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 Title: The Gospel is Jesus Christ  
 Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11  
 Theme: The gospel is inseparably linked to Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ confirms and validates the power of the gospel to fulfill what it promises: His victory over sin's penalty, power, and presence.

#### Why am I teaching this? - A.I.M.

- To know the gospel is Jesus Christ and has been affirmed by eyewitnesses.
- To choose Him for the saving of your eternal soul as many have before you.
- To experience His love for you and your love for Him.

#### Why is this important?

In its absence, saving faith cannot exist. To miss this point is to miss the gospel. It is this message that brings hope, healing, and wholeness to the despairing, diseased, and dysfunctional. This is the message the dying need to hear; "Jesus Christ died for their sins, was buried, was raised, and appeared to many."

#### Introduction:

Corinth was a major port which also commanded the land route from the Peloponnesus peninsula to central Greece. An industrial and ship-building centre, it was also a centre for the arts. Its inhabitants came from far and wide. In this epistle, Paul answers two letters he has received concerning lack of harmony and internal strife in the Corinthian church, a church he had founded. Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus (now in Turkey), probably in 57 AD.

It is important to remember the apostle is addressing issues as they existed within the Corinthian fellowship. So far the apostle has addressed ...

Division	1-4
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Lord's Supper	11
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He now addresses the issue of the gospel and resurrection. In light of what we have already seen inside of the letter it is safe to assume that a problem existed within the church concerning the gospel and the resurrection.

The issue is not in response to a question, but rather a concern that has been brought to the apostle's attention. The issue is significant enough to warrant a response.

It is important to remember that these two thoughts are not separate but one and the same. The gospel is Jesus Christ and His credibility as King of kings and Lord of lords is validated by His resurrection from the dead. Because Jesus Christ *is* the gospel, the gospel is a living, breathing, life-transforming power.

Are these truths still problematic within the larger scope of professing Christianity? Unfortunately, yes. The gospel is still under siege. And the resurrection from the dead is still being denied. It is in the absence of the gospel that resurrection truth has no basis. And in the absence of the gospel, its good news quality is completely lost. As Paul unpacks the truth of the resurrection we cannot afford to separate it from the gospel and neither one of these ideas have any life apart from Jesus Christ for Jesus Christ *is* the gospel.

The direct issue is not the gospel, but the resurrection. The gospel becomes the issue because of its immutable link to the resurrection.

#### What are the dangers?

There are two extremes we wish to avoid. The first is in making the gospel so vague that it has no substance. Simply believing is not the gospel. Belief or faith never operates in a vacuum. Belief or faith must have an object and the object of faith must be valid. The second is in making the gospel so complicated that it becomes law. The gospel is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Paul's short treatise helps us understand the biblical gospel.

#### What are some seductive deceptions?

In our teaching of the gospel we must shy away from getting snagged by either "Easy Believism" or "Lordship Salvation." The one asks too little and the other asks too much.

Notice how Paul lays out his argument.

- I. The gospel's origin (vv. 1-3a).

The gospel did not originate with Paul (vv. 1, 3). This addresses the source of the gospel.

- A. I preached to you the gospel you received (v. 1).

The preaching of Christ crucified forms the content of Paul's entire preaching ministry. This is what He preached.

- B. I delivered to you what I also received (v. 3)

Both words ("preached/delivered") used by the apostle carry an air of authority. Paul drives them back to first truths, that of first importance. This is what forms the foundation for all that we believe and is the power behind all that we

do. “The words may indicate priority either in time or importance.” (Rogers and Rogers, 439).

Although both verses use the Aorist tense, verse 11 uses the Present tense. “The present denotes a constant fact.” (Rogers and Rogers, 440). Paul preached Christ crucified. His message was constant and consistent.

Because Paul received this message it presupposes that someone was transmitting the message. Herein is the function of this fellowship. We must persistently and continuously be communicating the gospel.

“The Church is the repository and the transmitter of the good news.” (William Barclay, 1 Corinthians, 159).

In both verses the apostle uses the word paralambano. Both speak of something that he (or they) received at the front end of his “preaching” ministry. This same idea is present in Galatians 1:8 and 9. It is the same idea found in Jude 3. There is a posit of truth that we have received. It is not open to debate, redaction, and modification. The gospel is to be preached, not altered.

Notice the idea presented in these two thoughts. Paul received it from someone and he in turn gave it to another. The whole idea of faith transmission is intrinsically linked to the Christian faith. Missions is a natural and spontaneous expression of all New Testament Churches. Those of us who are saved and make up the fellowship of this church are a part of a chain whose links reach back past the apostle Paul and now reach forward into an unknown future. Our link, though temporal, is a part of an eternal chain.

