



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

I CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

LESSON: WITNESSES TO CHRIST'S RESURRECTION (EASTER)

— April 17, 2022

INTRODUCTION:

In **Chapter 14** Paul teaches about the gift of prophecy and the gift of speaking in tongues in this whole chapter. But he says pursue; follow after love; let love be your greatest aim. The primary message upon our lips must be the gospel, and it must be understandable to all men, while focusing on the edification of others, not self-edification. Even though you may have the gift of tongues, it's still important in the ministry so much that Paul wished that all would speak in tongues, because their spirit is praying, praising and talking to God who builds and strengthens them up for the task; but if tongues is interpreted, it builds the church (14:5). Tongues edify self, whereas prophecy edifies the church. ¹Paul insists that all the parts of worship should be conducive to instruction and edification. Tongues, prophecy, and other gifts were to be practiced under strict regulation (14:26-33a). Also, for the sake of appropriateness in the churches, women were not to speak in public worship. They were to keep silent. The reason why was because the women's behavior had gotten out of hand and this spoke to a proper behavior of women in the assembly. (14:33b-36). Paul declares that what he is writing is the Lord's instruction (14:37, 38). He concludes by encouraging the Corinthian Christians to seek to prophesy and not to prohibit or forbid people from speaking in tongues, provided that the whole worship service is decent and orderly (14:39, 40).

LESSON: I. TESTIMONY OF THE GOSPEL 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-2

1 ST—15:1 **Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;**— The word "*Moreover*", tells us that Paul had finished his answers to the Corinthians' questions, and now goes on to a new subject. Paul says he declared the gospel to the Corinthian church, the same gospel in which he had already preached to them, and they received, and stood on. Some in the church were in danger of not continuing the faith; some were denying the resurrection and undermining the gospel which was the hope the Corinthian believers stood on. So, they desperately needed the gospel proclaimed, and three things come to mind in verse 1 and 2: **1) they received the gospel (15:1); 2) they stood on the gospel (15:1); and 3) they were saved by the gospel (15:2).** The word "*declare*" (gnorizo) means to make known. Paul is reminding the Corinthians that he has already declared the gospel, but he does it again in (15:3-8): Declaring it as though they had never heard it. Proclaiming it as though they had never sat before it. Making it known as though they had never known it.

1 ST—15:2 **By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.** By this gospel he preached, they are saved if they hold firmly to the Word. Otherwise, if they turn from the gospel and deny the resurrection, they have believed in vain. They must keep the gospel in memory. A person must hold fast and continue to believe to be saved. They must not believe in vain. The idea is that some might believe, but didn't rely on the message, but sought another way—that was useless, vain, empty, and worthless. But, what Paul preached was to be believed to save them.

¹ <http://www.thywordistruth.com/corinth/less21cn.pdf>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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II. TESTIMONY OF EYEWITNESSES 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-7

1 ST—15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;—You can only testify of things you have received, and that's what Paul was doing. He said look in the Book; the Scriptures!

1) The first truth: Paul delivered the truth he himself received, how that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

- The word "**first of all**" means that the very first thing Paul ever preached to the Corinthians was the death of Jesus Christ. The death of Jesus Christ is so important that it must be the first thing preached. It is the very foundation of a person's salvation.
 - **Christ died for our sins.** The word "**for**" (huper) means for our benefit, for our sake, in our behalf, in our stead, as our substitute.
 - **Christ died as our sacrifice.**
 - **Christ died as our ransom.**
 - **Christ died as our propitiation.**
 - **Christ died...according to the Scriptures.** The truth of the gospel is not only important historically but prophetically as well. They had occurred as had been predicted.

1 ST—15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:—

2) The second truth: Paul delivered the truth that Jesus Christ was buried, and arose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures.

- The burial of Jesus Christ is important, for it proves two significant things:
 - **It proves that Jesus Christ died.**
 - It proves that no man is put into a tomb with a sealed rock and encloses it unless he is dead.
- Jesus Christ rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.
 - Most Old Testament scriptures such as Isaiah 53 foretold Jesus' atoning death, and His fulfillment We have just read that He was buried and was raised again on the third day.
- The resurrection of Christ proves...
 - ...that God is; that He exists.
 - ...that Jesus is who He claimed to be, the Son of God Himself; that Jesus Christ was sent to earth to secure the Ideal righteousness for man, and to die and to arise from the dead for man.
 - ...that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, the very One whom God sent to earth to save mankind from death and to give them life. The resurrection.
 - ...that the empty tomb is evidence that Christ assures the believer that he too shall be raised from the dead.

1 ST —15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:—

3) The third truth: Paul delivered the truth that there were eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection. He was seen of Cephas (Peter) and then of the twelve. Peter had failed the Lord miserably, having denied Him three times. Jesus definitely appeared alive after His resurrection to Peter, then to the twelve apostles of Christ. Although Judas, having committed suicide, the term twelve was a customary name to refer to the group, even though they were only eleven at the time. Matthias later replaced Judas.

