

J.J.

TESTIMONIES OF THE RESURRECTION

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

1 Corinthians 15: ¹Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But 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. ¹¹Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

Announcements :

- Since we are renting this church, please don't bring coffee, juice or soda inside.
- The women will have a quick meeting after the service.
- We now have 43 subscribers in the Youtube channel. We need 7 more so we can livestream using youtube and then you can share with your friends God's Word.
(show QR Code)

INTRODUCTION :

For this month of May, we will still continue on our preaching in connection with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Story : A man took a vacation to Israel with his wife and mother-in-law. During their time in the Holy Land, his mother-in-law unexpectedly passed away. The following day, the husband met with the local undertaker to discuss funeral plans.

"In cases like these, there are a couple of options to choose from," the undertaker explained. "You can ship the body home for \$5,000, or you can bury her in the Holy Land for just \$150." The man took a minute to think about it, and then announced his decision to ship her home.

The undertaker, intrigued by his decision, said, "That's an interesting choice. Can I ask why would you pay \$5,000 to ship your mother-in-law home, when you can easily bury her here for \$150?" The man promptly replied, "About 2,000 years ago, a man died and was buried here. Three days later he rose from the dead, and I can't take that chance with my mother-in-law "

If the mother-in-law was a Christian, that man should have paid \$150 because one of these days, she will rise from the dead also.

That's the background of the passage we will share today by God's grace. He was telling the Corinthian church in Chapter 15 that because Jesus Christ truly rose from the dead, those who believe in Him will one day rise from the dead.

By the way, brothers and sisters, in order for us to be truly saved, one must truly believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

Romans 10: 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

To be saved, we need to "believe in our heart"...means no doubt, truly convinced.

Important: We have to remember that our faith is not based on feelings or a philosophy or a myth. It is based on historical facts and evidences that God became man who died on the cross for our sins and after three days rose from the dead.

Note : The volume of historical facts and evidences regarding our Lord's resurrection is so overwhelming that it takes more faith NOT to believe in the resurrection.

INTELLECTUALLY HONEST people who tried to disprove it ending up believing in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Quote : This is from Sir Lionel Luckhoo, identified by the Guinness Book of World Records as the most successful attorney in the world concluded after an exhaustive analysis about the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ : "I say unequivocally that the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt."

TESTIMONIES OF THE RESURRECTION : PROFESSION, PROPHECY, PEOPLE

PRAY

***I. PROFESSION (of FAITH) CHANGED**

- **A change in belief and behavior.**

1 Corinthians 15: ¹Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

Question: What is the gospel that they received?

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

Note on ³For what I received I passed on to you : Verse 3-7 to is the basic “creed” that is being taught in the birth of the church. Paul likely received this formula after his conversion. It makes it one of the oldest records of Christian belief.

Definition : A creed is a set of beliefs of a certain group and is recited. Remember another creed of the early Christians I shared to you on Resurrection Sunday?

Romans 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

VERY IMPORTANT : WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS?

The creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 was written before Mark wrote the gospel. Mark is the earliest gospel written at around 50-55 A.D. and up. (Jesus died at around 33 years old) So if the creed says that that he was raised on the third day and that Jesus was seen by several witnesses, then the enemies of the gospel could have easily produced the body or showed the tomb where he is supposed to buried.

But they cannot, simply because THE TOMB WAS EMPTY. BECAUSE OF THIS, THE FIRST CHRISTIANS WHO WERE JEWS, THEIR PROFESSIONS CHANGED AND THEREFORE THEIR PRACTICES CHANGED

Belief changes behaviour : The first Christian converts were Jews as shown in Acts 2 – people with deep convictions about Sabbath day, Passover, sacrificing a lamb... and yet they abandoned these practices because they knew that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah simply because He rose from the dead which shows their change in belief.

IN FACT, THEY DID NOT PRACTICE THE SABBATH ANYMORE AND STARTED GATHERING ON SUNDAYS, FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK BECAUSE THAT’S THE DAY JESUS CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD. We discussed this last Sunday.

Quote : Beliefs changes your behavior. Behavior shows your beliefs.

I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand

Illustration: I know of a brother in Christ that whenever he comes from Saudi in the 80s, he would be bringing liquor but then he knew about the risen Christ, and so when he comes home he brought chocolates instead. And his friends were asking him, why he’s not drinking anymore and it’s because he is already a Christian.

