



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Bible, Part 231”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



Our text for today is **1Corinthians 15:3**:

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

Thank you for listening and thinking with me as we study God's Word to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As we begin, let me communicate to you that my preaching is based upon the fact that every episode recorded in the Bible is literally true.

We live in a culture in which fantasy and fiction dominate, but we need to resist the allure of made-up stories and intellectually concocted arguments as we develop faith in the meticulously recorded factual history of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ by the eyewitnesses who were present on the scene.

We must do whatever we need to do to develop the personal faith needed to believe that the Bible is the absolute truth, and recognize that every fiction put forth by man or by the devil to contradict or minimize the impact of Biblical accounts is a lie.

The Apostle Paul began this last and most important doctrinal chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians by reinforcing the primary truth about the Christian church. The gifts of love and prophecy are the best gifts, but no spiritual gift is of any value to one who is not saved in the first place. Without love, any of the other gifts do not profit, but without salvation, even love does not profit. Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:1–2**:

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

Love is important in expressing the gospel to the world. Prophecy is important in expressing the gospel to the world. But without the gospel, the good works of the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing is of any value. For without our knowledge and belief in the gospel, we are not saved from the destruction that is sure to come to the world. Without our knowledge and belief in the gospel, we have no part in the everlasting life that the Lord God would love for us to have and sent His Son to give us. **John 3:16–17** makes it clear:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.



It is imperative that we believe the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, without which, everlasting life will elude us. And what is this gospel? The Apostle Paul informs us in our text for today, **1Corinthians 15:3**:

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

We must recognize that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on Cross of Calvary as an historical reality. It is not a myth nor a fairy tale, but it is history, in that it actually happened, and the eyewitnesses to the event were there and are telling the truth about it. We must recognize this because without the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, the next part of the salvific reality of the gospel cannot follow. And the Apostle Paul gives us that next part in **1Corinthians 15:4: 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,**

The crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the substance of the gospel. There is no Christianity without these events.

Christianity is not just another way to show love and to get along with our brothers and our sisters. Christianity is the love of God giving the physical human life of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty that we owe for the sins that we have committed and then raising Him physically from the dead as the first fruits of those who sleep, meaning those who have died. The Apostle Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:22**:

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

How can we know this to be true? **1 Corinthians 15:5–8** informs us:
5 and that He [the Lord Jesus Christ] was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

6 After that He [the Lord Jesus Christ] was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

7 After that He [the Lord Jesus Christ] was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

8 Then last of all He [the Lord Jesus Christ] was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

We know this because of the eyewitness testimony of the Apostles, from the original disciples to the Apostle Paul, but also including a congregation of 500 men to whom the Lord Jesus Christ appeared. The writer of the Hebrews reinforces that which to which the Apostle Paul testifies, in **Hebrews 12:1–2**:

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.



We have more historical testimony from the Scriptures. Peter reinforces Paul's writings, in **2Peter 1:16**:

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

My friends, the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the gospel. It is doubtful that we are going to see the Lord Jesus Christ in person before the resurrection of the church, so it is ours to believe the eyewitness testimony of those that did see Him. As the Lord Jesus Christ told Thomas, in **John 20:29**:

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

We not only have the eyewitness testimony of the Apostles, but we have the circumstantial evidence of their martyrdom. Those eleven men, who proved themselves weak and frightened, fled and denied their association with the Lord Jesus Christ to avoid the possibility of sharing the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ before His resurrection. However, they became such bold witnesses of His resurrection that even the certainty of death could not dissuade them from testifying. They in fact chose death over recanting their testimony of the resurrection. And why? They were so convinced by their post-resurrection experiences with the Lord Jesus Christ that His fate would be theirs; that death would not be the end of life for them, but rather the passageway to paradise, as the Lord Jesus Christ told the criminal on the cross next to Him.

In His death, the Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sin. In His resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ let us know that the penalty for our personal sin had been paid and that we have not come into condemnation, but have passed from death into life, provided that we believe in His resurrection.

That, my friends, is the good news. That, my friends, is the gospel. The Apostle John tells us, in **Revelation 20:6**:

6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

But there were men in the Corinthian church who were like Thomas. They would not believe without seeing. Paul addressed them, in **1Corinthians 15:12**:
12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

These are faithless men who see church membership as a way of enhancing their physical life on planet earth because of the power of spiritual gifts. However, they desire to live in the larger human society that does not embrace the concept of the resurrection.