- This link is to be global
- This link is to be in our community
- This link is to be at our job
- This link is to be in our homes

## II. The gospel’s acceptance (vv. 1, 2, 11).

Belief or faith is defined (vv. 1, 2). Verse 11 speaks of the Corinthians believing. The word “believe” speaks of a past fact. The [tense] points to the fact of belief.

### A. You received the gospel

This speaks of a point in time action when they received the gospel. Scripture gives us two word pictures describing faith.

1. It is a gift received (John 1:12; Rom. 6:23)
2. It is an object believed (John 3:16)

The gift was extended and they received it (see also John 1:12). Has there been a point in time when you received the gospel? In having this discussion, it is important to remember that remembering a point in time is not what saves you. The blood of Jesus Christ saves you. You might have forgotten this point in time, but you are standing in the gospel.

#### B. You stand in the gospel

The word “stand” is in the perfect tense. The perfect tense speaks of a past fact with present results. They had begun standing when they received the gospel, and they are continuing to stand in the gospel initially received. A gospel that does not change your life is not a biblical gospel. Life transformation from the new birth is as inevitable as light from the sun or wet from water.

#### C. You are saved by the gospel

“Present passive indicates a continuous action which was being performed on the believers.” (Rogers and Rogers, 439). The consequence of this initially receiving was their rescue from the penalty, power, and presence of sin.

It is a tragedy of our faith when we see only our rescue from the penalty of sin and not the implications of the cross in the areas of its power and presence.

William Barclay states this idea well when he says,

“It is not something which is ever completed in this world. It takes another world to open to any man the full treasures of salvation. One of the greatest characteristics of the Christian life is just its limitlessness. There are so many things in this life which we can exhaust, but the meaning of salvation is something which a man can never exhaust.” (William Barclay, 1 Corinthians, 159, 160).

Leon Morris correctly notes how,

“We do not exhaust the meaning of salvation by our experience when we first believe.” (Morris, 1 Corinthians, 200).

This is why we preach “Christ crucified.” This is why we give our efforts to knowing “who He is, what He has done, and who we are in Him.” We believe the enjoyment of the cross and ministry overflow is a result of the gospel’s ever expanding understanding.

##### i. With the result that you will hold fast to the gospel

“The condition is assumed as a reality.” (Rogers and Rogers, 439). We have a tendency to read tentative or uncertainty in this. The issue is not whether they are standing, but whether or not they have received the gospel.

Those who have received the gospel hold fast to Him. This moves our faith from casual and non-consequential to intentional and transforming. The power and impact of the gospel cannot be overestimated.

### 1. Unless your faith is empty

Paul makes profession and perseverance inseparable. No saved individual is absent of the fruit of perseverance.

“Not that Paul really entertains this as a serious possibility, but if the denial of the Resurrection is carried to its logical conclusion, then it would be shown that their belief was fruitless, perhaps because it was exercised superficially or ‘at random.’” (Rogers and Rogers, 439).

### What are the dangers?

What about those individuals who profess Christ but have no outward evidence of this inward change? Is it possible to return the gift or reject the object and thus lose what was once possessed? First, the biblical seed will germinate but all grow at different rates. So it is impossible for us to be absolute in our judgment of others. In fact, I do not believe we can make final judgment on anyone. Second, if salvation is me securing for myself the object or the gift, then I could lose what was once secured. But . . . and this is a significant contrast, the gospel is not about me and my work but about Him and His work. Who I am in relation to the gospel is secondary and a consequence. He is the cause and I am the consequence. It is a glorious consequence to be sure, but I am the benefactor of His grace work. Whatever “holding fast” I appear to be doing is simply because He is holding me to Himself.

### III. The gospel’s content (vv. 3, 4).

The object of saving faith is defined (vv. 3, 4). The “for” of verse 3 explains what the gospel is. Remember, the gospel *is* Jesus Christ.

#### A. He died

Notice the purpose of this death. “He died for our sins.” The word “for” means “for the sake of, in behalf of, in place of.” The emphasis is on substitution. The death Christ died was so that I would not have to. This is why His death removes the penalty, power, and presence of sin from those who believe.

#### 1. The purpose of His death

This also addresses an implication as to why Christ had to die. There was an issue that could not be resolved by man’s ability. The ability to address sin is outside of man’s ability. In the absence of His divine intervention we would have faced an insurmountable obstacle.

- There was a debt we could not pay (redemption)
- There was a wrath we could not satisfy (propitiation)
- There was a gulf we could not span (fellowship)
- There was a war we could not end (reconciliation)
- There was a flaw we could not fix (justification)

Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He died and through His death our sin issue was addressed, answered, and resolved. Praise the Lord.

