

Living in the Truth of the Gospel – for Real

1 Corinthians 15:1-34

Pastor Guy Gray

The Heart and Soul of the Gospel

Hold on to your faith. Get a tight grip on the Gospel of Christ. Don't ever let go. Keep pressing into the very center of Gospel truth and take your stand there. Build your life there. This is the message of 1 Corinthians. The church at Corinth had become misguided. It was a church that was being more influenced by the messages and values of the fallen culture around it than by the Lord Jesus. So Apostle Paul writes to get them back on track. He does this by point them right back to the heart and soul of the Gospel—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In chapter one he began by pointing them to the Cross. The Cross is the power of God to those who are being saved. The Cross cuts through all the “wisdom” of human achievement and status. The Cross speaks of God's work for us that we could not do for ourselves. The Cross is the gift of God's grace to broken, lost lives. Then, after looking at all sorts of the specific dysfunctions of this church, through the many chapters of Corinthians, Paul returns to his primary focus in chapter 15. Once again he speaks of the death of Christ and this time he ties it together with the resurrection. Paul presents these two truths, the death and resurrection of Christ, as the very heart and soul of the Gospel. This is far more than a little refresher course in basic Christian truth. This is a passionate plea to return to the very center of the Gospel and to truly live in the truth of it. This is the single most important thing that we can do as followers of Christ. We must take a firm stand at the center of the Gospel, or we will be swept up in the values and views of the fallen culture in which we live. We are presented every day with countless “alternative spiritualities” that influence our heart and mind away from the pure Gospel of Christ. These washed out, Christ-less, human centered spiritual views didn't start with Oprah Winfrey and her parade of “new age” spiritual advisors. They were around at Corinth as well. So Scripture responds by pointing us back to the death and resurrection of Jesus as the bedrock foundation of our Christian faith and life.

If Christ was not Raised—We're in Big Trouble!

Living the Christian life in this world is a matter of living in sacrificial love. This is the way of the Cross. We live this way because it is the way of Jesus. We live this way because we have been freely forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ. We live as recipients of grace and we want to see that grace extended through our lives to others in this broken, fallen world. To live this way requires faith in Christ the risen Lord. We must truly hold a worldview that sees beyond the grave and beyond our experience in “this life”. Living the Christian life in this world makes no sense unless we believe we will share a life beyond the grave with Jesus. If we don't believe this, then we of all people are to be most pitied (15:28). If we don't believe this, then we should simply “eat and drink for tomorrow we die” (15:32). But if we do believe in real life beyond the grave with Jesus and if we believe that our actions in this life will impact our life in eternity, then everything changes. This is crucial. Some people at Corinth were either denying or de-emphasizing the resurrection of Jesus. They wanted to put the focus of Christian faith elsewhere. They said, “Hey, it's just not that important if Jesus literally rose from the dead.” But this is nonsense! If Christ has not been raised, we are dead in our sins, there is no hope for life beyond the grave and there is no reason to live the way of selfless love in this world.

It's Way More Than a Miracle

The resurrection of Jesus was more than a resuscitation of someone who had died. The resurrection of Jesus was more than that—more than even a “miracle”. It was the defeat of death itself and the beginning of a whole new creation. This is what we learn in 1 Corinthians 15. The whole chapter is designed to give us real hope. Scientists are trying to find ways to extend life in this world—100, 200, 300 years of life? They say it

might soon be possible, but who cares... because still, you die. Still this broken world is filled with pain and injustice. But the resurrection of Jesus is actually the pinnacle of the plan of God for the defeat of sin, death, evil, injustice and all sorrow. This is real. Do you believe it? Do you live like you believe it? Do you live as if this world was the best of all possible worlds and this life is your best shot at happiness? Read 1 Corinthians 15. Think it through. Hold tight to the full truth of the Gospel. Let it impact your heart, mind and choices everyday in this life, as you live in hope of the life to come!

An Opportunity for Reflection

This week, read through 1 Corinthians 1-34 each day. Spend time praying, meditating and journaling about this text. Allow the Lord to speak truth into your life.

River West Happenings...

Thursday April 10th Foundations: Sharing Your Faith in Real Life, 7-8:30pm @ RW

Learn how to share your faith with friends, family and others you meet along the way. Presented by Daniel Harkavy & Brad Pease

Saturdays, RWXC - River West X Country-meet at RW Parking lot @ 8:00am

Check out the information table in the Fellowship Hall today! For more information contact Scott Thompson @ 635.9574 or Kara Bigelow @ 407.0224

Saturday, April 12th Freshman & Sophomore Girls Spring Thing 5:00-11:00pm @ Hannah Anderson's Home

Freshman & Sophomore girls are invited to spend a fun and informative evening with Gina Kulper talking about the differences of how the world influences young women to think about their bodies vs. how God sees them. For more information or to RSVP, contact Hannah Anderson @ 697.3396 or Jillian Moyle @ 245.8196

Sunday April 13th—Baptism Service 7:00pm @ RW

Baptism is an exciting and important step in the lives of believers. Come join us as people make this outward display of the inward change that has taken place in their hearts. If you are interested in Baptism or have questions about what Baptism is contact Adam at 699.2226 or adam@riverwest.org.