

# I Want to Remind You of the Gospel

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[ 0 : 00 ] Lord, thank you for your word. Truly, it is a lamp for our feet. It is a light that guides us on the pathway of faith. Thank you for the Bible. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for leading the authors many years ago to put down in writing the truth we would need to know even today.

We pray that you would give us hearts that are open to receive that truth, too. And we pray this for Jesus sake. Amen. We'll be reading in a moment 1 Corinthians 15 verse 1 and we'll read a few other verses beyond that. Refer to a few other Bible passages as well.

But I want to just explore a bit with you this morning what the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to write to the church at Corinth when he said, I want to remind you of the gospel.

That's what I really want to do. I want to remind you of the gospel. Now, before he got to chapter 15, of course, there's 14 chapters leading up to it. And in those 14 chapters, the Apostle Paul had a lot of things to write to that church.

In part because there were so many problems in the church. But after those 14 chapters, Paul got to chapter 15. And this is what he said.

[ 1 : 22 ] Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel that I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. So this is back to basics.

I want to remind you of the gospel. I'll consider here the word brothers. That's a family word. And notice that the way it's used here, it doesn't leave out ladies. It's used inclusively, which is why some modern translations render this brothers and sisters.

Because it is indeed for all who are in the family of God.

And according to 1 John 3, if it's God who says we are his children, guess what? We really are his children. It's not just we're claiming. No, God says, you are my children.

Now, speaking of families, I grew up in a rather poor family. I remember that. Pretty poor. In fact, my parents were always looking for ways to save money.

[ 2 : 52 ] So since I had three older brothers, guess what that means? Hand-me-downs. Maybe some of you wore hand-me-downs.

I also remember that when I needed a new jacket, if there wasn't a hand-me-down available, my parents would buy me a jacket that was one size too big.

Ah, I know why they did that. They could save money, right? Because it would fit me, not just for one, well, sort of fit me, not just for one seat.

I could get two years out of that jacket. A size too big. Well, this truth that we are the family of God, if you think about it, it's like a jacket that's a size too big.

I mean, it's ours to know and to claim by faith, but it's something we also have to grow into. And we do have to grow into. It's like, you're my children, God says.

[ 3 : 52 ] You're brothers and sisters now. What does that mean for you? It's something to grow into, you see. The fact is, we don't always love each other the way we could.

Certainly not the way God loves us. And sometimes pride gets in the way. That kind of messes things up, doesn't it? When we're proud, or maybe we're too slow to say, I forgive you, if someone asks for forgiveness.

But either way, though it's something to grow into. This is indeed a great truth. It's an application of the gospel. And this is something that we do own, right?

God gives it to us, this truth that we are his children. And since we do need to grow into it, we can think as well. And we do well now and then to do this, to go to 1 Corinthians 13, two chapters back, because the Apostle Paul knew.

The church at Corinth, they just needed to know what it really meant to love each other. There were problems in that church. There were tensions. What does it really look like to love each other? How

are you going to grow into this truth that you are the family of God?

[ 5 : 06 ] Well, you know 1 Corinthians 13, maybe. Those familiar words, if I speak with the tongues of men and angels but have not love, what am I? I'm just a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

And so, church, think about what it really means to love each other, not how do you feel about each other, but what choices are you making to show that you are patient and you are kind and you don't envy each other and you don't rejoice with lies.

You rejoice with the truth and love protects and it hopes and it trusts and it perseveres. You see, brothers and sisters, since we are brothers and sisters, let's keep growing into this truth.

Well, another key word here in verse 1 is gospel, which literally means good news. And so, Paul was writing to that church, basically, dear friends at Corinth, I know you've already heard the good news of Jesus.

I know you heard it because I myself shared it with you. And as I think about this, I praise God that when you heard about Jesus, it didn't swoop, you know, one in ear and out the other.

[ 6 : 20 ] No, you actually believed him and you took your stand on it. It changed your life. And I know you've already heard this, but it's so important.

We're going to go through this with you again. It's really. And it is important. Indeed, the truth of the gospel is the very thing that fuels our love for Christ.

And it drives us step by step in the way of following Jesus. And it shapes what we do, everything we do for the kingdom of God.

And Paul said, I'm going to remind you of the gospel. And notice in this that the gospel, though, it's not just for new believers. It's not like bumpers, the bowling alley that they put in the alleys, you know, for youngsters.

Maybe not so youngsters while they're trying to get the hang of it. You get the hang of it, take the bumpers away, right? Well, it's not like that. Oh, it's something we all need no matter how much we grow in the faith.

[ 7 : 40 ] Let's think about the good news. In this way, Paul was reminding the church of something he had celebrated with them back in chapter 1, where he said, Christ sent me to preach the gospel not with human wisdom, lest the gospel be emptied of its power.

