

The Definition Of The Gospel

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (KJV)

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

I am amazed how many people believe and or try to convince their children to believe that bunnies lay eggs, but can't come to grips that a man by the name of Jesus died and rose again from the grave!

Nowhere in history has anyone been able to prove that eggs come from rabbits anymore then they have proven there is a fat, red suited, bearded man who lives at the North Pole and travels around the world in one night in a sleigh, pulled by reindeer and gives presents to every good little boy and girl.

- I knew Santa was not real as a boy because my older brothers were always bad and mean to me, but yet they got toys every year for Christmas!

But there is proof, not only in the Bible, but also it has been proven through artifacts, research, and scientific facts that Jesus Christ and His word is true and factual.

Not only has history provided answers about His resurrection, but also there is a host of people sitting here today who have experienced, felt, and house Jesus Christ in our lives!

I am not here today to try and convince you that there was a Jesus and that He died and rose again, because if our world will believe in a bunny who lays eggs and a fat man who flies in a sleigh, I don't need to prove there was and is a Jesus Christ.

But what I do want to do is declare unto you that regardless of your belief in Him, the fact is, Jesus is alive and well!

He is not some figment of our imagination, a cute fairy tale story, or just some great teacher of the past. But He is real, and He is powerful, and He is working among us even now!

From the beginning of the Word of God until the time of the Cross of Calvary, in the middle of the Word of God, everything points to His death, burial, and resurrection!

Everything from His resurrection to Revelation points us to Salvation through His resurrection and what will become of us if we do or do not receive the gospel, which is the death, burial, and resurrection!

"He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher."

"He never had a family or owned a home. He never set foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never wrote a book, or held an office. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness."

"While He was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends deserted Him. He was turned over to His enemies, and went through the mockery of a trial."

"He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had - His coat. When He died, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave."

"Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure for much of the human race.

All the armies that have ever marched, and all the navies that have ever sailed, and all the Parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings who ever reigned, - put together, . . . have not affected the life of mankind upon this earth as powerfully as this ONE SOLITARY LIFE!"

- The life of Jesus has affected the world in ways that are far too numerous to even fully comprehend.

His Life Changed The World

"Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about Him, Jesus of Nazareth has been the dominant figure in the history of Western Culture for almost twenty centuries."

"If it were possible, with some sort of super-magnet, to pull up out of that history every scrap of metal bearing at least a trace of His name, how much would be left?"

"It is from His birth that most of the human race dates its calendars, it is by His Name that millions curse and in His Name that millions (billions now) pray." (Jesus, Through the Centuries, by Jaroslav Pelikan)

"Into this world of craving for salvation the preaching of Christianity made its way. Long before it had achieved its final triumph by dint of an impressive philosophy of religion, its success was already assured by the fact that it promised and offered SALVATION- a feature in which it surpassed all other religions." (Mission and Expansion, Harnack)

In the 1st book of the Bible, Genesis, Jesus shows up as sin is birthed into a perfect world.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Exodus 15 tells the story of God's people who escaped the bondage of Egypt, which was a type of sin.

They came to the Red Sea and their past; the Egyptian army was pursuing them to take them back to Egypt as slaves.

God parted the Red Sea and they walked across on dry ground to the other side.

The Red Sea was a type of Christ burial and our baptism.

The enemy drowned in the Red Sea, when they were about to capture God's people.

When you have been baptized in Jesus Name for your sins, the blood of Jesus Christ will drown the enemies of your soul!

1 Corinthians 10:1-3 (KJV)

1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

Just as water saved Noah and his family as they floated in the ark, so does water save us today by being baptized with water in the Name of Jesus Christ!

1 Peter 3:20-21 (KJV)

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

In the New Testament John the Baptist was preaching baptism of repentance when Jesus showed up in:

Matthew 3:13-15

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Jesus was saying I want to fulfill what I have come to do. That is through my death, burial, and resurrection that I am going to deliver you from your past.

You are not going to simply be the old person you used to be, trying to be better.

- If that has been your experience in the past I will declare to you that you have not had a real experience!
- This is more than a new year's resolution; it's more than an old habit you have been trying to break!
- It's more than an old house that has been renovated that should have been torn down!

