**THE GOSPEL I PREACHED TO YOU**

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Key Verses 1

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

**Introduction**



 In this passage Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel he preached to them, which they received. Some Corinthian believers denied the resurrection of body because of some false teachings in the church. Paul wanted them to remember the true gospel that they received and hold to it firmly. He confirmed that the gospel that he preached was the true gospel from God and mentioned the proofs of Jesus’ resurrection. Most of all through his personal testimony he testified how the grace of God that God gave to him in Risen Jesus worked so powerfully for him to do work harder than any other apostles. May God help us to know the power of the gospel and experience the power of the gospel.

1. **Read verses 1-4. Why did Paul remind Corinthian believers of the gospel? (1-2) What did he do with the gospel? (3a) What was the gospel message that Paul passed on to them? (3b-4)**

1-1. **Read verses 1-4.**

 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance[a]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

**1-2. Why did Paul remind Corinthian believers of the gospel? (1-2)**

 ***Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.***

* I want to remind you of the gospel : Corinthian believers needed to be reminded of the gospel because they were confused and even lost the gospel because of the false teaching in the church that denied the resurrection of body. Some of the believers followed their teaching.
* The gospel is the foundation of our faith and salvation. If we lose the gospel or hold wrong gospel, the foundation of our spiritual can be shaken and we can go wrong way. The sound and truthful gospel should be reminded as much as it is needed.
* The gospel I preached to you: The true gospel that Paul preached to them at first. Paul preached the gospel that he received from Jesus. It was the true gospel that God revealed to him. “**I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. 12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ”**.(Gal 1:11,12)
* which you received and on which you have taken your stand. Corinthians received the gospel and on which they stood. They grew spiritually, taking roots in the gospel. But now they became doubtful about the gospel and were about to follow different teaching. It was like changing the foundation of their spiritual life.
* People could say we could have different beliefs in the church but according to what we believe, our spiritual and practical life can be very different.
* By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Corinthian believers were saved through the gospel that Paul had preached. Only by the true gospel that God revealed can people be saved.
* We should know ‘this gospel’, the true gospel through the word of God.
* Corinthians were already saved if they believed the gospel as it was preached.
* We should hold firmly the gospel without loosening it. We should not follow other teachings that sounds attractive or reasonable based on human thoughts. There are so many challenges out there that could shake our faith in the gospel. But we should hold firmly to the gospel by faith to the end for our salvation.
* Otherwise, you have believed in vain. If we don’t hold to the gospel, many years of our life of faith is nothing. We don’t gain anything through our faith if we don’t believe the gospel.
* The foundation of our faith is to believe Jesus’ death and resurrection. When we hold the gospel of both Jesus’ death and resurrection firmly, our faith can be strong and we can overcome all challenges.

**1-3. What did he do with the gospel? (3a)**

***For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance***

* Paul passed the gospel that he had received. He didn’t add or change anything. I delivered exactly the same gospel that he had received from God.
* He didn’t keep the gospel for himself only. Rather he passed it on to others. All believers who received the gospel are commended to pass it on to others. The more we pass it, the more people can receive it.
* As of first importance – the gospel message is the most important message that we should preach. Gospel is the core of word of God. We should preach the gospel of Jesus as of first importance. If we don’t preach the gospel message, all our bible studies are meaningless.

**1-4. What was the gospel message that Paul passed on to them? (3b-4)**

 ***that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,***

* Paul here shares the facts of his gospel. There are three or four important elements in his gospel. The reason Jesus died, the fact that he really died and the unimaginable reality that he was raised from the dead. On top of them, they happened according to the scriptures, not by accident.

* First, the reason for Jesus’ death. Paul makes clear what Christ's mission and purpose were in this world. The Jewish people were expecting Christ to be a political kingdom of God in this world, starting with Christ in Israel.
* Paul's gospel tells a very different story about the Christ. He said that Christ died for our sins. Jesus came to open the way for the cursed people of every nation to enter God's kingdom where they will live forever.