And what is at the center of that good news message? Well, it's this, the message of the cross. Yes, it's foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

It is the power of God. So I'm glad Paul said, I can remind you of the gospel, the power of God. Being saved sounds like a process, doesn't it?

And that is true. We were saved, you could say, in eternity past when God chose to make us his children. We were also saved in our lifetime when first we cried out to Jesus, saying, God, be merciful to me.

And we are being saved as we take our stand on the gospel day by day. We are being saved in the sense that we are growing into the truth, that we are God's children growing in faith, hope, and love.

[ 8 : 57 ] We are learning more what it means to imitate God since we are his dearly loved children. Gospel.

It's the power. So how much should we study the gospel? How often should we reflect on it? Maybe until we master it?

Oh, no, no, no, no. How about until it masters? Paul said, I want to remind you of the gospel.

And in this passage, reading on a bit down in verses 3 and 4, we see how Paul summed up the gospel. He said, what I received I passed on to you as of first importance, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures.

Now, this good news, it is an amazing story. It's amazing in many ways. Let me just point out a couple. For one thing, it's amazing that Jesus was willing to die for us when he had committed no sins.

[ 10 : 06 ] It wasn't for his sins, but ours. Can you imagine that someone being willing to die in your place for your sins, though you never did anything good for them?

That's love. It's amazing. There's a hymn that says, was it for crimes that I had done? He groaned upon the tree. Amazing pity, grace unknown, and love beyond degree at the cross.

It's amazing. But that's not the end of the story. This is why it's amazing, too. There's what happened on the third day. Think of that for a moment. Think of someone who's in the news,

someone who's a criminal, who's condemned by a jury, sentenced by a judge, someone who is publicly executed, someone who is pronounced dead by experts, someone whose dead body is laid in a tomb.

What would you do later if about half a week later you heard that that person who had been publicly executed was alive? I mean, would you believe that? Would you?

This is amazing. Dead men don't come back from the dead. Dead men tell no tales. But in the gospel, oh, this is such good news.

[ 11 : 25 ] Jesus, crucified, dead, buried. He rose on the third day, and his story continued. It's amazing. I was just thinking about this over the years as a pastor.

I've officiated at more than 100 funerals. And then I thought to myself, I wonder how many of those 100 plus came back to life? 10%?

Actually, no. Zero percent. Zero. But Jesus did rise on the third day. It's amazing. Indeed, this part of the story is so extraordinary, so amazing.

It's like we need proof before we would even believe it. And so for the Corinthians and for us, Paul offered a couple of kinds of evidence, a couple of kinds of proof.

For one thing, he pointed to the scriptures. This is according to the scriptures. And so Paul, in other writings, he pointed out that Jesus was indeed the Messiah promised long before.

[ 12 : 28 ] And we know that as we study the Old Testament too. For example, Psalm 16 says that the Holy One, the Messiah, would die, but he would not experience decay. Yes, he would rise again.

And so Isaiah 53 said that the suffering servant of God, after he had died, he would still see the light of life, and he would rejoice. He would have to rise to do that.

And then there's all this evidence too of the eyewitness encounters with Jesus. Before he ascended to heaven, the risen Jesus appeared to Peter saying, Peter, do you love me?

Then feed my sheep. Jesus appeared to the 12, showing them his nail pierced but resurrected hands and feet. Jesus once appeared to a gathering of even 500 of the brother.

There are many eyewitnesses. He appeared to his half-brother James, who previously had thought Jesus was very mixed up. I mean, thinking he was the Messiah. How could he think that?

[ 13 : 28 ] But Jesus appeared to him, and James became a great leader in the church. And finally, Paul said, when I was on the road to Damascus to persecute the church, Jesus, the risen Jesus, appeared to me from heaven.

Wow. Well, did these things really happen? These eyewitness events? Oh, yes. Each encounter with the risen Jesus changed lives.

Fearful, cowardly Peter became a bold witness for Jesus. James, who had thought his brother Jesus was half crazy, became that leader in the church. And Paul, who had persecuted the church, became a church builder who risked his life to proclaim the good news that Jesus is Lord.

And all through church history, the gospel continues to change lives. Who do yours and not?

It's amazing. Now, this is indeed worth remembering. So let me also, taking a cue from the Apostle Paul, refresh your memory about the gospel.

[ 14 : 39 ] And this might indeed be a reminder. I don't remember. I might have shared some of this with you already. But it's worth thinking about. Like what we call the three R's of salvation.

Not reading, writing, arithmetic. But three words that reveal the good news. From Colossians 1, verse 13 says that God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

Verse 14 says that in Christ we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. A bit further down in Colossians 1, verse 20 says that it pleased God through Christ to reconcile all things to himself, whether things on earth or in heaven by making peace through his blood that was shed on the cross.

And so there you have these wonderful three R words, right? We are rescued. We are redeemed. We are reconciled to God. Rescue.

Imagine someone in an earthquake, trapped under rubble, completely dark. It's scary. Legs pinned down.

