

The Good News

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-8

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This morning, we have been singing the GOOD NEWS! Sometimes we refer to the good news as the “gospel.” So, as we think about what we’ve been singing this morning, I would invite you to turn with me to one of the earliest written records of the gospel message, found in 1 Corinthians 15 (p. 1800). And I say that this is one of the earliest accounts of the gospel, because at the time this passage was written, most of the actual gospel accounts had not yet been written. The book of Matthew, for example, was most likely written at some point just before 70 AD, Mark was most likely written at some point in the mid-50’s AD, Luke was most likely written around 60 AD, and John was most likely written even later, at some point around 85 AD or even later. So, with the possible exception of the book of Mark, 1 Corinthians is one of the first inspired books to directly mention the Lord’s death and resurrection, having been written by the apostle Paul in roughly 55 AD, only about 25 years after the events that are recorded.

And we are looking at this passage this morning, because this passage gives the clearest and most concise explanation of what the gospel really is. If you will, then, please look with me at 1 Corinthians 15:1-8,

¹ Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; ⁷ then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; ⁸ and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

Singing the Good News

AnnouncementsStuart Clifcorn
PrayerWalt Smith

Jesus' Death

Isaiah 53:1–12 (p. 1154).....Elijah Mueller
Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross (#359)David Boone
Nailed to the Cross (#444)David Boone

Jesus' Burial

John 19:31–42 (p. 1694); Matthew 27:62–66 (p. 1556)Gary Mueller
Buried with Christ (#85)David Boone
One Day (#516).....David Boone

Jesus' Resurrection

Matthew 28:1–20 (p. 1556).....Spencer Grodi
We Saw Thee Not (#726).....David Boone
He Lives (#220).....David Boone

The Good News: 1 Corinthians 15:1–8 (p. 1800).....Baxter Exum

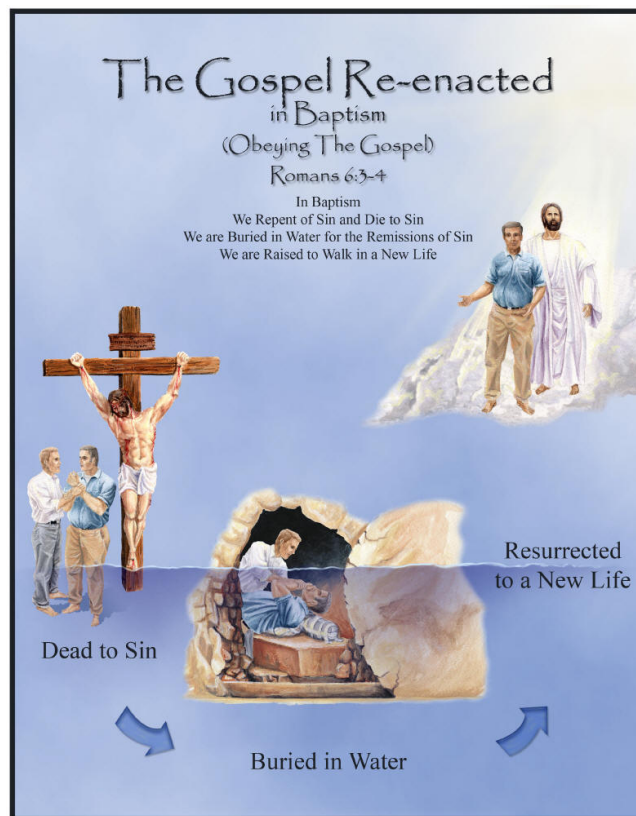
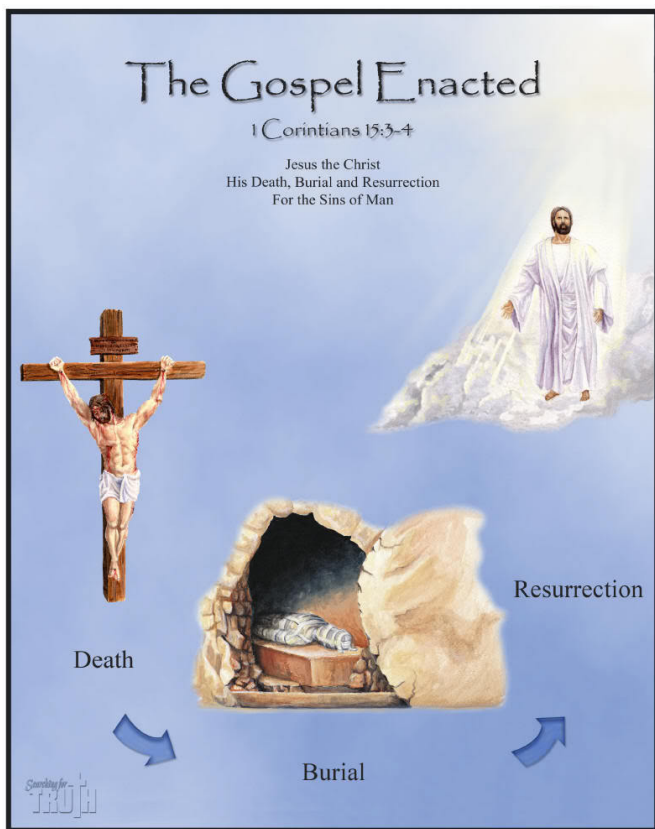
Lamb of God (#950)David Boone