Remember : We have to remember that the early church was being persecuted, that's why Paul was asking them to "hold firmly to the word I preached to you"

Evidence/Example : The disciples were afraid of the Jews when they learned that Jesus died but in the end they were all willing to die for their faith.

(We'll discuss this later)

***II. PROPHECIES CONCLUDED**

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

Question : What is the Scriptures during Paul's time? The Old Testament

Note : There wouldn't be any resurrection if Jesus did not die on the cross and Paul was stating the reason He died...for our sins and the way He died was precisely prophesied in the Old Testament.

Centuries before Christ was crucified, God had already ordained the details of His Son's suffering and resurrection.

Example of Prophecies in the Old Testament :

**Isaiah 53: ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.*

*¹¹ After the suffering of his soul,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied ;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.*

**Psalm 16 : ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*

Note : The Scriptures testified accurately Jesus' birth (even His place of birth), His suffering and death (even the taking of his garment) and of course, His resurrection.

Important Application : If the Scriptures are accurate on the details about Jesus first coming, then the Scriptures is also accurate on His Second coming.

(We will study this next week by God's grace)

***III. PEOPLE CONVERTED**

Now, we have to listen to this part because I will give you a test afterwards...LOL

1. From Denier To Preacher

⁵and that he appeared to Peter,

The KJV version, mentions “Cephas” kay-phas, it’s Peter’s Aramaic name which means stone, Peter is the Anglicized translation of Petros which is the Greek for stone.

And we know what Peter is famous for: He denied that he knew Jesus Christ for fear of being persecuted. His famous words in the three gospels.

*Matthew 26: “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” 72 And again he denied it with an oath: “**I do not know the man.**” 73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” 74 Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “**I do not know the man.**”*

And yet, because he saw Jesus Christ die and saw the risen Christ in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit came, he started preaching that the prophecies in Joel and in Psalms that the Messiah will rise again from the dead is Jesus Christ Himself.

In fact, in Acts Chapter 4, this is what was said about Peter.

*Acts 4:13 **When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.***

Wow! From one who said that he doesn’t know Jesus to one who became so courageous that they were associated with our Lord. What changed? It’s because they saw the risen Christ!

2. From Cowards To Courageous

and then to the Twelve.... then to all the apostles

We know the Twelve, they were also apostles. Judas was replaced by Matthias. But looked at what happened when Jesus got arrested.

Matthew 26: 56... Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.

Mark 14:50 Then everyone deserted Him and fled.

And when Jesus rose from the dead, Mary Magdalene saw that the tomb was empty. She reported it to Peter and John. They went to see it for themselves, but

John 20:9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Where were they staying?

*19 On the evening of that first day of the week, **when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders,***

They were scared.

But we know the rest of the story:

Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

What happened afterwards? Let's see how they lived and how they died.

How did the Twelve die?

Peter : preached to the Jews - crucified upside down

Andrew : preached to the land of "man-eaters" (Soviet Union) - crucified

Thomas: preached in Syria and India – speared by four soldiers

Philip : preached in North Africa and Asia – crucified

Matthew : preached in Persia and Ethiopia – axed to death

Bartholomew : preached in India, Armenia, Ethiopia and Southern Arabia – Flayed (skinned alive) and crucified

James (son of Alphaeus): preached in Syria – Thrown from the temple tower; Stoned and clubbed to death

Simon the Zealot : preached in Persia – crucified

Matthias (replaced Judas Iscariot) : preached in Syria – Stoned and beheaded

Judas Thaddeus : preached in Judea, Samaria, Iraq (Mesopotamia), Libya – killed with arrows

James (son of Zebedee) : preached to the Jews – beheaded

John (son of Zebedee) : preached to the Jews and Ephesus – exiled in Patmos

Remember, these people deserted Jesus when he was arrested and were hiding for fear of their lives and then in a few days and their whole life preached Jesus and died for Him? What happened? THEY SAW THE RISEN CHRIST!

3. From The Twelve to more than Five Hundred

*⁶After that, **he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.***

KJV "have seen" optanomai

SIGNIFICANCE: Paul is saying look, **many saw** that Jesus rose from the dead and some of them SAW HIM AT THE SAME TIME and some of them are still alive... **you can ask them yourself.**

Apologetics : Some say this is mass hallucination or is it? Is there even such a thing as mass hallucination?

