



God's Far-Reaching Love

1st Corinthians 15



God's Far-Reaching Love

- At The Cross, pg. 139 in big book
 - “Alas! And did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that Sacred Head
For such a worm as I?”
- Why would they rewrite the last line?
 - Because nobody in this day and age of promoting self-esteem and positive self-images really gets off on being called a worm

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- Well Randy, that's harsh, not Scriptural, and does not sound like the loving God I know
 - Bildad, one of Job's friends, asks a question that is theologically sound in light of the rest of Scripture that teaches about our innermost need for God due to our sin nature
 - **Job 25:4-6 MSG**, "How can a mere mortal presume to stand up to God? How can an ordinary person pretend to be guiltless? Why, even the moon has its flaws, even the stars aren't perfect in God's eyes, So how much less, plain men and women—slugs and maggots by comparison!"
 - **Psalms 22:6 NIV**, "But I am a worm and not a man"

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- I say all of this because Easter is only precious when we recognize our great need and God's great love
 - The beginning of a true and proper self-image is in seeing how desperately we need God
- There are two foundational themes found in Scripture
 - Mankind's great need for a Savior, Deliverer, Redeemer
 - God far-reaching love in providing one

In presenting the Gospel to Gentiles, God selected one that most hated, disbelieved, and abused the Gospel Message

- **1st Corinthians 15:9-10a NIV**, “9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am”
 - **1st Timothy 1:15 NIV**, “15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.”
- There was no room for the Gospel of Jesus in Paul’s life and saw no need for anything Jesus offered him

In presenting the Gospel to Gentiles, God selected one that most hated, disbelieved, and abused the Gospel Message

- Paul was prideful in who he was
 - There was no room in Paul's heart or theology for the Gospel of Jesus
 - The only answer to the Gospel Message in his mind was to censure it, to destroy it, to remove it from history
 - Sounds like today doesn't it
 - Until risen Jesus got Paul's attention on the Damascus Road

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- **Acts 9:3-5 NIV**, 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?” 5 “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied.
 - It was not this experience alone that convinced Paul of the truth of the Gospel – he found it was true in the Old Testament, Scripture

In presenting the Gospel to Gentiles, God selected one that most hated, disbelieved, and abused the Gospel Message

- Much like the Bereans in **Acts 17:11 NIV**, 11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.
- So, it was not a Jesus sympathizer writing these words, but a hardened unbeliever bent on the destruction of the Gospel of Jesus

Paul reminds the Corinthians it really does matter what you believe about Jesus

- Paul believed that a person named Jesus of Nazareth existed and performed miracles, taught great truths, loved the needy deeply
 - Paul believed Jesus was basically a good man, but a very dangerous one that challenged his way of thinking
- He even believed Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried
- Resurrection – impossible experientially, scientifically or logically
- He did not believe Jesus was the promised Messiah come to save mankind, come to save Paul
- Jesus did not match his assumptions or desires of what the Messiah would do and be

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- The Corinthian church was corroded with sin on a variety of fronts
 - Sharp divisions, Sexual immorality, Marriage and Family issues, Worship order...
 - They did not look much different than the unbelieving people around them
 - The Gospel of Jesus was being masked by this church's behavior

Paul reminds the Corinthians it really does matter what you believe about Jesus

- So Paul takes them all the way back to their beginning teaching
 - **1st Corinthians 15:1-2 NIV**, 1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.
 - The Gospel Message of Jesus Paul present never changed no matter who he presented it to

Paul reminds the Corinthians it really does matter what you believe about Jesus

- **Vs. 1,** “I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you”
 - The forgiveness of your sin debt before a righteous, holy, just God is only found in the finished work for Jesus Christ on the cross and the empty tomb proves God’s acceptance, the Gospel of Jesus
- **Vs. 2,** “By this gospel you are saved. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.”
 - If it is not Jesus crucified and resurrected than whatever you are believing in is not truth and will not eternally last

Paul reminds the Corinthians it really does matter what you believe about Jesus

- Peter told the Jews in the first sermon of the church age this same point
 - **Act 4:12 NIV**, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”
 - **MSG**, “Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one.”
- It matters what you believe and are trusting in

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Gospel of Jesus is bound to historical facts with eyewitness testimonies

- The Gospel of Jesus was not thought up in some theologian's mind
 - It is not some pie-in-the-sky hope for mankind
 - Jesus was a real person, He had real things happen to him similar to you
 - God provided eyewitnesses to these events

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Gospel of Jesus is bound to historical facts with eyewitness testimonies

- **1st Corinthians 15:3-8 NIV**, 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures
 - Here is the far-reaching, outrageous love of God in a simple Gospel Message
 - Unless you are gullible the next question should be, “How do I know this is true or why should I believe it?”

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Gospel of Jesus is bound to historical facts with eyewitness testimonies

- **1st Corinthians 15:3-8 NIV**, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Gospel of Jesus is bound to historical facts with eyewitness testimonies

- There are many message the Church can proclaim, many issues we can have a voice in, many things we can teach but the main message of the Church must be the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - Whatever happens in the individual churches, in your life must never hinder the Gospel of Jesus being seen and heard and felt
 - We never want to give unbelievers a reason to turn away from the Gospel Message

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- **Vs. 3b**, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures
 - **Isaiah 53:5 NIV**, But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.
- **Vs. 4**, He was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures
 - **Psalms 16:9-10 NIV**, 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, 10 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

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- **Vs. 5-8**, He appeared to various people in various ways
 - None of these were looking for Jesus' resurrection
 - They did not believe it even when the women returned and told them what they had seen and heard
 - They did not believe it even when Jesus appeared in the upper room with them later that evening

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- This is also not a complete list of appearances
 - **Vs. 5-8**, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

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- Since Christ has risen, we can hold confidently to the truth that we will be risen as well as promised by God in His Scriptures
- This is God's far-reaching love demonstrated to undeserving mankind
- **Romans 5:8 NIV**, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
 - **MSG**, "But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him."

God's Far-Reaching Love

- There are many religious teachings that are good earthly religions
 - They teach of family values, loving those around you, living humbly, self-sacrifice but there is little or no hope after death
 - The Gospel of Christ is trustworthy not just for this life, but also the life after we take our last breath
 - **1st Corinthians 15:20 NIV**, “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (*who have trusted in His provision for sin*).”

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- **Hebrews 2:3 NIV**, “How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.”
 - **Act 4:12 MSG**, “Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one.”



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