

1 Corinthians 15:3-5

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[0 : 00] And turn if you will to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. And we're going to read verses 1 to 5. It's on page 961 in the church by this.

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1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Rome or in Greece and the Apostle Paul set aside weeks on end to write these masterful theological treatises. But actually, what you have in the New Testament is you've got two ladies who can't get on in Philippi and what do we have? We have the letter to the Philippians because of that.

You have a group of Jewish Christians, they go on a tour, a preaching tour of Turkey and what do you have as a result of that preaching tour? You have the letter to the Galatians. And here is the dear old Corinthians this church with all their problems and all their questions and yet without that dysfunctional church with all their questions and all their problems, we wouldn't have 1 Corinthians. We wouldn't have these brilliant answers that God provides for us in 1 Corinthians and 1 Corinthians 15. Those of you who are teachers, you know it's like in a class.

[3 : 49] What do you need for an outstanding class? What you need is you need awkward pupils. pupils. You might not think that. But you need pupils that will put up their hands and ask the difficult question.

And they'll ask the searching questions. So lecturers know more than they're telling you, don't they? And if you want to access that extra knowledge, what you've got to do is you've got to stick up your hands and you've got to ask the question.

And that is what is happening here. So just flick back with me. Let me show you that. Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 7. And Paul keeps making this statement. And the ESV really helpfully actually kind of gives you these clues.

One of the things I like about this Bible translation is it is when the New Testament uses the same word literally it translates it as the same word. You'll see that now. So he says now concerning the matters about which you wrote.

Chapter 7.1. He's talking about marriage. And chapter 8 verse 1. Now concerning food offered to idols. He's going to answer that question.

[5 : 02] Then he says doesn't he now concerning spiritual gifts. And so he's moving through and answering their questions. Now what is the question in chapter 15 that Paul answers?

You'll see the problem in verse 12 of chapter 15. Now Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead. How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

The last issue that Paul deals with which is probably the most important one for him to deal with is is there any future for the body after the grave?

Is there any future for the body after the grave? If the dead are not raised so look at verse 16. If the dead are not raised well not even Christ has been raised.

Verse 29. Otherwise what do we mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all. Verse 32. It's the same thing. If the dead are not raised it's the same phrase.

[6 : 08] So Paul is answering this question. In 1 Corinthians 15 it's not so much an issue of forgetfulness but a denial of the resurrection of the body and a denial that at the end time well the

dead will be raised.

And one commentator says the Corinthian errors have resulted in one of the great theological treasures of the Christian church namely 1 Corinthians 15. Now notice what Paul says in this one. Just see there. Now I would remind you brothers of the gospel. I don't know what your earliest memory is. I think my earliest memory is the memory of Prince Charles and Diana getting married. It's a terrible thing as your earliest memory. But it's a turning point. You'll remember that huge vast dress that she was wearing.

It was a turning point. In some ways it was a momentous event but probably not. Where were you when Neil Armstrong walked on the moon? Where were you when JFK was shot?

[7 : 18] Well most of you weren't alive were you? But do you remember when those planes went into the World Trade Centre? 9-11. Do you remember where you were when you heard that Princess Diana died?

They're momentous events. And the words that Paul uses for gospel is a momentous event. he says I want to remind you of the momentous news which I literally gospels to you which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

I received it from God and I passed it on to you and you embraced it and you in the Corinthian church you received it and you stand on it and that means there's two you are saved.

now I would remind you brothers of the gospel I preached to you which you received in which you stand and by which you are being saved.

