

“The Gospel is Jesus Christ”

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Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Somehow within our thinking, we have reduced the gospel to a production or tract or system of presentation when the gospel is a person, NOT a presentation or program. First Corinthians 15:1-4 lays out the basic components of what constitutes the gospel. The gospel of grace, of God and of Jesus Christ communicates a singular idea and that is . . . the gospel is a person, and that person is Jesus Christ. The gospel is gracious because Jesus voluntarily took upon Himself human nature in order that He might, by becoming the second Adam, become humanity's race representative (Rom. 5:12-21). He did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He became sin, who knew no sin (Heb. 4:15), in order that we might become righteous before His Father (2 Cor. 5:21).

Verses 3 and 4 tell us that He died in behalf of sin. The sin issue presupposes that a need existed significant enough to warrant an action by God in our behalf. If sin was capable of resolution by human effort, then the incarnation and cross were unnecessary. But sin does exist. Like the presence of God, sin does not need verification. Its existence can be justifiably shown. What He did in His death was unattainable by any other death. His resolve secured our end.

However, His death is a part of a larger thought. Attached to His death is a confirming statement, He was buried. The burial of Jesus confirms that He was dead. The resurrection of Christ sustains His death. In its absence, all bets are off. His resurrection stamps a “yes” to the promises of God. Resurrection says the grave is not the end. Resurrection continues a story whose story line reads “the best is yet to come.”

There is, in addition, another thought. He appeared to many. His appearance tells us that these are not mere words that cannot be supported by reality or fact. You can have the death of an idea, but we are not talking about theories or formulas or programs or hypothetical conjecture. We are talking about an individual, someone who possessed flesh and blood. This one died and was buried and rose on the third day and appeared to many.

When we speak of the gospel, we are not speaking of His church (which is a consequence of the gospel), or a method of presentation (which is perhaps necessary, but NOT the gospel). When we speak of the gospel, we are speaking of Jesus Christ. When we share the gospel, we share Christ. We might seek an indirect approach of sharing Christ when we invite people to a church service, but let us not confuse or dilute the gospel by thinking this is the

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gospel. Jesus Christ *is* the gospel. It is for this reason we say, “Christianity is not a religion it is a relationship, and this relationship is with a person and His name is Jesus.” Jesus Christ is Christianity.

Although the need of man is great, because of the sin issue and the penalty against it, the real attraction in Christianity is not our deliverance from sin, but our relationship to Christ. Christ is the attraction. He brings hope to the despairing, healing to the diseased, and wholeness to the dysfunctional. He is glorious and great. He is incapable of deficiency and sufficient for our inability. He is the light in darkness, the water that quenches thirst, and the food that satisfies hunger. He is an unfailing companion and faith filled friend. The gospel deals with sin, but it is not just from sin we are rescued. The gospel is good news not simply because we are saved from sin. The gospel is good news because of who Christ is. He *is* the good news. It is when we see Him that evangelization becomes spontaneous and this is because of the overflow. Sharing anything other than Christ is empty and unfortunate. So . . . as we think of the gospel, let us begin to think biblically. Let us begin to think “The Gospel *is* Jesus Christ.” And let us in thinking this, see who He is and then what he has done. Let us make this the centerpiece of our verbal and visual “gospel” communication.