THE GOSPEL

I Corinthians 15:1-4

1-21-2023

Introduction:

*The greatest need for every man, woman, boy, & girl is to hear an adequate, accurate, and compassionate presentation of the "gospel"

WHAT IS THE "GOSPEL"?

I. Jesus DIED (crucifixion) (I Cor. 15:3)

Four key words describe Christ's redemptive death:

A. SACRIFICE (The Essence of the Gospel)
"Christ died"

B. SUBSTITUTE(The Graciousness of the Gospel)
"*For"*

C. SINS (The Necessity of the Gospel)
"our sins"

D. SCRIPTURES (The Foundational Basis for the Gospel)
"According to the Scriptures"

II. Jesus LIVES! (Resurrection) (I Cor. 15:4)

III. BELIEVE IT! (I Cor. 15:1-2)

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THE GOSPEL

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Introduction: Hymn: "I love to tell the story"

v.1 - ***"Brethren"*** -Even believers ("brethren in Christ") need to have the gospel repeated to them.

Ex. the Hymn: "Tell me the Old, Old story"

The Gospel is good news (great tidings) to the ears of lost, depraved, helpless and hopeless sinners.

The plight of lost people: We need to have a deep realization that all men without Christ are lost and doomed.

The greatest need for every man, woman, boy, & girl is to hear an adequate, accurate, and compassionate presentation of the "gospel"

WHAT IS THE "GOSPEL"?

Imagine that you are in a hospital room, calling on an unbeliever who is at death's door. You have time for only 25 words to communicate the Gospel. After the 25th word, the patient will pass away. What would you say in this situation?

Are you able to express the Gospel so concisely that if the mortally ill person responds properly, he is saved? Do you comprehend the Gospel sufficiently to put the saving message in these few words?

(This idea originated in Dr. C. Ryrie's Theology class)

It is vitally important to know exactly what the Gospel is for three reasons:

1. We are commanded to preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15).

2. A curse is pronounced upon anyone who would twist, add to or delete from the Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

   There are so many "gospels" being preached today. Why? Because Satan so as to Muddy the waters", or to "confuse" the world as to the real Christian message has added substitutes o alternatives to the one & only Gospel God has given.

3. A person's eternity depends on it! (II Cor. 4:4)

The Doom of the Lost

1. Luke 16:19-31 -
   --eternal conscious torment
   --eternal unfulfilled desire (v. 24)
   --eternal memory (v. 25)
   --eternal hopelessness (v. 26)
   --eternal loneliness (v. 19-21)
2. Mt. 8:12 - outer darkness
3. Mt. 13:42 - furnace of fire
4. Mt. 25:41 - everlasting fire
5. Mt. 25:46 - everlasting punishment
6. Mk. 3:29 - eternal damnation
7. Rev. 11:7 - bottomless pit
8. Rev. 20:10 - lake of fire and brimstone
9. Rev. 21:8 - second death

The word ***"Gospel"*** (*euangelion*) simply means "good news" or "good announcement" or "good message."

The word *euangelion* is used in the New Testament to describe:

--any good news (II Thess. 3:6)
--good news about the Messiah's arrival and His establishment of the promised Kingdom (Mt. 3:1-2, 4:17, 10:5-7)
*--the good news of the grace of God (Acts 20:24)

What exactly is the Gospel?

Paul in I Corinthians 15:3-4 describes the specific contents of the Gospel message. *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."*

The Gospel is succinctly this:

Christ died on behalf of people and He arose from the dead.

The two basic facts of the Gospel are these:

Jesus <u>died</u> and Jesus <u>lives</u>!

I. Jesus DIED (crucifixion) (I Cor. 15:3)

"First of all" - first in importance; The priority of Paul's message was "Christ, and Him crucified"

"that which I also received" - Paul's message did not originate with him; Rather it was handed down to him from above.

Four key words describe Christ's redemptive death:

A. SACRIFICE (The Essence of the Gospel)

"Christ died"

His death was pre-figured by the O.T. Sacrificial system.