Instead of trying to remodel an old house I am going to flatten it, bury it under the Red Sea and build a new house, a new creature!

Everything in history hinged on this one event.

As great as His birth was, it was not as effective as His death.

The Cross was not a pretty way to die! It was open, exposed, bloody, and painful!

If that was not enough Jesus' particular cross was set on a hill overlooking a major road to and from the commerce of the day!

- His death was not done in private somewhere, where the family and close friends could only attend.

No it was done in the city square if you please!

The cross was the greatest symbol of God's love for humanity! It represents our shame, failures, sin, fears, disgrace, rejection, pain, and ridicule!

If you feel like you are a nobody, look at Calvary and see how much God paid to get you out of trouble!

If God has enough power to take the sting out of death and victory out of the grave, then He has the power to break your addiction!

- Deliver your children from drugs
- Provide food on your table
- Heal your body!

As great as His death was, it was not as great as His burial!

His burial allowed Him the ability to become something new!

There had to be death in order for there to be life

- The corn kernel has to die and be buried before it can produce a corn on the cob.
- One kernel produces hundreds more.
- But it does not sprout up as one kernel; it comes back in a bigger better form!

We need to understand that the cross is a type of death. And Jesus said if we do not take up our cross and follow Him that we cannot be with Him.

There are all kinds of crosses today, not the ones made of wood, metal, and plastic, but ones God gives us to help kill our flesh.

For some, it's your job. It may be that you know what you could be and the position you think you should be in.

Your boss is fighting you and co-workers don't like you, but God knows it's the very thing, at the moment, to keep your flesh crucified and on your knees talking to Him!

Maybe your cross is that you are single and you have yet to find companionship, but in spite of what your flesh wants, you see God working in your life.

Your cross, at the moment, is living without companionship.

I want to assure you that married folks did not get away without a cross.

For some of them, their cross is sitting right beside them this morning. Everybody thanks you're wonderful expect the person you are married to. Everyone applauds you except the person you come home to fight with.

- And like Paul, you ask: Lord, remove this thorn in my flesh!
- But God says: My grace is sufficient for you.

If your cross is not lying beside you at night, it might be the cross down the hall in the form of your children who are giving you fits, and trouble. Everything is going good, but your child is breaking your heart.

For some, their cross is their parents. They want to live for God but their parents are drunks who abuse them and keep them from the house of God!

His burial was shocking! The one who could heal the sick and raise the dead has died Himself?

But millions had died before Him and millions and been buried.

But His resurrection was beyond human ability!

No one had ever been resurrected by his or her own power!

But then again no one had ever been God in the flesh!

And just like your cross I mentioned earlier, Jesus' cross was temporary!

Your situation this morning whatever it is, has hope, because there will be a resurrection for those who choose to die out to their flesh in repentance, be buried with Him in baptism, and be resurrected through the power of the Holy Ghost!

Just like Paul said in...

Philippians 3:10

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

You can't know Him in the power of His resurrection until you know Him in His suffering!

You have to know that Jesus did not bring you to a death and burial to leave you in the grave, but He wants to finish the work He has begun in you!

The Gospel has two aspects:

- One is the work God has done FOR us! (Which is what we have been talking about!)
- The second is the work God does IN us!

Many teach that all you have to do to be saved is to follow a simple sinner's prayer of accepting Jesus Christ as your personal savior!

My question to that type of salvation is, where is the gospel in that? What are the death, burial, and resurrection in the sinner's prayer?

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

So how do we without physically dying on a cross, being buried in a tomb and hope to rise three days later as Christ did, experience the death, burial and resurrection?

We apply Christ's work in our lives through a salvation experience that parallels His work in a symbolic way.

Peter delivered the 1st Gospel message in:

Acts 2:23-24 (KJV)

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Then once they believed on this they were pricked in their hearts.

Acts 2:38 (KJV)

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The message of Easter:

You can bury your past, your sins, shame, embarrassment, or unhappiness by repenting of it to God, and washing it all away in baptism in Jesus name, and then have power through the Holy Ghost to never go back!