* When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they sinned and brought the whole creation under the curse of death. Since then, mankind has been unable to escape from the power of death.
* God was the most heartbroken about it, so he decided to fix it by sending Jesus to die for our sins, providing atonement and redemption for us. It is a Good News!
* God does not want us it to be ruined forever. He loved the world so much that he sent his only begotten son to save whoever would believe on him, helping them crossover from death to life! Thank God. - John 5:24

* Second, Jesus was buried. It seems easy to overlook. There are some ideas that Jesus did something while his body was in the tomb, but we simply cannot be sure if Jesus did something outside of his body during that time. One thing we Christians believe is that his burial was also according to a scripture.
* It happened because he was ***really*** dead, beyond all doubt. Pilate was surprised to hear Jesus died so soon on the cross, but after his body was pierced by a spear the report was confirmed.
* Jesus the son of God, laid down his life as a ransom for many, and his burial with the secure tomb set the perfect stage for his resurrection despite religious leaders’ endeavor to seal it through guards. - John 12:24
* Third, Paul was so brief about Jesus' death and burial because he really intended to preach only about the resurrection.
* One day, Paul caused a riot by mentioning the resurrection of the dead in front of the Jewish court in Acts 23. It should be no surprise that the controversies about resurrection would spill over to the Christian communities too.
* To any logically thinking person(esp., Greek people), a resurrection of the dead was probably a very difficult thing to consider. So, Paul added the fact of Jesus' resurrection to his list of issues that are a matter of first importance.
* Job testified about his hope to see God in his flesh. Abraham had to believe God would raise the dead, or he would not have been able to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.
* King David mentioned of the resurrection of the Christ that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. Isaiah 26:19, says, “... your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy."
* Daniel wrote in Daniel 12:9 "many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

* Nobody can say Paul was preaching his own gospel or his private account of Jesus' resurrection.
* Paul was not making up the idea that Jesus rose from the dead, but sharing the same good news all the other apostles shared. The matter of first importance at this moment is that Jesus really did rise from the dead.
* In Jn 2, Jesus mentioned about destroying the temple and raise it again in 3 days, that was about his death and resurrection. Because it happened as he said, we trust that Jesus is alive and we have confidence that all his words are true!

* Why is that so important? Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures- Jesus died to pay the price of our sins. **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.(Romans 6:23)**
* He died to set us free from the judgment of sin and the power of sin through his death. It is because Jesus won the victory over sin and death. His resurrection gives us sure hope that there is life after death.
* If there is nothing to look forward too, then our life here on earth is meaningless. But because Jesus is alive, He is worthy of our allegiance. Swearing allegiance to a dead leader is useless, there is nothing they can do to help you. We also see that if Jesus rose from the dead, his other promises are trustworthy and sure.
* In all these things, Paul agrees and testifies that Jesus resurrection happened just as the Apostles testified and that his resurrection was in accordance with the scriptures that all Jewish people learned from their childhood. We can have confidence in their testimonies too.
* Fourth, According to the Scripture - Jesus’ death was the fulfillment of the word of God. It didn’t happen accidently. It happened according to God’s plan in the Scripture.
* He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures-Jesus rose from the dead with the power of resurrection. Through his resurrection he set us free from death and gave us eternal life with the hope of resurrection.

John 11:25-26 reads,

 “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?””

**2. Read verses 5-8. To whom did the risen Jesus appear in order? How were they changed through their witnessing the resurrection?**

2-1. **Read verses 5-8**.

 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

**2-2. To whom did the risen Jesus appear in order?**

* He appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve (Mt 28:8-10, Mk 16:14, Lk 24:33-36, John 20:19)  **“until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”** (Act 1:2,3)
* he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep- Among the witnesses, most of them were still alive. It was clear proof that Jesus resurrected and his resurrection was truthful fact not man made story. Corinthians could have chance to talk with them face to face and hear from them directly about Jesus’ resurrection.
* Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles: James was Jesus’ brother(Act 1:14) He might accept Jesus after seeing Jesus’ resurrection. All apostles refer to all apostles including 12 disciples and other disciples such as Barnabas.
* and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born- Jesus appeared to Paul directly. (Acts 9:1-10) ‘one abnormally born’ means a person who is not worthy. Paul humbled himself by calling him ‘one abnormally born’
* There were so many witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection. It means Jesus’ resurrection is absolutely true that no one could deny it.

**2-3. How were they changed through their witnessing the resurrection?**

* The disciples and other believers who witnessed Jesus became powerful witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection.
* Peter preached gospel message boldly before big crowd and he and John preached before Sanhedrin even risking their lives. (Acts 4:1-22)
* Apostle Paul converted after meeting risen Jesus and preached the gospel of Jesus to the point of death.
* Early Christians’ main gospel message was Jesus’ resurrection and they lived as witness of Jesus even sacrificing their lives with the hope of resurrection and Jesus’ second coming.
* The believers’ totally changed life and their powerful witnessing under severe persecution was the proof of Jesus’ resurrection.
* People who truly believe the resurrection of Jesus cannot but be changed and live different life. Faith in Jesus’ resurrection has life changing power.