You are rescued. What are you rescued from? You are rescued from God because God is loving well of course he's loving but he's also holy he is just and God must punish sin and so here we are told in the gospel that God punishes sin in the person of the Lord Jesus his son and so this gospel is momentous news because it tells us how God in love rescues us from God himself Paul says this gospel is received it is held and as you stand on it it brings you salvation and outside of this gospel look at the end of verse 2 outside of this gospel there is vanity there is only vanity unless you believe in vain outside of the gospel verse 3 for I have delivered to you as of first importance now that is very very interesting isn't it verse 3 so where have you heard let's start with verse 3 before for I delivered unto you where have you heard that before go back to 1

[9 : 39] Corinthians 11 you heard it before because we read it in every communion service and in 1 Corinthians 11 which we'll read later on Paul passes on the Lord's supper tradition really and notice what he says for I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you and he goes on to speak about the Lord's supper and the Lord's supper is important we've been learning about it in the adult Sunday school I think in lots of churches in the UK we downplay the importance of the Lord's supper it is a means of grace it is a means of strengthening the Lord's people it is vital it is at the heart of church life but go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 do you notice the difference verse 3 for I delivered unto you as of first importance it's very very interesting he says

I pass the gospel message the word of the gospel on as number one first priority it is even more important than the Lord's supper the words takes priority over the sacraments it is even more important 1 Corinthians 15 than the Lord's supper what is Christianity about at its heart what it's about sometimes I ask people would you call yourself a Christian and I was at hospital this week and the nurse was talking me and I said would you call yourself a Christian and she said I'm trying do you get that it's an embarrassing answer really isn't it I'm trying wouldn't you think that being a Muslim is something to do with Mohammed being a Buddhist something to do with Buddha being a Confucianist something to do with Confucius so being a Christianity is it not something to do with Jesus and not just my effort if it's a matter of following

Jesus example it is a very cruel religion if you think the message of Good Friday is really follow the example of Jesus that is very very cruel because you cannot and pride causes us to invent all other ways which we think we can save ourselves being a Christian Paul says to the Corinthians is what for I deliver to you of first importance what I also received that Christ it's all about Jesus it's all about Jesus it's everything to do with him and so what I want to do over this Easter weekend is I want us to look at verses 3 and 4 and I want us to discover the four that we're going to look at the first two this morning and then the second two on Sunday if you go to a different church on Sunday morning tough luck you can email and get the recording or something so today we're going to look at the first two that and on Sunday we're going to look at the second two that so can you see them in verse 3 for I deliver to you as of first importance what I also receive that

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures notice what it doesn't say it doesn't say that Jesus died of course he did but it uses his title he is the Christ the king the anointed one the messiah the lord the one who is god in flesh he came and he died and the death of Christ is central isn't it earlier on in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 Paul said I decided to know nothing among you I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified he died he died an historically verifiable death but look at verse 3 he died and here is the theological meaning you have the event and the theological meaning why did he die he died for our sin he died for our sin what a remarkable thing he had no sin he had no sin of his own for which to die and death is the penalty for sin we said it in our prayers didn't we the wages of sin is death that's the wages sin pays but Jesus had no sin he had not earned the penalty and yet he died he pays it somebody else's penalty somebody else had earned that penalty by their own sin now if I were to say to you this morning what do you think is the most audacious claim of Jesus there are lots of them aren't there I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father but through me I think it's this one when he said in the midst of his enemies who of you which of you accuses me of sin I think that is probably the most audacious claim of the Lord Jesus so if I walked into the elders meeting this week and I said which of you accuses me of sin all six men would line up and tell me if I went to my family and I said which of you accuses me of sin they would all have a very long list those of you this morning if I said which of you accuses me of sin well you would all stand up those of you know me wouldn't you say well I've heard you say that I've seen you do this you can accuse but the only thing the only thing the only thing that his opponents could accuse Jesus of doing was eating with tax collectors and sinners in other words

[15 : 32] Jesus had no sin he was sinless and when he died he died for sin but not his own and so the apostle says for our sins for our sins on behalf of the sins that we as his people have committed the death of God's innocent son for his undeserving people and it is all of grace we don't deserve it it is kindness we don't deserve but look at the next words he died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures it is no knee jerk reaction from God is it God doesn't think oh the plan has gone wrong with Adam and Eve I've got to do something I've got to do something things are getting worse no it's according to the scriptures so 700 years before

