

Easter 2016

1 Corinthians 15:3-11

1. If you're here today, you either go to Revolve or you thought, "We might as well check out that church with the weird name."
 - a. Why start another church? Why this job? Because I want to help people?
 - b. *[3a] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received:*
 - c. I want to give you what I have received.
 - d. Anyone who tells you that Jesus is about religion, teaching your kids morals, getting healthy and wealthy, politics or anything like that is just selling stuff
 - e. This is all about grace. It's the greatest love story.
 - f. *"Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love."*
 - g. And if it's true, it's worth sharing. If it's not true, let's leave now.
 - i. Road is out - gotta warn people
 - h. The church - the people of God - are tasked w/ passing that love in word & deed
2. *[3b] that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*
 - a. Before we can really understand what this verse is saying, we need to realize a few things...
 - b. **GOD RULES** - The Bible tells us God created everything, and that he is King over everything.
 - i. Because he rules, what he says matters. If he wasn't in charge - who cares. If he didn't have any right or say in the matter, we might as well do whatever we want. But if he does rule, if he is the king - that's significant
 - c. **WE SINNED** - We all choose to disobey God. The Bible calls this sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death.
 - i. We all fall short of the glory of God, we miss the mark (sin)
 - ii. "I never killed anybody" Maybe not, hopefully not, but the offense of our action is directly related to the importance of the person offended
 1. Let's say that I come up to you after the service and I slap you...
 - iii. The reality is that we've done a lot worse than a slap on the face...
 1. Love God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength - Nope
 2. Love my neighbor as much as I love myself - Nope
 3. Always treated God as God and never worshipped anything else - Nope
 4. Never spoke blasphemy - Nope
 5. Kept sabbath holy, carving out a day to rest and recharge - Nope
 6. Honor my parents always - Nope
 7. Never once "angry without cause" - Nope. Sometimes I don't even know why I'm angry.
 8. Never hated anyone - Nope.

- 9. Never lusted after anyone - Heh.
- 10. Never stole even a paper clip or ballpoint pen, told as much as a “white” lie, and not once desired anything that belongs to someone else. - Nope
- 11. Always “pure in heart,” perfect in thought, word, and deed. - Nope
- iv. Now. I’m going to stand before the God who is King. What’s he going to say? I’m done. BUT...
- d. **GOD PROVIDED** - God sent Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It’s something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us.
 - i. We needed a scapegoat - someone to take the blame, someone to take the fall. We need someone to get God’s wrath and punishment so we can get off without even a jot on our record.
- e. Getting back to our verse, Jesus died for our sins.
 - i. Literally, he died to atone or take away our sins (1 John 3:5)
 - ii. He accomplished this by dying on behalf of our sins (1 Peter 2:24)
 - iii. People say, “Maybe he fainted, maybe he escaped, maybe it wasn’t Jesus at all, but was Judas...” → Paul says, “he was buried”
 - 1. The fact that Jesus was buried verifies his death
- f. God knew this had to happen - predicted it, promised it, guaranteed that he would fix the sin problem. → It was all according to the Scriptures, as they explained
- g. This king who rules is a GOOD king, a GOOD father. In his “Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love,” he provided Jesus, the GodMan to receive the full punishment for sins.
- h. Why is this possible? Because...
- i. **JESUS GIVES** - He lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, he gave his life, BUT he also rose again. → And the resurrection matters...
 - i. *And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only [because the resurrection is a lie, then] we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:14-19)*
 - ii. But Christ has been raised. With GLORY and POWER.
- j. **Because Jesus GAVE His life for us, our sins are paid for.**
- k. **Because Jesus ROSE, death is defeated and we can be welcomed into God’s family for eternity.**
- l. You say, “Look, preacher, I’m not buying it. This whole thing's a joke.” Humor me.

3. *[5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.*
 - a. Appear visibly to those who knew him best → That's definitely Jesus, not Jesús
 - b. Appeared to some 500 more - most at the same time...
 - i. That's pretty substantial for a court of law
 - c. Appeared to JAMES - His brother who didn't believe him.
 - i. Imagine being Jesus' brother. Come on.
 - d. The fact that Jesus was seen verifies his resurrection
4. *[8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. [9] For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*
 - a. He even appeared to Paul - a dude who wasn't even looking for Jesus. A dude who hated Jesus. Was killing Christians. The Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of his day.
 - b. Untimely born - Greek word premature birth → before he was ready
 - i. Why wasn't Paul ready? Explain his past
 - ii. Ex: "If I ever stepped into a church the roof would collapse..."
 - iii. Nobody is too bad. At the same time, nobody is good enough.
 1. We are never ready - our spiritual rebirth is always premature
 - c. Why would Jesus come and appear to Paul? Why would he forgive Paul? Would you have forgiven Paul? Why would Jesus?
 - i. Because this good king. This king who rules. This king who has been sinned against by mankind at every corner. This king has a "Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love."
 - ii. He wants all people to be forgiven - soccer moms, prostitutes, drunks, pastors, schoolteachers, terrorists, and preschoolers.
 - d. Paul's past was simply a backdrop to display the grace of God
 - i. So is mine... So is yours...
 - ii. I don't care what you've done, God's grace is enough. He gave his SON. It's enough. His grace is enough.
5. *[10] But by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. [11] Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*
 - a. **GOD RULES || WE SINNED || GOD PROVIDED || JESUS GIVES**
 - b. **WE RESPOND.**
 - i. He poured out his grace, we respond to it.
 1. Positively or negatively, you always respond...
 - ii. He gives the gift. It's right there. Do we receive it? Do we open the box? Do we unwrap the most splendid gift that could ever be given - a Father/Son, Father/Daughter relationship with the KING OF CREATION.
 1. Positively or negatively, you always respond...
 - iii. But we have to respond. Mom can't do it. Dad can't do it. Your spouse can't do it. I can't do it. Your kids can't do it. You have to do it.

1. Positively or negatively, you always respond...
- iv. God's grace woos you like a lover. His never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love calls out to you.
 1. Positively or negatively, you always respond...
- v. It commands you to believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you from your sins. That means not religion, not good deeds, not church, not revolve, not Buddha, not the 5 pillars of Islam, not the Force, Jesus.
- vi. How? Through what He's already done on the cross.
- vii. *"The times of ignorance [people not knowing any better] God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:30-31)*
 1. It's not my job to judge you, but it is Jesus'
 2. God secured that job for him by raising him from the dead.
 3. You and I will have to answer to the one who poured out his blood.
- viii. So what do we do? Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.
 1. Positively or negatively, you always respond...
- ix. Like Paul, we respond to his grace → we hear, embrace, and live this good news.
- x. We respond to his never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love.
 1. Positively or negatively, you always respond...
- c. To those who haven't made a faith decision to repent and follow Jesus → I don't know where you are on your spiritual journey, but you need to think about it.
 - i. If you came w/ someone who is a follower of Jesus, talk w/ them about it.
 - ii. If you just showed up, or you don't even like that person, talk w/ me and we will set up a time to meet w/ me or an elder - one on one, small group
 - iii. The gospel always requires response. It can be response running from God or running to God in faith. You have to make a faith commitment
- d. To those who claim to follow Jesus, by the grace of God you are what you are.
 - i. It is your obligation to remember that → to live your life to promote that grace with your words and your deeds. To live out your resurrection hope
 - ii. Jesus first words, "follow and I will make you fish..." last words, "Go and make disciples..."
- e. Jesus is alive! And it makes all the difference. People need to know. It's not just for your happiness and celebration today, it's for our response - every day.
 - i. **God's never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love has conquered sin and death forever. How will you respond?**