Lord's Supper: Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed (#12).....David Boone

Offering: Sweeter Than All (#601).....David Boone

When We All Get to Heaven (#756)David Boone

Prayer.....Al Kindermann



- I. So, as we've been singing this morning, the gospel, first of all, is the good news that **JESUS DIED FOR OUR SINS.**

And I would emphasize here, as Paul did, that the Lord died for our sins *"according to the Scriptures."* In other words, the Lord's death was not an accident, but it was planned, it was prophesied, it had been predicted from the beginning of time. His death was not an accident, but it was planned for a reason. He died *"for our sins,"* as Paul says in verse 3. He died in our place. He died as a substitute. We deserve to die, but Jesus took our place. The Lord's death, then, means everything to us. As Elijah read earlier from Isaiah 53, *"He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed."* This is why the cross is so important. Obviously, we do not want to make the cross itself an idol – we don't bow down at the foot of a cross up here; however, let us never go to the other extreme, either. Instead, let us remember what Paul said in Galatians 6:14, *"But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."* Obviously, Paul was not talking about the actual cross, but he was talking about the Lord's death. And so today, when we sing about the cross, we are singing about the Lord's death, the Lord's sacrifice.

- II. Secondly, as we look back at Paul's words here in 1 Corinthians 15, we also find that the gospel, the good news, includes the Lord's **BURIAL** – in verse 4, **HE WAS BURIED.**

It is so easy to overlook the importance of the Lord's burial. And yet, as with the Lord's death, the burial itself was the miraculous fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Even going back to that passage in Isaiah 53:9, where Isaiah said, "His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death." Have we thought about that? Just the fact that Jesus was buried was rather unusual. Normally, the Romans would leave the dead on crosses for days, weeks, even months – long after the birds had picked the skeletons clean.

The Romans used crucifixion as basically a billboard, “Follow Roman law, or any one of you might be next.” Jesus, though, was buried. But even the Lord’s burial was unusual. His grave was **“assigned”** with wicked men. In other words, he should have been buried in disgrace; he should have been buried with thieves and robbers. In reality, though, the Lord was **“with a rich man in His death,”** just as Isaiah had predicted. As Gary read for us earlier, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus got permission from Pilate to come and take care of the Lord’s body. And although the Lord died like a criminal, he was buried like a king. I love what Charles Hodge said about this, “To save us, God could not cancel the cross, but He could be lavish in the burial.” And that makes sense to me. Jesus had to be crucified, but once that was over, the Lord’s body was treated with the utmost of respect. The body was taken down and was carefully wrapped up in fine linen along with about a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloe and various spices. And then, at that point, the Lord’s body was placed in a brand new tomb that had just been chiseled out of the rock, a tomb into which no body had yet been laid. I like to think that Jesus “borrowed” a tomb for a few days. Some of you here this morning may already own your burial plot. There is nothing wrong with that; there is a value in planning ahead. But let us remember that the Lord never owned any property, not even the grave where he was laid. But it was, in fact, one of the most lavish burials to ever take place – more than a hundred pounds of myrrh. As I understand it, myrrh is basically tree sap. It smells great. But it is very sticky. Archaeologists tell us that an average Jewish man in the First Century would have weighed about 125 pounds. What they did, then, was basically wrap Jesus in linen and sap that was roughly equal to his own body weight. And this was expensive. Myrrh was normally imported from the Far East. The Lord, then, was buried lavishly. As Isaiah said, he was **“with a rich man in his death.”** The burial, then, is a vital part of the gospel message.