Isaiah said we read it now called to worship he took up our infirmities let's go back even further than that let's go back to the first promise that God ever made what was the first promise God ever made was Genesis 2 actually the first promise God ever made was this and it would cost him dearly to make it so in Genesis chapter 2 in verse 17 we often think Genesis 3 15 was the first promise but it's not Genesis 2 17 you may surely eat of any tree of every tree in the garden but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die God says to Adam and Eve our first parents he says you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil for when you eat of it you will surely die and that was God's first promise and God made that promise and God knew when he made that promise that eventually that promise would be fulfilled

Adam did die but this would involve for God the death of his own son as the substitute for Adam and Adam's race and all who would come according to the scriptures he's the Passover lamb isn't he he's the Passover lamb do you remember the exodus when the firstborn the redeemed would look forward to the Lord Jesus as the lamb of God the sins that would be laid on him the death of God's innocent son for his undeserving people according to the scriptures and that Paul says is well it's from God and it is momentous news and he says that is my first priority being a Christian is not about being spiritual it is not about being good being a

Christian is not about believing in God it's about knowing that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that is what we preach minister I know quite well was facing opposition in his church and we were at a minister's conference over dinner and somebody said well what is it that they don't like about you and he said they accused me of preaching Easter sermons at Christmas that is exactly what Christmas is about it's about Easter the Lord Jesus the cute little baby the infant child came in order to give his life for our sin now the second that the second that in 1 Corinthians 15 it is this that he was buried that he was buried the certainty of his death is the foundation of his resurrection without his real death his resurrection was a fantasy what is this telling us it's telling us that

Jesus was not play acting it's not a pseudo death it's a real death Jesus did not faint Jesus did not pass out he really died and he died so much that he was buried and the second that in verse 4

underlines the first that in verse 3 the apostles creed puts it like this he was crucified dead and so dead he was buried and we know that his death was unique we must die we must die you will die unless the Lord Jesus Christ comes again it's inevitable but Jesus chose the moment he would die he chose the words by which he would die because

[20 : 56] Jesus was voluntarily dying for sin which was not his own he chose to die Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and he was buried let me say three things in closing the Christian faith is all about Jesus that's not rocket science is it but I think it is very fashionable in our culture to talk about God however you imagine him to be let us be absolutely clear according to the Bible Jesus is God and anything that you imagine about God that is not consistent with the person words and works of Jesus the Bible says is wrong it's not up to you you cannot decide Jesus is God and he is God in the flesh and the Christian faith is not about you it's not about me it is about him it's about what he's done and you and I can't tinker with that we can't play with that we can't say oh I know you don't think that about

Jesus death but come on we're all alright we all believe no you don't the Bible is clear isn't it it's about what he's done the shortest definition of the Christian gospel is the one in Galatians 1 isn't it we went around preaching him to preach him to preach him alone to preach Jesus is to preach the Christian gospel when I came to this church I had absolutely no idea what the church are here as lots of you will know and I remember coming in the first year I was here and Graham said oh it's Pentecost Sunday we've got some Pentecost hymns and at that point I had to work out what is Pentecost Sunday but I had no idea but anyway in my panic in the room there what I began to realise was oh should I be preaching something about the Holy Spirit all I had was a sermon about Jesus and then I thought that's exactly what Pentecost is about isn't it the first

Pentecost sermon in Acts 2 was all about Jesus when the apostle Paul finds the disciples of John the Baptist who've never even heard of the Holy Spirit what does he teach them about he teaches them not about the Holy Spirit actually he teaches them about Jesus because the Christian gospel the Christian message is all about Jesus Hudson Taylor had a young Christian missionary from Scotland who was about to go home from China on his on his furlough home missionary assignment is that what they call it Hudson Taylor called the man in and said to him when you get back to Scotland your great temptation will be to tell them all about China don't tell them about China tell them about Jesus and Jesus will look after China that is the great truth isn't it I sighed for rest and happiness I yearned for them not thee but while