## 2. The promise of His death

Everything happened “according to the Scripture.” This is the centerpiece of biblical revelation. Everything from Genesis through Revelation preaches Christ crucified. What is the core of biblical revelation? Jesus Christ is the core of biblical revelation. His cross work in behalf of His people is the centerpiece of all biblical revelation.

Let us not kid ourselves. We might be about all things good with coffee, cookies, kool-aid, and cotton candy, but if we are not about Christ crucified, then we have replaced the best with the good and we have gone from God worship to man worship.

## 3. The priority of His death

This is the centerpiece of Christianity. This is the object from which all things Christian radiate. Christ crucified. Remember 1:17 and 2:2?

- The preaching of the cross is to those who perish foolishness.
- I determined to know nothing but Christ crucified.

All things good must always bow before the best and Christ crucified is the “best.” He is the spring from which flows the Christian hope. He is the pinnacle of theology’s pyramid.

### B. He was buried

Both His death and burial are past facts. But the resurrection is a present reality. Paul shifts from using the aorist tense to that of the perfect tense with His rising.

### C. He was raised

“The perfect emphasizes that Christ is risen and indicates a continuing condition which has given rise to a new state of affairs. Christ continues in the risen state.” (Rogers and Rogers, 439).

“He was raised is passive, which puts stress on the activity of the Father in raising the Son (v. 15). And it is perfect, which points to the permanent state; it ‘sets forth with the utmost possible emphasis the abiding results of the event.’ Christ continues in the character of the risen Lord. The perfect tense is used in this way six more times in this chapter (vv. 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20), and once only in all the rest of the New Testament.” (Morris, 1 Corinthians, 202).

It is impossible for us to fully comprehend the implications of His resurrection both theological and practical, but the impact is truly life altering. Because He lives, the problems of life are incapable of crippling the people of God.

#### D. He appeared

This is also an aorist tense. His appearance was not simply a dream, vision, or illusion. There was “body” to His appearance before men.

All four of these elements are necessary for the gospel. In the absence of these four elements, it breaks down. Had He not rise from the dead, then we serve a fallen Savior. Had He not appeared to the many, then we could never be sure that it actually happened. Each part validates the other parts.

#### IV. The gospel’s eyewitness (vv. 5-11).

The witnesses to the gospel (vv. 5-11)

The living Christ has verifiable evidence. People actually saw Him embodied. Remember, the gospel is Jesus Christ. This gospel is provable.

- A. 500 witnesses (v. 6)
- B. Peter, James and the 12 apostles (vv. 5, 7)
- C. Paul (vv. 9-11)

The listing of Peter, James, and Paul is intentional. All three doubted and made tremendous failures, but God, in grace, appeared to each and embraced all.

#### 1. His humility of self (vv. 8, 9)

Paul’s reference to having been “born out of due time” . . .

“is probably his comment on the unique way he became an apostle. Unlike the other apostles, who had the benefit of an initial training period with Christ, Paul became an apostle abruptly, with no opportunity for earthly contact with Christ or His teaching.” (Nelson’s Study Bible).

“The thought is to emphasize Paul’s weakness and his dependence on God’s grace.” (Rogers and Rogers, 440).

## 2. His dependency on God (v. 10)

In the passage he uses two strong contrasting conjunctions. The first is his contrast to others and the second is his contrast to the grace of God.

- a. This dependency does not exclude human activity
- b. This dependency does not exclude divine sufficiency

How do we balance these two ideas? Philippians 2:12 and 13 provides a picture of this along with Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 3:3, 4. The one flows from the other, and the other is the channel through which the grace of God is manifested. Divine sufficiency always flows through and produces human activity. Grace works. “His grace to [Paul] was not without effect.” Paul labored to the point of exhaustion, but it was God working in and through the apostle.

“His word for *worked* means ‘labor to the point of weariness.’ Deissmann holds that the expression ‘came originally from the joyful pride of the skilled craftsman.’” (Morris, 1 Corinthians, 204). The intent is not only Paul’s part, but on the magnitude of God’s grace in and through Paul.

Grace living is not a license to sin or a liberty for sloth. As a grace celebrating fellowship we should picture Christ in our love for one another. This should be a dynamic fellowship, a family that pulsates with life.

## 3. His unity with others (v. 11)

Paul saw himself as a part of a much larger whole. Other people besides the apostle were preaching Christ crucified. The gospel Paul preached is the gospel he received, preached by others, and believed by the Corinthian fellowship. There is nothing novel or creative here. Our message continues to be Christ crucified.

APPLICATION: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Share the gospel, but share Christ. The gospel is not abstract or intangible. The gospel *is* Jesus Christ. With whom can you share Him?
2. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin, then we invite you to receive Him today.
3. See how He is to impact every area of your being and life. He is worth finding, celebrating, and declaring to every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. All of this begins locally and nationally, from the home and in the work place.