

39. Learning How to Explain the Gospel Clearly

In our last two topics, we talked about the instructions that Paul gave to help the Corinthian church learn to use the worship service of the whole church both to equip believers to share the Word of God and to build up the entire church. As we equip our physical and spiritual children to serve the Lord, we want to help each one learn to explain the Gospel clearly so that they are equipped to share the Gospel with relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances that have never repented of their sin of unbelief and placed their faith in Christ and His death and resurrection.

Paul explained the Gospel clearly so that every Christian in Corinth would know how to explain the Gospel to others and answer the questions that others might have. 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 says, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.” As Paul began these verses, he said that he was going to explain the Gospel. First, Paul said that this was the Gospel that he had preached to the Corinthians when he had been at Corinth. Although many things change in this world, we see that the Gospel is one thing that does not change.

Second, Paul said that this was the Gospel that the Corinthians had received when they placed their faith in Christ. Third, Paul said that this was the Gospel in which they now stood. Fourth, Paul said that this message of the Gospel is the message that saved them. Paul wanted to make it very clear to the Corinthian Christians that the Gospel is the only message that can provide salvation. It was the message to which they were to hold fast. The word that is translated “hold fast” means *to keep, to get possession of, to take or to hold back*. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17-21, we read, “Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.” Here, we see that there are several things to keep doing once we place our faith in Christ. In the same way, we are to hold fast to the message of the Gospel so we can share it with others.

We see in the following verses that there are four things that the Corinthian Christians were to hold fast and share as they shared the Gospel with others. These include the following:

1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
2. Christ was buried.
3. Christ rose again according to the Scriptures.
4. Christ was seen by many witnesses after His resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 says, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: 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.” Paul said that he had received this message that he was going to give them. Galatians 1:15-17 tells us that he received this message directly from the Lord, “But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia

and later returned to Damascus.” The Lord made sure that Paul could explain the message of the Gospel clearly as he took that message to the Gentiles.

We want to help our children clearly understand how to explain why it is important that Christ died for our sins. Hebrews 9:22 says, “And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.” We want to help our children learn to explain that if Christ had not shed His blood for our sins that it would be impossible for anyone to have their sins forgiven. Then, one of the evidences of the fact that Christ died was the fact that He was buried. Another evidence of the fact that Christ died is recorded in John 19:34, where we read, “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” The fact that the blood was already separating into blood and water was clear evidence of the fact that death had already occurred.

We also want to help our children clearly understand how to explain why it is absolutely essential that Christ rose again from the dead. 1 Corinthians 15:16-17 says, “For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” Here, we see that the resurrection is absolutely necessary or we would still have our sins. If Christ would not have risen from the dead, it would be impossible for Him to raise us from the dead. In Matthew 28:5-7, we see that the angel was the first to announce the resurrection of Christ. Those verses say, “But the angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.’” Here, we see that the angel was the first to give the news of the resurrection.

The soldiers and the enemies of Christ were the next to verify the resurrection. Matthew 28:11-15 says, “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.” And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” The soldiers told the chief priests all of the details that they knew about the resurrection. The chief priests and elders paid them a large amount of money and promised to protect the soldiers from death because the chief priests and elders recognized that their story was true.

However, Christ also had many other witnesses of His resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 says, “And that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.” There are a total of ten appearances of Christ after His resurrection that are recorded in the New Testament. More than 500 people saw Christ in the various times that He appeared. Most of those people were still living at the time that Paul wrote the book of 1

Corinthians. Many of these witnesses were later put to death because they taught the resurrection of Christ.

In 1 John 1:1, John explained four ways that he and the other disciples knew that Christ is alive. That verse says, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life.” Christ even invited Thomas to put his hand in the hole where the spear had gone into Christ. John 20:27-28 says, “Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’” Thomas was invited to check out the evidence for the resurrection of Christ.

Paul also shared his own evidence for the resurrection of Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:8-11 says, “Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.” Paul had seen Christ. Acts 9:3-6 says, “As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’” Paul was changed from the persecutor of Christ to the apostle to the Gentiles because he saw Christ.

Paul explained another key thing about the resurrection of Christ. He explained that the resurrection showed the grace of God to him personally. Prior to the appearance of Christ to him on the road to Damascus Paul had held the coats of those who stoned Stephen. Acts 8:3 says, “As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.” Acts 9:1-2 says, “Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” Here, we see that Paul was on his way to Damascus to arrest additional Christians at the very time that Christ changed his life.

As we help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain the Gospel clearly, we also want to help them realize the power of the Gospel. In Romans 1:16, Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” We want to help our children develop the same attitude as Paul. That will only happen as they see that we are not ashamed of the Gospel. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share the message of the Gospel that will transform the lives of others.

