

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

What is the Gospel & Why is It Important?

I Corinthians 15:1-8

¹ What is the gospel and why is it important? The Bible passage today helps answer those questions. Let look at First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 1 through 8. ²

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ¹ ³

After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last

¹ v1-5.

of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.²

The gospel is God's way of bringing a lost and dying world back to Himself. Verse 2³ tells us it is the way God planned for people to be saved. So it's important for us to know what it is and how God designed for it to be presented.⁴

So, this is . . .

I. What the Gospel Is

What the gospel is.⁵ Let's look at the word "gospel".⁶ The word **gospel**, in the original language,⁴ means "the good news" or the "good message". It was an announcement of a good message.

The background of the Old Testament echoed this idea. In Isaiah, chapter 52, verse 7, it says, **How**

² v6-8.

³ v2 - By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

⁴ εὐαγγέλιον.

beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news ⁵ .

I believe the New Testament concept was influenced from Israel's neighbor, Syria. When soldiers went into battle couriers would be sent periodically from the front lines to inform the kings and the people how the battle was progressing. ⁷ A favorable report of victory was the "good news"; this word. So, **the gospel is a victory message!** ⁸

Keep in mind **who God is.** ⁹ He existed before anything else. ¹⁰ His might and majesty are beyond anything you can even imagine. ¹¹ He created everything you have experienced or know about. ¹²

The gospel is the story about how this God acted in history to redeem people from their sin back to Himself! This is how He did it! ¹³

God Himself became a man! Christians call this fact the Incarnation. Philippians, chapter 2, verses 6

⁵ This word is in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

through 8, Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! ¹⁴

Verse 3 in our passage today ⁶ as well as verse 8 in the Philippian passage just quoted ⁷; **that man died on a cross!** ¹⁵

Then, in verse 4, ⁸ **He was buried** in a borrowed grave. ¹⁶

Then, also in verse 4, ⁹ on the third day, **He was raised from the dead!** ¹⁷

Then, recorded in verses 5 through 8, ¹⁰ **that resurrection was proven by numerous appearances:**

⁶ I Corinthians 15:3 - For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . .

⁷ Philippians 2:8 - he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!

⁸ v4 - . . . that he was buried . . .

⁹ v4 - . . . that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures . . .

Peter, then the 12 Apostles, then over 500 people at the same time, then James, then the apostles again and, then, Paul.

The gospel is the victory message to us of what God did to redeem you from your sin back to Him. ¹⁸

Now . . .

II. How It is Proclaimed

How it is proclaimed. ¹⁹

Verse 1 ¹¹ tells us **it is to be preached!** ¹² ²⁰ This word is the verb form of the word for gospel. ²¹ Then, **the gospel is received;** ¹³ “intimately associated with what is received”. ²²

How do you receive it? ²³

¹⁰ v5-8 - and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

¹¹ Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

¹² εὐαγγελίζω. related to the word gospel = εὐαγγέλιον.

¹³ παραλαμβάνω.

You take your stand on it! ¹⁴ **You commit yourself to it!**

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Then, in verse 2, **you hold firmly to it** ¹⁵ ₂₅ and **trust in it!** ¹⁶ ₂₆

An example of the Lord's salvation pattern is found in Acts, chapter 18, verse 8, **Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.** That's God's plan for salvation! The gospel is presented. Then it's heard and accepted by faith. Then it is to be responded to by you being baptized! ₂₇

So, how are we to respond to this today? Notice . . .

¹⁴ ἵστημι.

¹⁵ κατέχω.

¹⁶ ἐπιπιστεύω.

III. The Evidence of the Gospel's Importance

The evidence of the gospel's importance. ²⁸

The gospel is to be proclaimed today as you share it with other people. ²⁹ Second Timothy, chapter 4, verse 2, Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season . . . ³⁰ If you present it, people will respond to it because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. ¹⁷ ³¹

The gospel is proclaimed today by your participation in the ordinances of the church. ³²

Notice how it is proclaimed in the Lord's Supper.

The bread represents the Lord's body, His flesh. ³³ With the bread, you are reminded and proclaim that God became a man. ³⁴

The fruit of the vine represents His blood. It is used to remind you of His death on the cross. You proclaim that death until He comes again! ³⁵

¹⁷ Romans 1:16.

The other ordinance is **Christian baptism**.³⁶ It is total immersion in water.³⁷ It symbolizes the Lord's death, burial and resurrection; the gospel message.³⁸

When you participate in this ordinance you portray your own death to your old life, burial of the old life and a resurrection to the new life in Christ. It also proclaims your confidence in your own resurrection!

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The resurrection of our Lord is the crowning point in the gospel message. Without the resurrection, the gospel is somewhat pointless. But with the resurrection of the Lord a reality, everything else fits in place!

How about responding to that saving gospel message right now!

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