***Quote** : Hallucinations are individual occurrences. By their very nature only one person can see a given hallucination at a time. They certainly aren't something which can be seen by a group of people. - Dr. Gary Collins, noted professor for 20 years, author of several psychological books and president of national association of psychologists

In short, what the five hundred saw at the same time was true. THEY SAW THE RISEN CHRIST!

***3. From Sibling To Servant**

⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

Note : It wouldn't be James the son of Zebedee or James son of Alphaeus since Paul already mentioned The Twelve.

This was the half-brother of Jesus. He was mentioned by Paul in Galatians because he was the leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13-21; Acts 12:17; Gal 2:9; Acts 21:18)
Galatians 1:19 I saw none of the other apostles – only James, the Lord's brother.

BUT BEFORE THAT James was a skeptic when Jesus was proclaiming He is the Messiah,
John 7: ⁵For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

They even thought our Lord was crazy.

Mark 3:21 When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

Illustration: Imagine Mark saying to Miguel that he is the Messiah, that he is God who became man. I'm sure Miguel will be laughing at him or will say to his dad, let's bring him to the hospital.

But later on, here's how James introduces himself :

**James 1: 1 James, a servant (doulos :slave) of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*

In fact, James was stoned to death.

WHY? IT'S BECAUSE HE SAW JESUS (HIS HALF-BROTHER) WHO HE CLAIMED TO BE – THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD RESURRECTED from the dead. Jesus is alive!

***4. From Murdering Disciples To Making Disciples**

⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Etymology : abnormally born – ektroma – in short, born at not the exact time.

In short, what Paul is saying, he saw the risen Lord not as how the others saw him.

Let's see Paul's history and how the Lord appeared to him. Before Paul's conversion, he was a persecutor of those who follow Jesus.

Stoning of Stephen :

**Acts 7:57, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

(The laying of their clothes at his feet symbolizes that Saul was backing them up)

How Paul was converted

Acts 9: ¹Meanwhile, **Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³**As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.** ⁴**He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"***

***AFTER HIS CONVERSION**

¹⁰But 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. ¹¹Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

In short, he is saying before I was zealous to get rid of followers of Christ, now I am zealous more than any other to make followers of Christ.

WHAT HAPPENED? He saw the risen Christ!

CONCLUSION :

I mentioned earlier, that I will give you a test...LOL

We saw earlier, Peter, from denier to preacher. The twelve, from cowards to courageous men. From the twelve to 500 people at the same time. James who was a sibling, a brother who thought Jesus was crazy to calling his himself as a slave to His Lord Jesus Christ and then of course, Paul himself, who wanted to murder the disciples of Christ to making disciples of Christ.

HERE'S THE TEST : WHAT CHANGED IN YOU THAT TRULY SHOWS YOU BELIEVED THAT JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE?

Personal Testimony : Before knowing Jesus Christ, my mouth was dirty and was always cursing but when I truly believed that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour, that's the first thing that God cleansed me of because He's going to use this mouth to preach His Holy Word.

Jerry : From Curser To Preacher

Illustration : Last week, I mentioned the story of my schoolmate Tom who was an alcoholic before and his family left him but then he got saved and believed and accepted that Jesus Christ is His Lord and Saviour. If my memory serves me correct, I remember he was saying to me in Tagalog that because of that he was transformed from an alcoholic to become an addict. **He became an alcoholic to become a Jesus addict.**

So Beloved of Christ, what is your own personal testimony that you believe Jesus rose from the dead?

And if we truly believe that Jesus rose from the dead, this is what happens to us.

Lyrics of the Christian Hymn “Because He lives”

Verse 1

God sent His son,
They called Him, Jesus;
He came to love,
Heal and forgive;
He lived and died
To buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there
To prove my Savior lives!

Chorus

Because He lives,
I can face tomorrow!
Because He lives,
All fear is gone.
Because I know
He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

Whatever is happening in this world and in our lives, we need not be afraid BECAUSE OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR LIVES as Job said in the middle of his great suffering.

*Job 19:25 I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.
26 And after my skin has been destroyed,
Yet in my flesh I will see God;
27 I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!*

S.G.D.