

Resurrection – What should we do about it?

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 15:1-11

If Christ did not rise from the dead, then the gospel would not be the power of God unto salvation. We would be, of all men, most miserable – to be pitied by others. See I Corinthians 15:12-19, 20-22; Romans 1:16; John 5:21-27; 11:25-26; I Thessalonians 4:13-18. How important is the gospel? If we believe in Christ's resurrection, what should we do about it?

The Gospel Imperatives – I Corinthians 15:1-2

- The gospel must be declared / preached – vs. 1 (delivered – vs. 3) and received by faith.
- The gospel will save you and cause you to stand.
- The gospel must be kept diligently in your mind. It is possible to believe the gospel in vain.

Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23 – The sower went forth to sow seed. There were four kinds of soil which represent four kinds of condition of the human heart:

- Wayside – hard-packed, never takes root
- Stony ground – shallow soil, takes root but dries up, can't endure the heat
- Thorny ground – crowded soil, too much competition by other distracting things
- Good ground – best receptive to the seed and produces fruit

The Gospel Truth: Foretold in the Old Testament – I Corinthians 15:3-4

- Christ died for our sins.
- He was buried and was in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights.
- He rose from the dead.

The Witnesses – I Corinthians 15:5-10

How many people saw the many infallible proofs of Christ's resurrection? – I Corinthians 15:5-8
cp. Acts 1:1-3

- Peter and all twelve of the disciples at one time (including Matthias – Acts 1:15-26)
- Five hundred brethren all at one time
- James then all the apostles at one time (This is more than the twelve. It includes others who were servants and preachers of the gospel – Luke 10:1-20.)

- Note that Jesus, over a period of forty days, often appeared to groups of people. These appearances could not have been hallucinations. Luke interviewed many of them and used their testimonies to write his books. See Luke 1:1-2; Acts 1:1-4.
- Paul saw Christ in a special way. He was the last one. He never followed the Lord during His earthly ministry. He fought the followers of Christ and hated the gospel. But Christ made a special appearance to Paul and called him into the ministry (I Corinthians 15:9-10; Acts 9:1-22; 22:1-21; 26:1-23).

Therefore, Paul is not considered *“one of the twelve.”* Paul refers to himself as *“one born out of due season”* – a miscarriage, an immature birth. Paul did not feel worthy to be called an apostle. Yet he passionately served Christ as an apostle (I Timothy 1:12-16).

Preserving the story – I Corinthians 15:11

See I Corinthians 15:3. The gospel story was being repeated over and over, ever since Jesus gave His disciples the great commission and great power on the day of Pentecost (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:19-21 cp. Acts 1:8). Eventually, the gospel came to the town of Corinth. Many people believed, were baptized, and were joined together as a church. If it were not for the truth of the gospel being preached and the power of God’s Spirit, they would never have known Christ and experienced salvation... and neither would any of us, two thousand years later.

If God’s people were to quit preaching the gospel to others, the next generation of people would be lost... and everyone else after that (Romans 10:8-15). But it’s not going to happen! The gospel will never become extinct! (Matthew 24:14) Christ’s Spirit, who lives in us, will keep us motivated with His love (Matthew 28:20; II Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:13; II Timothy 2:1-2). Christ’s love takes away fear, doubt, indifference, and laziness.

Here is how Jesus explained things in Luke 24:44-48:

- Believe the Scriptures.
- Tell others what the Lord has done for you.
- Tell the Gospel to all people.
- Call on others to repent and believe, so that they can be saved.

Here’s how Paul explained it in II Timothy 2:8-10 (cp. Romans 1:1-4; I Peter 1:3-5)

- Remember / don’t forget the resurrection! The gospel is powerless without it.
- Expect trouble and persecution when sharing the gospel. But the resurrection power of God’s word works right on through man’s hatred and unbelief.
- Endure everything that tries to stop you. Let God use you to bring others to salvation. The end results are glorious (II Timothy 2:3-4, 24-26 cp. Galatians 6:9; I Corinthians 15:51-58).