B. SUBSTITUTE (The Graciousness of the Gospel)

"for our sins"

The word "for" is the Greek word *huper* which means "on behalf of" or "in the place of."

Paul gives a theological explanation of the historical facts of Christ's death. "Many people were crucified by the Romans, but only one "victim" ever died for the sins of the world" (Wiersbe, p.617)

More occurred that dark day than Jesus merely tasting a physical death. He bore our sins in His own body (I Pet.2:24) and became a curse for us (Gal.3:13) as He drank that bitter, horrid cup of sin for the world.

How did "Christ die for my sins?"

Perhaps the most essential part of the Gospel, and the most misunderstood, is the statement that *"Christ died for our sins"* (I Cor. 15:3).

Christ did not die merely to "set an example" as most unbelievers think; His death actually accomplished something. It is important that the soul-winner make it perfectly clear that Christ died as our substitute; He took our place, He paid our punishment; He suffered the equivalent of our eternal damnation; He died on our behalf.

This concept of Christ dying on our behalf is the crux of the Gospel and the emphasis of the New Testament.

Scriptures emphasizing the fact of Christ's substitutionary death
(using the word "huper" [on behalf of]):

"This is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22:19)
"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you"
(Lk. 22:20)
"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
"I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
"Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
"Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)
"He . . . delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32)
"Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
"For he hath made him to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21)
"Christ . . . gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
"Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)
"Christ [was] . . . made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13)
"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25)
"Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died for us" (I Th. 5:10)
"Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:6)
"He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9)
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
"Christ also suffered for us" (I Pet. 2:21)
"Christ also hath once suffered for sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
"Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
"He laid down his life for us" (I Jn. 3:16)

Here are some ILLUSTRATIONS
to help you explain how Christ died as our "SUBSTITUTE."

The Judge & the Criminal - Suppose on the streets of our city was a man with a gun. This man one day pointed the gun at an innocent person & shot him and killed him. He then attempted to run away, but a police officer caught him, arrested him, and brought him to jail. The day finally came when he was to go to court to stand trial for his murder. After hearing the evidence, the jury found him clearly guilty of cold-blooded murder. The Judge then rendered this verdict: *"Because of your crime, you will have to pay for it with your life - You will have to die in the electric chair!"* The convicted criminal went back to his prison cell to wait. Finally, the dreaded day came for him to be executed. The guards brought him over to the electric chair, strapped him in, and the officials were about to pull the lever. Suddenly, a stranger entered the room. The officials noticed it was the city Judge, the same one who had found this man guilty and given him the death penalty. They asked the Judge, *"Sir, why did you come here?"* To which he replied, *"Do you see that man? He is guilty of murder, and there is no doubt in my mind that he deserves to pay for it with his life."* With a tear rolling down the Judge's cheek, however, he said, *"But I love that man, and I would be willing to take his place."* The room was silent. The man in the chair could not believe that someone would love him so much. [Rarely would anyone die for a good man; never mind for a criminal - Rom. 5:7-8] But suppose the Law allowed such a transaction. The man in the chair got up, and the Judge sat down in his place. The lever was pulled and the Judge was electrocuted, giving his life for the criminal so that he could go free.

Even though we have never heard of such a thing, that is exactly what Jesus Christ did for you. You see, He is the Judge of the universe. And the judge Himself stepped down from His throne in Heaven, came into this world -- all for the purpose that He might die on the cross and take your place and pay for the sin you committed. He became your substitute. He paid your penalty so that you could be free from the wages of your sin. Jesus died on your behalf so that you wouldn't pay for your sins yourself in the Lake of fire! What love! What a sacrifice!

The Wise & Just Ruler - A wise and just ruler established a series of laws for his people to follow. One day his mother broke one of the laws and was brought to the ruler after being caught. The penalty was twenty lashes. How could the ruler remain just and still fulfill the demands of his love for his mother? He chose to take the lashes on his own back. Justice was satisfied, while love was revealed in full measure.