1 ST—15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. Afterwards, Jesus was seen by 500 of His brethren at the same time, of most of whom are still living, though some had fallen asleep (died). This

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may have been the appearance in Galilee (Matt.28:10, 16-20) where the larger number of Christ's followers were. The point is: five hundred believers could testify of God's love for men.

1 ST—15:7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. He then appeared to James— and then to all of the apostles. James the brother of Jesus, who did not believe in Jesus until after the resurrection but later, became prominent in the leadership of the Jerusalem church. The appearance of Christ was to equip the apostles to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection.

III. TESTIMONY OF PAUL 1 CORINTHIANS 15:8-11

1 ST—15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

4) The fourth truth: Paul delivered the truth that he was a strong eyewitness of Jesus Christ's resurrection, born out of due time. Paul's most important credential to be an apostle was that he was an eyewitness of the risen Christ.

- Paul saw Christ after the Lord's ascension. The phrase "**one born out of due time**" (to ektromati) means a miscarriage, an abortion, a child born out of time. Paul is simply saying that he did not know and follow the Lord when the Lord walked upon the earth, but he saw the Lord after He had left the earth and ascended into heaven. Paul of course, referring to his experience on the Damascus road and perhaps to the visions granted him.
- You see Paul was very prideful in who he was and what he had achieved in his position and personal morality and righteousness. He was a rising young leader in Judaism; a promising career of looking forward in a place on the Sanhedrin high court. Yet, he turned 180° in a day, gave up his promising future and chose a life of suffering and sacrifice because he had seen the Lord! Nothing less than having actually seen Christ face to face could change a man so radically. Nothing less than having actually seen Christ face to face could make a man give up so much and pay so great a price for preaching the gospel. It was Christ making Himself know to Paul, for Paul was blinded by Jesus' bright light on the Road to Damascus. Jesus is able to reveal Himself to a blind man.

1 ST—15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. Paul could not forget the souls he had destroyed and the people he had wronged; or how he had fought against the Lord. Like Paul, we would give much to go back and redo the past; change some things, but we cannot. Paul was radically converted and changed against all odds. He had a deep sense of unworthiness.

- Paul says I am the least of the apostles.
- I am not meet (unfit; unworthy) to be called an apostle because he persecuted the church of God.

1 ST—15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. There's that word "but..." What we can't change, God's grace can. That's why God's grace had to come in for somebody like Paul. "*But by the grace of God*" meaning it was God working within and without. It was God's prevailing love moving when he didn't know what he was doing. The grace of God had to take over to make him what he was to be. It is by God's goodness and through no merit of our own of who we are today! For you see the grace God granted upon Paul was not useless; was not ineffective, but it effected his life so much that Paul lets us know that he labored, desperately driven more abundantly





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than them all (being an instrument for God—laboring in the Word—preaching—enduring hardships—suffering than any other apostles). Yet it was not him, but it was the grace of God in him (that made him an apostle of Christ; a preacher of the gospel). To Paul the greatest thing in all the world was the grace of God, because it was the fact that God loved him so much! Look at this:

- God forgave his terrible sins.
- God allowed him to follow and serve His dear Son.
- God allowed him to proclaim the glorious cure for the cancer of sin and death, even the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ!

All that Paul was and all that Paul did was by the "grace", the underserved favor of God! — the grace that was with him—The grace that touched him—The grace that delivered him—The grace that spoke through him.

1 ST—15:11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

5) The fifth truth: Paul delivered the truth that whether it was he or they, we preached and believed.

There is only one gospel that is preached and that has to be believed — The gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior. Only His death and resurrection truly offers eternal life to men. The fact and truth is that God gave His only begotten Son for the world, that they might believe. He allowed His Son to die, and then raised Him up to life. It was to assure man that God truly loved us and will raise us up to live eternally with Him.

SUMMARY:

Paul declared the gospel to the Corinthian church, the same gospel which he had already preached and they received, stood on, and were saved. (15:1-2).

You can only testify of things you have received, and that's what Paul is doing. The Old Testament Scriptures declared Jesus was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (15:3-4). Peter (Cephas) saw Him, and the disciples saw Him collectively (15:5). Then five hundred plus people saw Him at the same time (15:6). James, Jesus' half-brother saw Him, then of all the apostles (15:7) (15:3-7).

"And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Paul's most important credential to be an apostle was that he was an eyewitness of the risen Christ (15:8). Paul says that he is the least of the apostles, and he's not fit; unworthy to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the church of God (15:9). But by the grace of God Paul says I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon him was not in vain; but he labored more abundantly than they all: yet not him, but the grace of God which was with him (15:10). Therefore, whether it was he or they, we preach, and so believed. It makes no difference who worked the hardest, he or they; the important thing is that they preached the Gospel to you, and you believed it (15:11) (15:8-11).