

The Complete Gospel

Lesson for Sunday, May 14, 2023

REVIEW:

Genesis 1:31 – God created it all

Genesis 1:27 – We are all created in God’s image

Genesis 3:6 – The Fall changed it all

Genesis 3:15 – God’s promise of redemption

Genesis 12:2-3 – The Seed of Abraham

Genesis 49:10 – Judah’s Royal Seed

Exodus 12:23 – The Passover Lamb

2 Samuel 7:13 – The Line of David

Isaiah 53:5 – The Suffering Servant

Deuteronomy 7:9 – God is true to His Word

Matthew 1:16 – The time is fulfilled

John 19:30 – It is finished!

Matthew 28:5-6 – The Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – The Complete Gospel

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ We have seen God promise to reverse the curse (Gen. 3:15) and then keep His promise in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1, John 19, Matt. 28).
- ⇒ God has made a way for every sinner to be saved – by the Gospel. The most concise definition of the Gospel is found in 1 Corinthians 15. That is today’s text.

BIBLE STUDY: Paul and the Facts of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

1. The Facts Stated (vs. 3-4)
 - a. ILL: The most iconic character in the classic TV series, Dragnet, is Detective Sergeant Joe Friday, who is often quoted as saying “Just the Facts, Ma'am”.
 - b. It is important for us to remember that ***the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is a historical fact that happened at a real time in real history***. When presenting the simple Gospel, Paul keeps his readers focused on the facts.
 - c. Paul takes us to the cross (vs. 3)
 - i. The reality for Christ’s death (3a): *“how that Christ died...”*
 1. There can be no doubt that Jesus died. There were hundreds of witnesses to His death.
 2. He not only died but His dead body was pierced by a Roman spear to demonstrate once and for all that He was literally dead.
 - ii. The reason for Christ’s death (3b): *“according to the Scriptures”*
 1. Remember the Passover Lamb in Exodus? Every animal sacrificed in the Old Testament pointed forward to the cross of Christ.
 2. The entire Christian faith is predicated on Calvary. Wonderful passages such as Psalm 22 and 69 and Isaiah 53 all point to the cross.
 - d. Paul takes us to the cemetery (vs. 4a): *“and He was buried...”*
 - i. Throughout the New Testament, the apostles are always including Christ’s burial in their descriptions of the work accomplished by Jesus. This re-emphasizes the fact that Jesus was literally dead.
 - ii. This, too, was alluded to in the OT: Isaiah 53:9, Psalm 16:10.
 - e. Paul takes us to the calendar (vs. 4b-d):
 - i. A deed to be remembered (4b): *“He rose again...”*
 1. Paul states the fact of Jesus’s resurrection one more time! It is the best proved fact in history!
 2. John Phillips wrote, “There is more concrete evidence for the resurrection of Christ than there is for the conquest of Britain by Julius Caesar.”
 - ii. A day to be remembered (4c): *“on the third day...”*
 1. This is what Jesus had told His disciples He would do repeatedly!
 2. See Matthew 27:63; John 2:19.

3. In Matthew 27, Jesus's enemies even remember what Jesus had predicted (see vs. 63-64).
 - iii. A detail to be remembered (4d): *"according to the Scriptures"* – Paul was doing what we have been trying to do this entire series! He is reminding his readers that the Bible tells one story – the story of redemption!
2. The Facts Substantiated (vs. 5-8)
 - a. Seen by His friends (vs. 5): *"He was seen..."* – Paul continues to pile on the evidence by listing a specific number of eyewitnesses that could support his account!
 - i. By the man who denied (5a): *"Cephas"*
 1. Peter had a private and personal interview with the risen Lord in Luke 24:34.
 2. Jesus also saw Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee in John 21.
 3. The greatest evidence that Peter had seen the resurrected Christ was the change in Peter's life from that moment on!
 - ii. By the men He discipled (5b): *"then of the 12"*
 1. "The 12" was the general term for the complete body of the apostles.
 2. Interestingly, some of them seemed to be hard to convince, which adds to their credibility as witnesses.
 - b. Seen by His flock (vs. 6): *"After that, He was seen of above 500 brethren"* – The Bible does not say when this event took place, but Paul is quick to point out that at the time of his writing there were still many of the people that attended the event still alive and known by many who would support Paul's testimony.
 - c. Seen by His family (vs. 7a): *"After that, He was seen of James"* – James was one of Jesus's half-brothers. At one time, the family of Jesus thought Jesus was crazy (John 7:5). But James would soon become a major leader in the early church in Jerusalem. What caused this change? He saw the resurrected Christ.
 - d. Seen by His followers (vs. 7b): *"then all of the apostles"* – This seems to be a larger group than just the 12. The Bible does not clearly indicate who this group included.
 - e. Seen by His foe (vs. 8): *"And last He was seen of me also"*
 - i. Paul closes his argument by presenting himself as a witness.
 - ii. Paul had been the most bitter, energetic, and determined foe of Christianity on mission to stamp out what he considered a new cult.
 - iii. Then Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus and was forever changed. He went from Christianity's greatest foe to Christianity's greatest apologist.

CONCLUSION:

- ⇒ What is the Gospel? Based on 1 Corinthians 15, *the Gospel is the historical fact that Jesus died, was buried, rose from the dead and was seen.*
- ⇒ God fulfilled His promise originally made in Genesis 3:15 through the Lord Jesus Christ. All the work has been done. All that remains is a willingness on the part of the sinner to believe.
- ⇒ Close with Romans 10:9-10.

APPLICATION:

- ⇒ Romans 1:1 – Who was Paul?
 - A servant/slave of Jesus Christ.
 - An apostle of God (simply a messenger sent out by God).
 - Separated unto the Gospel. His message was the Gospel.
- ⇒ Everything Paul was, we are to be!
 - We have been saved by the Gospel.
 - We have been sent to a lost world by God with the message of the Gospel.