I passed my saviour by looking for rest and happiness his love laid hold on me now none but Christ can satisfy none other name for me there's love and life and lasting joy Lord Jesus found in thee God cannot give you happiness and peace apart from himself in his son in fact true happiness and true peace does not exist apart from the Lord Jesus happiness and peace and rest are only found in Jesus the Christian faith is all about Jesus Christ died Christ was buried the second application is this it's all about the substitutionary element of what Jesus did at the cross it's all about the substitutionary element of what Jesus did at the cross it's about that transaction my brother was telling me about a girl who went into a jeweller shop in Swansea and he was in there I don't know what he was doing in there he definitely wasn't buying jewellery for his wife! he was in the jewellers and the jewellers said she said I'd like to buy a cross and she said do you want a normal cross or one with the little man on it it is that man he had no idea he had no idea of death the one with the little man on it isn't that what our culture thinks the glory of the cross is this what God's justice requires God's love provides what God's justice requires God's love provides we do not earn his death we receive it we trust it we believe it it's like collapsing into a hammock you put all your weight in that it's like collapsing onto a stretcher or a bed that's what faith is it is all by grace undeserved it is all through faith so let me ask you on this good

[26 : 27] Friday where does your confidence lie he died for my sin he was buried for my sin and the third and final thing well this is my tenth Easter preaching here and you would have thought you already know this and we do already know this is I think most of us already know exactly what I've said this morning that we're not going to tell you anything new so why do we need reminding because I think all my problems in life all my problems in life spring when I forget these truths and all your problems spring when you forget these truths as well it's hopefully why you come to church why do you come to church to hear the gospel because church believe it or not should be the place of reality

I know sometimes it doesn't feel like that but church is the place where you go to hear what God says and my biggest problems arise in my life when I forget these things and Paul says I want to remind you I want to remind you when I feel so guilty the gospel reminds me that my past has been dealt with when I fear the future the gospel reminds me there is glory to come when I feel so inferior to other people the gospel reminds me that I am a child of God when I am jealous of someone else the gospel reminds me that I am complete in Christ when I hate myself the gospel reminds me I am God's child and he made me in his image when I feel so insecure the gospel reminds me that God's love is unconditional and when I feel so insignificant the gospel reminds me that I am adopted into God's family and when I feel purposelessness the gospel reminds me that I am living for his glory and when I feel lonely the gospel reminds me that I am part of an enormous family and it starts right here in church and when I feel self righteous the gospel reminds me that it is only his righteousness will stand and when I doubt I have to come back to the fact of his life his death his resurrection and when I'm filled with pride I need to remember what he has done and when I'm self-centered I need to remember that because of what the gospel does I am a servant to Christ and to others do you think you need those reminders I need them I need to have the gospel preached to me I need to have the gospel read to me I need to have the gospel of the Lord Jesus sung to me he died for my sin he has been buried for it and I am set free from my guilt the debt has been paid paid for me J.I. Packer in knowing God says keep saying these things to yourself I am a child of God God is my father heaven is my home every day is one day near heaven mumble to yourself all day if I see you wandering around kneeling this week mumble to yourself I am a child of God God is my father heaven is my home every day is one day near heaven my saviour is my brother and every Christian is my brother and sister so listen to the old hymn he paid a debt he did not owe we owed a debt we could not pay I needed someone to wash my sin away and now I sing a brand new song amazing grace Christ Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay this is biblical this is true this is authentic this is apostolic Christianity and it's what you have and wonderfully for many of you today it is what you believe and it's what you've received and it's what you trust and it's what we rely upon and it's what we depend upon and it's where we stand is what you call orthodox Christianity and Paul says at the end of verse 2 by this gospel you are saved if you hold fast to the word I preached to you otherwise you believed in vain that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried let's pray