**3. Read verses 9-11. Why did Paul call himself the least of the apostles? (9) What did Paul testify about his new life in Jesus? (10) How was he confident about what he preached? (11)**

**3-1. Read verses 9-11**.

 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

**3-2. Why did Paul call himself the least of the apostles? (9)**

 ***I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.***

* Paul considered him as the least of the apostles even though he was one of the greatest apostles. He even thought that he didn’t deserve to be called an apostle. He humbled himself deeply.
* ‘I persecuted the church of God’ – he humbled himself remembering what kind of person he was before Jesus appeared to him. He was enemy of God and tried to destroy the church, the body of Christ. This was serious sin before God that could cause God’s wrath.
* Paul knew that he was a terrible sinner and that he would end up being severely judged by God with eternal condemnation if Jesus had not appeared to him.
* When we remember what kind of sinners we were before Jesus visited us and what kind of grace we received from God, we become humble before God and man. If we have any hint of pride we should remember what kind terrible sinners we were and what would happen if God had not called us.

**3-3. What did Paul testify about his new life in Jesus? (10)**

 ***But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.***

* Apostle Paul was recognized as a great apostle. He did great works and achieved so many things. He preached the gospel covering vast regions and built so many churches. Most of new testaments are his writings. He could be recognized as the greatest apostle.
* But Paul said, “by the grace of God I am what I am’. Paul said he was able to do all the work by grace of God, not by his own ability or merits. God’s grace made him great apostle. Whatever we became or achieve we should remember that we are what we are by the grace of God.
* And when God’s grace is with us we can become great servants of God even though we might be weak and unable. Jesus’ disciples were uneducated young people but they became great disciples through God’s grace.
* His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – God’s grace to Paul had effect. God’s grace affected him greatly and worked in him effectively.
* God’s grace changes people and let them work for God. God’s grace is very vivid and powerful. God’s grace is revealed through the person’s character, life and his work.
* No, I worked harder than all of them - God’s grace let him work. Paul worked harder than all of other apostles. When God’s grace was with him, he did bear the grace by working hard responding to the grace. He didn’t make God’s grace in vain. He participated in Jesus’ suffering to preach the gospel and the grace of God, the power of resurrection made him so powerful and strong.
* When we decide to serve God’s will and obey God’s command by faith, his grace empower us to be able to do his will and obey his command and let us work hard to serve God’s will.
* Paul knew how to let the grace of God become effective in him and enjoy the grace of God.
* God is empowering us to do his work by giving us his grace. When we do his will by faith in his grace, his grace empower us to do great work of God.
* Yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. – Paul knew that he was able to do a lot of work because of the grace of God. God’s grace that was with him enabled him to do the great work that ordinary man couldn’t do.
* We are weak but the grace of God that is with us is so powerful. So by the grace of God we can do great work that we couldn’t do for ourselves. And God is so graceful and he pours his grace on us abundantly when we ask him.
* God gives us his grace in Jesus unlimitedly and we can do great works for God’s salvation work by the grace just as Paul did.
* Thank God for enabling us to do great work of God by giving us his grace abundantly in Jesus Christ.
* We have to give thanks to God only after we do some work remembering we did it by the grace of God.

**3-4. How was he confident about what he preached? (11)**

***Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.***

* Paul reminded Corinthians of the true gospel, the gospel of Jesus’ death and resurrection.
* He had absolute confidence about the gospel that he preached. He wanted the Corinthians to remember the gospel and hold to it firmly and stand on it because he knew that that was the only true gospel and by holding to the gospel they could be saved and live powerful life.
* Paul knew that Jesus’ resurrection is the essence of the gospel and he lived by the faith of resurrection and died by the faith.

**Conclusion**

 Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians of the true gospel of Jesus’ death and resurrection, especially the resurrection of Jesus by presenting many proofs of it.

There seems to be many different gospels. But only the gospel of Jesus’ death and resurrection can give us salvation and has power to change us and enable us to do great work of God. We should hold to the gospel firmly with absolute faith. May God give us much his grace in Jesus so that we may be able to work hard for his salvation work.

**One word : He was raised according to the Scriptures!**