III. As we go back to Paul’s explanation of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15, we see a third crucial part of the good news in the fact of the Lord’s RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD – as Paul said, “...He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

And in this passage, Paul appeals to a wide variety and vast number of witnesses. We have a number of individuals listed, but one of my favorites here is how Paul refers to how Jesus appeared to **“more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now.”** With this, I believe Paul was issuing a challenge: If you don’t believe me (that Jesus has been raised from the dead), then go talk to these people – if you don’t believe me, then go out there and do your own research! And again, remember that this was written only about 25 years after the resurrection. As I prepared for this morning’s lesson, I tried to think back to what was going on in the world 25 years ago. What were YOU doing in 1990? In January of that year, I graduated from high school and started college in Tennessee, all on the same weekend. Not too many people care about that, though, so I looked online and discovered that on January 3, 1990, General Manuel Noriega surrendered to US forces in Panama. On April 25, the Space Shuttle Discovery placed the Hubble Space Telescope into orbit. On May 22, Microsoft released Windows 3.0. On August 2, Iraq invaded Kuwait, eventually leading to the first Gulf War. I would ask, then, if somebody came up to you today doubting whether any of these events actually happened, we would have options, wouldn’t we? With these things happening only 25 years ago, we could go interview many of the people involved. You could talk to my parents, for example, and if called into court, they might even testify under oath that their son did, in fact, graduate in January 1990. We could interview government and military officials concerning what happened with General Noriega. We could have a discussion with people at NASA who were crucial to the Hubble project. We could talk to people at Microsoft about the release of Windows 3.0. We could talk to some of our own friends who served in the First Gulf War. And I believe that is the challenge Paul is making here as he lists all of these witnesses, **“most of whom remain until now.”** He was saying: Go check the story. Go do some research.

We look at this passage, then, and we realize that our belief in the resurrection is based on eyewitness testimony. And thankfully, several of these eyewitnesses wrote books. We think of Matthew the tax collector. We think of Mark, a young man at the time. We think of Luke, a medical doctor. We think of John, one of the Lord's closest friends. And I would point out: Many of these eyewitnesses were willing to die for their faith. Large numbers of men and women were more than willing to be tortured and killed for their belief in the resurrection. They stuck to their story, knowing that it would cost them everything.

Conclusion:

The gospel, then, the good news (according to the scriptures), is that Jesus came to this earth to die for our sins, he was buried, and then he was raised up from the dead on the first day of the week. This is the good news. The question, then, for us is: So what? What does this mean for us? Yes, Jesus died for our sins, yes, he was buried, and yes, he came back from the dead, but what do we need to do about it? The Bible tells us that we are to believe the gospel and obey it. In fact, there are two references in the New Testament promising God's judgment on those who **"do not obey the gospel"** (1 Peter 4:17 and 1 Thessalonians 1:8). The gospel, therefore, is to be obeyed. But how do we obey a death, burial, and resurrection? The apostle Paul answers this question in Romans 6 (p. 1765). How do we obey a death, burial, and resurrection? Think with me, please, about the words of Paul – Romans 6:3-7,

³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

Those of us who are Christians have been baptized into the death of Jesus Christ, and having been buried with him through baptism into death, we were raised up to walk in newness of life. The Christian life begins at the point of baptism. Baptism is the new birth referred to by Jesus in his discussion with Nicodemus in John 3. And so this morning, if you have not yet been buried with Christ in baptism, we would invite you to obey the gospel. Let us know if you would like to study God's word together. But if this is something you have not yet done but know you need to do, we hope we can help in some way. We invite you to let us know about your decision as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: foullakeschurch@gmail.com