The Rescue Dog - A man was lost in the Alps. The owner of the lodge where he had been staying sent out his best rescue dog to look for him. The dog found the man half-conscious, grabbed him, and started to shake him in order to wake him up. On coming to his senses the man, seeing the dog and thinking it was a wolf, stabbed the animal. The dog let go and returned to the lodge, where it died shortly thereafter. The dog's owner followed the trail of blood, came to the lost man, and saved him. The dog had given his life so that another might live.

The Burnt Hen - One day a certain farmer saw that a fire had ignited in his wheat fields, and was being blown toward his barns by the wind. To save the stored grain there, he lit a backfire, in hopes that it would impede the progress of the other flames. After both fires had subsided--and the barns had been saved--the farmer walked out through the smoldering ashes of the nearby fields. There he discovered the dead body of one of his hens, which had been caught in the blaze. Sadly, he turned over her black, charred body with his foot--and out from underneath ran four baby chicks. Her sacrifice saved her young ones. Such is the work of Christ on the cross, a place where the love of God dealt with the justice of God, where God's mercy matched God's wrath. Our Lord's sacrifice has saved us." (attributed to Donald Grey Barnhouse)

The Bridge

John Griffith's childhood ambition was to travel. He fantasized about it frequently, but that ambition crashed with the Great Depression of 1929. As the howling winds turned Oklahoma, his native state, into a dust bowl, this young man with his wife and small child packed his belongings in an old car and headed out to try to find a life somewhere else.

They made their way to Missouri and, as Dennis E. Hensley tells the story, John finally found a job as the controller of a great railroad bridge spanning the Mississippi River. Each day at certain hours, this massive bridge was raised so that the great freight and passenger trains could rush across. John found some delight in this because he often wondered what far places these people were visiting; and so he had some joy in their experience.

In the summer of 1937 John Griffith took his eight-year-old son, Greg, with him to work for the first time. Little Greg was understandably thrilled at the great railroad bridge and the stirring and exciting trains that roared across it. He marveled at the control house, filled with all sorts of levers over which his daddy had absolute, sovereign control. His father took him to an observation deck and told him that our here he could watch the boat and trains go by.

At noon, John Griffith but the bridge up to allow for some ships that were coming. Since there would not be a train to some while, he made his way along the catwalk to the observation deck. There he opened his brown bag and he and Greg had lunch. As they ate, John shared with his son some of the stories of various ships that had gone by and of the time the great flood had overflowed the banks of the Mississippi.

Just as John was telling his son that story, he was startled by the shrieking of a train whistle in the distance. He quickly looked at his watch. It was 1:07. He had forgotten the express for Memphis. With four hundred people on board, it would be roaring across the bridge in only a few moments. He leaped from the observation deck to the catwalk.

John raced back to the control tower. He placed his hand upon the massive controls and started to close the bridge. He glanced down under the bridge to see if there were any ships beneath it. A sight caught his eye that brought his heart leaping into his throat. Greg had slipped from the observation deck, and fallen into the gears that operated the bridge.

Greg's left leg was caught in the cogs of the two main gears. John knew if he pushed the lever, his son would be ground between four tons of whining, grinding steel. His mind whirled in panic and desperation. There was no way to free his son before the train would be upon the bridge. Again, the train whistle shrieked. He could hear the clicking for the locomotive wheels and rapid "puffing" of the approaching train. There were four hundred passengers on that train-four hundred souls!

John was a father, and this was his boy. He knew what he had to do. He heaved the lever of the massive gears. The Memphis Express thundered across the bridge. John lifted his face, smeared with tears, and looked into the passing windows of the train. Businessmen were reading their afternoon papers, conductors were looking at their large, vest-pocket watches and finely dressed ladies sipped coffee in the dining car, while children pushed long spoons into dishes of ice cream. With wrenching agony, John Griffith cried out to the steel train, "I sacrificed my son for you! Don't you care?" The train rushed by.