They want to play both ends against the middle. They are like the politicians that pay lip service to an affiliation with the church while voting in



legislatures and courts that abortion and homosexuality be legalized. They use the pandemic to make sure that the church was as hobbled as possible. They do not believe in the resurrection, but see their “allegiance” with the church as a means to obtain power and give themselves respectability.

The Apostle Paul looked at their actions and discussed the ramifications of that which they were doing, in **1Corinthians 15:13–18**:

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.

16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

Anyone that wishes to use the power of God to advance their position in the world while not actually believing the testimony of the Apostles and martyrs that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead will find themselves in a bad way. The Apostle Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:19**:

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

I heard the old hymnologist say,

This world is not my home; I'm just passing through
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
I can't feel at home in this world anymore.
Oh Lord, you know I have no friend like you
If heaven's not my home, then Lord what will I do?
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

The Lord God offers us everlasting life through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, after seventy or eighty years of life on this planet. But if our focus is on clinging to life on this planet while failing to come to a saving belief in the life, death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are of all men most pitiable.

The gospel is about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that He is the first fruits of those who are fallen asleep. Jesus clarifies, in **John 12:24–25**:

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.



25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

So those that love the power and glory in this life that can come from using the gifts of the Holy Spirit are on a course that will lead them ultimately to destruction. Those who are saved must not be attached to the world as we know it, but must recognize the reality of the resurrection and be prepared to join the Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom at any time. We must also endeavor to prepare others, because the mission that the Lord Jesus Christ gives us is to preach the gospel to every creature.

Preacher, you have not improved your sermon if you omit Jesus' offer of everlasting life. To preach how we can do better in this physical life is fine, but that is not what the gospel is about. You may remember the encounter between the Lord Jesus Christ and the young man that wanted to know how to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him, in **Mark 10:21**:

21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

The young man recognized Jesus as an authority on the subject of everlasting life, but the promise of treasure in heaven was not sufficient to convince the young man to give up his treasures on earth. **Mark 10:22** informs us:

22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

I wonder how the young man would react to hearing the preaching of the gospel. Would he accept that which the apostles preached about the resurrection, or would he disbelieve the apostles, and consider that he dodged a bullet by not selling out and following Jesus.

It would be interesting to know his reaction. But there is a reaction that is more important to each of us. How do we react to the Apostle Paul's preaching, in **1Corinthians 15:20**:

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

My Christian mother died from Alzheimer's disease. I preached her funeral, and was personally comforted to say that she would be once again be clothed in her right mind as she approached the throne of grace. Twelve years later, my Dad died of multiple organ failure. I preached his funeral, and was comforted to forecast their reunion in the heavenly places. They were buried together in adjacent plots, and it will be wonderful, on Resurrection morning when the dead in Christ rise first, that they will be able to rise together, because they embodied the love for one another that the Lord Jesus Christ admonishes us to have.



I understand the focus of almost everyone on human life on planet earth, because I share it. We know physical life. I pray daily that my loved ones and I would have a reasonable portion of health and strength and to be clothed in our right minds. This physical life is the life that we know, and, as we have seen in our study of the Scripture and our personal experience, to voluntarily give up that which we know for treasure in heaven requires saving faith. But it is ours to develop saving faith in the gospel during our time on planet earth, for saving faith is the entrance to the everlasting life that the Lord God has promised to those that believe in the life, death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is ours to listen to and believe the testimony of those who inhabited the first century church, especially those who were the eyewitnesses of the works of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul, who was an eyewitness, informs us, in **1 Corinthians 15:21–22**:

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

That first sin in the Garden condemns us all to physical death. The Lord God informs us, in **Genesis 3:17–19**:

17 Then to Adam [the Lord God] said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.

19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

Returning to the dust is the definition of physical death, to which we are condemned by the sin of Adam. But even though we must die physically, we are blessed to have access to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ through faith in His resurrection, that gives us eternal life, as the Apostle Paul informs us in **Romans 8:35–39**:

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



Those that focus on the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ over the things of this world will not be separated from the Lord. To them, eternal life is a guarantee, as Paul tells us, in **1 Corinthians 15:22–28**:

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.

28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

"Putting all things under His feet" does not destroy headship order. The Lord Jesus Christ is not going to put the Lord God under His feet, but will rather be subject to the Lord God, who sent the Lord Jesus Christ to save whomever of us that will believe in Him, His life, His death, His burial and His resurrection. As we line up under the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ will line up under His Father so that headship in the Kingdom will be maintained as the Lord God originally planned.

