworthy to be called an apostle*” (vs.9), because he “*persecuted the church of God*” (vs.9). Although Paul was devoutly religious (Phil.3:5-6), and believed in God, he came to realize that he was in desperate need of God’s forgiveness – that all his “good works” and religious devotion could not save him.

1 Tim 1:15 ~ “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.”

1 Tim 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.” (KJV)

1 Tim 1:15 ~ “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst.” (NIV)

Eph 3:8 ~ “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”

Gal 1:13 ~ “For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.”

1 Tim 1:13 ~ “... formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent ...”

Acts 22:4 ~ [to the Jews in Jerusalem] “I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women”

Acts 26:9-11 ~ [to king Agrippa and his court] “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

➤ **Acts 9:1-8** records Christ’s appearance to Saul (see also Acts 22:1:11; 26:12-18). Before his conversion, Saul was a Pharisee and a leading persecutor of New Testament Christians (“*breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord*”; vs.1). In fact, when he was a young man, he held the coats of those who stoned Stephen and gave his approval to his death (Acts 7:58-8:1). On his way to Damascus, to find and imprison any Christian he found, Saul was knocked down and blinded by a light from heaven. When he heard a voice saying, “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*” (vs.4). He asked, “*Who are you, Lord?*” (vs.5). The voice replied, “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting*” (vs.5).

It is imperative to notice that Jesus takes it personal when His disciples are persecuted (“*persecuting me ... whom you are persecuting*”). This should be a sobering warning for anyone – whether professing non-Christian or Christian – who seeks to harm or deceive Christians (see Matt.18:7; 23:13-15; Jd.1:11-13)!

Jesus then ordered Saul to go into Damascus and there in the synagogues, after he had regained his sight, he began to preach that Jesus “*is the Son of God*” (Acts 9:20). Speaking of Paul, Jesus said to Ananias, “*he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name*” (9:15-16).

➤ Although his spiritual birth was late, it was not too late! “*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain*” (vs.10). This statement is true of every genuine believer. For no one is good enough, or can do enough good, to merit God’s saving grace (see Rom.3:10-12, 23; Eph.2:5, 8-9). Salvation is completely a work of God’s grace, and absolutely not something that anyone deserves or earns.

On the other hand, It is important for us to remember that no one can out sin God's grace. Even though Paul felt tremendous guilt and sorrow for what he had done, he knew God's grace covered all sin. That is, as Paul is a great example of, no one is too bad – no one has sinned too much – for God to be able to forgive and save (conversely, no one is so good that they do not need God's grace/forgiveness).

Rom 5:20-21 ~ “Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

1 John 1:9 ~ “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

✓ Illust: Hymn: “Grace Greater than our Sin”

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled.

Refrain:

*Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.*

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face, Will you this moment His grace receive?

(written by Julia Johnston in *Hymns Tried and True*, 1911)

➤ But Paul also knew that God's grace was not cheap and “*not in vain*” (vs.10). Paul's faith was neither superficial nor disingenuous. In fact, the apostle Paul “*worked harder than any of*” the other apostles (vs.10; see 2Cor.11:23-12:12). The power of God's grace was at work in his life. He was not working *for* his salvation, rather his salvation was working *in* him! That is why he is quick to add, “*though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me*” (vs.10). The very same grace that worked so powerfully to save him was at work in him to obey God's commands.

D. The proof of the GOSPEL (vs.11)

➤ Paul now turns back to the Corinthian believers. He once again reminds them that it is the Gospel that he, and the other apostles (“*I or they*”; vs.11), “*preach*” (vs.11; see vs.1), and it was the Gospel that they “*believed*” (vs.11; see “received” vs.1). Without the resurrection there would be no Gospel – no forgiveness of sin, no deliverance from God's wrath, and no eternal life. But because Jesus is raised from the dead all who believe in Him are saved in Him.

Rom 1:16 ~ “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Rom 4:24-25 ~ “... It will be counted to us [as righteousness] who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”

Rom 6:4, 9-11 ~ “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ... ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Rom 8:11 ~ “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”

➤ There is only one true Gospel – and it centers on the sinless life, substitutionary death, and supernatural resurrection of Jesus Christ! There is no Gospel in a sinful Savior and no Gospel in a dead Savior. While the messengers of the Gospel change, the Gospel itself never changes.

The preacher's responsibility is not to “dress up” or disguise the Gospel; it is not to make the Gospel more palatable or “politically correct.” The preacher's main job is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the fulfillment and culmination of all Scripture. He is not to preach himself. He is not to preach political/social issues, secular psychology, or worldly philosophies. He is not to be a comedian or entertainer. He is called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 1:23 ~ “... we preach Christ crucified ...”

1 Cor 2:2 ~ “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Gal 1:6-9 ~ “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – ⁷not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.”

➤ The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not an irrelevant or peripheral message. It is first and foremost of Christian doctrine. It is the very heart of Christianity. A Gospel-less Christianity is a Christless Christianity; a false (cultic) religion deceitfully masquerading as Christianity. Preachers who preach as false gospel are false preachers, and “Christians” who believe a false gospel are non-Christians. The Gospel is the crux of salvation.

Conclusion

➤ The cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ was central to the apostles' preaching and ministry. They faithfully – relentlessly, unashamedly, and courageously – proclaimed “*that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures*” (vs.3-4).

John 11:25-26 ~ “Jesus said to [Martha], ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’”