From Coral Ridge Messenger
Fort Lauderdale, FL

C. SINS (The Necessity of the Gospel)

"for our sins"

"our" -This word shows that the sinner is personally responsible and accountable for his own sins

"sins" -This word points to the fact that the sinner has missed the mark of God's perfect moral standard (Rom. 3:23)

D. SCRIPTURES (The Foundational Basis for the Gospel)

"According to the Scriptures"

Our authority as we witness the Gospel is solely God's Word, the Bible. Some Old Testament Scriptures that predicted Christ's death for sinners are Genesis 22:8, Isaiah 53:5-12, Daniel 9:26

II. Jesus LIVES! (Resurrection) (I Cor. 15:4)

Paul's point of emphasis in this chapter centers around the subject of the Resurrection and particularly of Christ's Resurrection.

Why is Christ's resurrection of utmost importance?

If He never arose...

He would lack the greatest credential to His being The Son of God (Rom.1:4), the Messiah and Savior. Christ's resurrection is a vital element of the Gospel because if He did not arise from the dead, His claims of being the Messiah and Savior are invalidated. A messianic prophecy: "*...neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*" (Psalm 16:10; cp. Acts 2:25-28)

> "A follower of Buddha writes of that religious leader, "*When Buddha died it was with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains."* Mohammed died at Medina on June 8, 632, at the age of 61, and his tomb there is visited yearly by tens of thousands of Muslims. But they come to mourn his death, not to celebrate his resurrection." (MacArthur, p.401)

We however, serve a risen Savior and have Good New to share!

He would have no present power to save anyone (I Cor. 15:17)
How could He be the resurrection and the life if He Himself remained in the tomb? (John 11:25; 14:6)

He would have been a deceiver and a liar
He promised He would arise (See: Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34)

The gospel would be bad news, not good news if Christ never arose. It would mean that the wages of sin were never fully paid by Him if death retained its cold grip on Him.

Note: The reference to Christ being "buried" validates the fact that He literally died, (not "swooned") and that His resurrection was a literal miracle.

"According to the Scriptures" - The O.T. spoke of the Messiah's Resurrection (Psalm 2:7 [cp.Acts 13:32-33]; 16:8-11 [cp.Acts 2:25-28]; Isaiah 53:10; Zech.12:10; Job 19:25;) (Christ taught the disciples on the road to Emmaus many O.T. references to His suffering, death, and resurrection - Luke 24:25 -27)

Christ died in fulfillment of Passover, was buried in fulfillment of Unleavened bread, and arose in fulfillment of firstfruits (which occurred on the day after the Sabbath after Passover week - Lev.23:9-14; cp. I Cor.15:23).

III. BELIEVE IT! (I Cor. 15:1-2)

This Gospel must be genuinely believed (*"received"* - v. 1) in order for one to be saved (v. 2)

"Received" - v. 1. Aorist tense - points to a once and for all personal reception of the Gospel (a whole-hearted taking to oneself; a glad welcoming). No one is converted if they do not personally take into their hearts the Gospel message (Rom. 10:9-10). This involves the exercise of their will. No one is saved against their will (Rev. 22:17).

Important Tips So You Do Not Force a Person Against Their Will

1) Go as far as the Spirit leads in your presentation of the Gospel
(if they object, don't persist against their will; try again some other time)

2) Don't manipulate or twist anyone's arm to believe

3) Ask the person if he would be willing to sincerely receive Jesus Christ as His Savior
(perhaps remind him: "Don't make this decision to please me or to get me off your back; but if you genuinely want to, you can receive Christ.")

Remember:

"A person convinced against their will remains an unbeliever still."
C. H. Spurgeon

"Wherein ye stand" -Perfect tense - one who genuinely received the Gospel will never forget it, but will remain standing on it and saved by it!

"By which (Gospel - v. 1) ***also ye are saved"*** -

"Are" - presently and continually saved

"Saved" - passively by God; not yourself

The Gospel saves a person, if his faith was not *"in vain."*

How does one *"believe in vain"*? He insincerely "believes" without purpose. He believes without meaning it. He goes through the motions but never really receives the reality (Ex: Simon the Sorcerer - Acts 8:13, 21-23).