But the most important thing that we must do is to hold fast to the gospel. Should we do so, our position in the Kingdom is assured. Paul wants the Corinthians to know that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His church is inevitable. Equally inevitable is the defeat of the Lord Jesus Christ's enemies. All other secular or religious systems that do not recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ are part of the system of the Antichrist and will be destroyed, including the system of death that Satan wants so much to lure us into.

We live in blessed times in a blessed place, although our place and time are becoming less so. We live in a time in which Christian worship is not directly persecuted, although Satan is slowly taking over our governmental institutions and introducing concepts that we Christians know are contrary to the Word of God.

I read of our government practicing outward hostility to the Church, endeavoring to cripple the moral standards of the Church by threatening to revoke the tax-exempt status of those that do not conform to the immoral societal changes that the government wishes to promulgate, particularly as it pertains to homosexuality. And if the government is successful in doing so, many churches will have difficult decisions to make, because to preach the true gospel may cost them the majority of their contributions, if the people contributing are focused on



this life rather than eternal life. Preachers will be called to remember that the majority of the Apostle Paul's writing, including this very book of 1 Corinthians, was done from Roman incarceration, and Paul's life ended when his neck met the blade of Nero's chopping block.

Yes, we are free to worship, but we should recognize, even from the writing of the Apostle Paul, that our freedom to worship is not a given. The forces that oppose Christ will do whatever they can to abridge those freedoms and co-opt the church.

So, this lesson may seem to us to be historical, much more relevant in times of religious persecution. But times of religious persecution are always right around the corner, as people are more and more convinced that the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is a fairy tale or a story told to keep people in line, as I was convinced before I actually studied to show myself approved, a worker that does not need to be ashamed, one that rightly divides the Word of Truth. Paul asks the church, in **1 Corinthians 15:30–31**:

30 And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?

31 I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

What does Paul mean? Listen to Paul's persecution resume, given in **2 Corinthians 11:24–28**:

24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—

28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

Saints, Paul suffered these things. How will suffering these things effect our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we ready for the coming persecution, or are we at ease in Zion? Do we have the belief in the gospel that will allow us to focus on treasures in eternal life to the exclusion in treasures in this life? Do we believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to the point that we will confidently emulate His martyrdom, as did the Apostles and martyrs?

To say that we believe in Jesus may soon be more than a notion. Right now, we can make that statement without fear of persecution, but the day may come when we will be called upon to give lip service to a very different Lord than the one portrayed in the Bible.

So, it is of the utmost importance that we become and remain absolutely convinced that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered on Calvary's Cross, hung His head



in the locks on His shoulder and died, was buried in Joseph's new tomb, and then rose physically from the dead on that first Easter Sunday morning. Then the Lord Jesus Christ appeared physically to His disciples, to the 500 men at once, to the Apostle Paul and is waiting in heaven to be with those of us that are faithful to His teaching and make the good news of the Gospel clear to men, women, boys and girls.

Suffering is such a prominent part of the Gospel because we must be prepared to do it. As the old hymnologist tells us:

Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone, and there's a cross for me.
The consecrated cross I'll bear till death shall set me free;
And then go home my crown to wear, for there's a crown for me.
O precious cross! O glorious crown! O resurrection day!
When Christ the Lord from heaven comes down and bears my soul away.

We must be assured in our faith in the Gospel. I can tell you, saints,

I know it was the blood, I know it was the blood, I know it was the blood for me,
because one day when I was lost, He died upon the Cross and I know it was the
blood for me.

He hung His Head and died, He hung His Head and died, He hung His Head and
died for me, because one day when I was lost, He died upon the Cross and He
hung His Head and died for me.

They laid Him in the tomb, they laid Him in the tomb, they laid Him in the tomb for
me, because one day when I was lost, He died upon the Cross and they laid Him
in the tomb for me.

He rose up from the grave, He rose up from the grave, He rose up from the grave
for me, because one day when I was lost, He died upon the Cross and He rose
up from the grave for me.

He reigns as King of Kings, He reigns as King of Kings, He reigns as King of
Kings for me, because one day when I was lost, He died upon the Cross and He
reigns as King of Kings for me.

I know it was the blood, I know it was the blood, I know it was the blood for me,
because one day when I was lost, He died upon the Cross and I know it was the
blood for me.



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Saints, we have to know. We must do whatever we have to do to come to the unshakable conclusion the Biblical episodes recorded by the eyewitnesses are actually true, so when we are called to stand for that which the Bible says, we can do so. And even if we cannot convince those that choose to oppose us and persecute us, we have to be willing to stand on our text for today, **1 Corinthians 15:3–4:**

**3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,**

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