[ 15 : 55 ] Can barely move his arms. He can't. He can't get himself out. No way. And tap a little bit maybe, hoping a rescuer will hear him and come and reach him in time.

But that's a bit like our predicament, isn't it? In Adam, how we are weighed down by Adam's guilt and our own transgressions. And yeah, we need to be rescued from that.

We need God, actually, to reach into our lives because we can't save ourselves. It just can't be done. And yet Psalm 40 gives us good news. The psalmist said, I waited patiently for the Lord and he turned to me.

He heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire, and set my feet upon a rock. And Christ, God has rescued them.

And redeemed. Every time I see the word redeemed, I think, oh, a price was paid. And that's a good way to think of it. A price was paid. Redeemed. A price was paid.

[17:04] For what purpose? Well, to set us free. To release us. To set us free from our past, to be God's children forever. And what price was paid?

Well, God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son. And when Jesus went to the cross, he redeemed us, not with perishable things like silver and gold, but with his own precious blood.

Oh, a great price was paid for our redemption. And reconciled. Oh, we were strangers to God.

We were cut off by our own foolishness. We didn't really know God as our creator and redeemer.

But when we were his enemies, God reconciled us to himself by the death of his son.

Romans 5 says, and since we have been reconciled to God by Jesus dying, how much more shall we be by his reliving?

[18:06] One more reminder. Actually, we talked about this just last Sunday. The good news, and it's just amazing, the good news of union with Christ.

To keep it simple, and I have to keep things simple, I think of what happens when, I've got a book here, and I take a piece of paper and I put it in a book.

It's in the book. Union with Christ. Why, well, again, to keep it simple, I have to think of it like, okay, as long as, as long as the paper is in this book, whatever happens to the book happens to the paper, right?

If I throw it in the mail, send it to my daughter in California, if I mail the book to her, the paper goes with it, and if I lock the book away in a safe, the paper's locked away with the book.

Its destiny is one with the book, and think of that. God unites us with Christ in such a way that our life is hidden with Christ in God, and our destiny is now the same as, as long as we're in Christ, is the same as that of Christ himself.

[19:47] That's good news. New Testament actually is full of references to this. Here's just a small sample. Romans 6, verse 4. We were buried with Christ through baptism.

With Christ, buried with him. And, if we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly be united with him in his resurrection. With him in his resurrection.

1 Corinthians 1, verse 2. To those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy. See, in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

And, there's a lot of these references in Ephesians 2, verse 6, which says, God raised us up with Christ and has actually seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

that's the gospel. With Christ. In Christ. God regards you with Christ and in Christ.

[20:53] Again, I just have to keep it simple. Like, paper in this book. And then I think of how the destiny of the paper is defined by the destiny of the book.

And I wonder, it's such a wonder of God's grace that he unites us with Christ so that his destiny is our destiny and his glory becomes our glory.

You may not feel this, but this is the gospel truth. truth. And it's because of this that the apostle Paul could say this toward the end of Romans chapter 8.

This really gave him confidence for the future. Indeed, he said, I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is, where?

It is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Where are we? We are in Christ, praise God. And where is his love? It is in Christ.

[22:12] So, forever, we are God's beloved children in Christ. And this can give us confidence too for the future.

Oh, if I'm having a really good day and I'm rejoicing, I am in Christ. But if I'm having a horrible day and things are just going wrong and the news is bad and I feel awful and things are just falling apart

around me, guess what?

I'm still in Christ. if I'm rejoicing because the phone rings and one of my kids says, you have a new grandson, I'm so rejoicing.

I'm in Christ. But, what if tragedy strikes? I'm in Christ then as well. And, what if I'm praying and it just feels like the spirit is working in me and through me and I'm, I can almost hardly contain it.

Well, I'm in Christ. But, what if I'm going through what many have described as the dark night of the soul when nothing I seem to say or do or think or believe makes any sense? Well, I'm in Christ then.

[ 23 : 32 ] You know, that's not just a motivating, thank you God, but it's a sustaining truth. and hopefully we're seeing it's good to be reminded of the gospel.

And I trust that the Holy Spirit will use the gospel truth that you proclaim with singing and praying and proclaiming the gospel.

I trust he will continue to use it to comfort us and yes, to motivate it to live for Jesus. We come to Jesus for rest and then power the Spirit to go up our sleeve and do the work God has called us to do looking to Jesus blessing his name.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we do thank you for the gospel. Thank you for the good news that you are God of grace and mercy as well as power and justice.

And thank you God for the good news that you take us and bring us into your family and you even link us to Jesus so that we will share in his glory.

[ 25 : 03 ] O Lord, encourage us with this truth and yes, as we said, may it motivate us ever to love and serve you. And bless us now too, Lord, as we celebrate together the Lord's Supper.

In it, may we also see, sense, even taste the good news of Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.