One who believes in vain has an intellectual assent of the Gospel but not a personal appropriation. Even the Demons have an intellectual awareness of the facts but are Hell bound (James 2:19)

Marks of someone who has not believed "in vain" but has saving faith:

1) A changed life (II Cor.5:17)
2) A new fruit (Rom. 6:21-22; Mt.7:20; works which follow faith (Ja.2:18)
3) A spiritual desire (Jn.10:27; I Pet.2:2-3)
4) An obedient spirit (I Jn.2:29)
5) A love for God & His children (I Jn.4:7)

True faith evidences itself by persistence in the faith.

"If ye keep in memory" = If you firmly hold on to (cp. Jn. 8:31; Col. 1:23)

Anyone who departs from the faith never really believed it to begin with (I Tim. 4:1). Only those who hold firmly to Christ's Word are His disciples indeed (John 8:31; cp II Cor.13:5; II Jn. 9)

"Our salvation is kept by Christ's holding us fast, not primarily by our holding Him fast. Our holding onto Him is evidence that He is holding onto us" (MacArthur, p.399)

The Gospel presentation must include these three basic ingredients:

1. Man's problem (sin and resultant condemnation)

2. God's provision (Christ died for sin and arose)

3. Your personal reception (you must believe

The Gospel in 25 words:

"Friend, you have sinned.
But Christ died for your sin
and rose again.
Trust Him alone
and He will save you eternally.
Trust Him now!"

A Gospel Acrostic:

G od's
O nly-begotten
S on
P rovides
E ternal
L ife

Spread the Gospel!!!

If you know anything about the "Titanic," you know much of what took place 87 years ago, when the ship that even God couldn't sink, DID sink. Of the 1,528 people who ended up in the icy water, only six were rescued. But did you know that one of those six was actually saved twice that night?

His story is an inspiring reminder that there's more to life than mere survival.

To tell this man's story, though, I have to first tell you about another man, a Scot named John Harper. Harper, a minister of the Gospel, boarded the Titanic with his six-year-old daughter, Nana. He planned to travel to the Moody Church in Chicago, where he'd been invited to preach for three months. When the ship struck the fateful iceberg and began to sink, Harper made sure his daughter was placed into one of the lifeboats. He then began what would be the last evangelistic work of his young life.
As the freezing waters began to fill the ship, Harper was heard shouting, "Let the women, children and the unsaved into the lifeboats." Survivors reported that Harper took off his own life jacket and gave it to another man. "Don't worry about me," he reportedly said, "I'm not going down, I'm going up!"

When the ship began to sink, more than 1,500 passengers jumped or fell into the icy waters. As they gradually drowned or froze to death, Harper was seen swimming from one passenger to another, pleading with them to accept Christ.

Only six of the 1,500 people struggling in the water were later rescued, including a man who later identified himself as Harper's last convert. This young man had climbed up on a piece of debris.

Harper, who was struggling in the water near him, shouted out, "Are you saved?" "No," the man replied. Harper then shouted the words from Scripture: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The man did not answer, and a moment later he drifted away on the waves.

A few minutes later, the current brought the two men back together. Again Harper asked, "Are you saved?" Once again, the answer was "no." With his dying breath, Harper shouted, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." He then slipped under the waves for the last time.

Then and there, the man he had witnessed to, decided to turn his life over to Christ. Four years later, at a Titanic survivors meeting in Ontario, Canada, this man tearfully gave his testimony recounting how John Harper had led him to the Lord. I don't need to tell you that this dramatic story never made it into the movie. We live in a culture that seems to be more interested in fictional stories of romance, illicit sex, and priceless jewelry than in the real romance between God and His people.

When the subject of the Titanic comes up, every year at the anniversary of the sinking, tell your friends the story of the young Scottish minister who witnessed to Christ with his dying breath. And make sure your kids know the story a well. John Harper reminds us of a great lesson, the secret of the ages: that there's more to life than mere survival.

[The information for this BreakPoint commentary came from the book "The Titanic's Last Hero" by Moody Adams (The Olive Press, 1997). The testimonies in this book were originally compiled in 1912 by John Climie of Scotland.]