

## What is the Gospel of God's Grace?

Introduction: Greetings... Subtitle. On one trip to China, a brother in Christ and I went out one night to take pictures. While walking around, we saw a little girl about 8 or 9, by a large Mao Zedong statue. She spoke very good English. As we talked, a small group gathered around, including a soldier. What did we do? We shared the gospel, and the little girl translated, at the foot of this statute in China. It was amazing! It is probable some of them didn't know the Gospel. Now, if someone asked you, "What is the gospel?" what would you say? Every Christian needs to know and be able to explain the Gospel of God's Grace. Please stand as we read God's word.

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-6** - Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you - unless you believed in vain. 3For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

Prayer...

The Church in Corinth was a mess. They were confused about sin, spiritual gifts, leadership, doctrine, and more. Paul wrote this to correct problems and answer questions. Chapter 15 deals with the resurrection, but he starts with the gospel. Each topic we will cover should be studied more. Please do so. I will give a summary.

### A. 15:1-2 - The Gospel Believed

Paul declared the gospel in Corinth at the end of his second missionary journey in Acts 18. He reminds them of the gospel he preached. They were saved by it if they held fast to it. Paul proclaimed the truth to them. They received or took it from him. Example: If I gave you 900 million yen and you took it, you received it. They received the gospel from Paul, in which they stood in or were established. They believed it. They held fast or took possession of the gospel of grace. Salvation cannot be lost, but Paul challenged them to make sure they truly believed. Do you truly believe the Gospel? Have you received it and embraced Jesus?

### B. 15:3a – The Gospel Received

Paul received the gospel. It belongs to God: Romans 1:1-4. God revealed it to Paul. Application: Those who change it blaspheme God. There are many false gospels. The only way to see lies, is to know the truth. Next is, 5 aspects of the gospel: First...

### **C. 15:3b – Christ Died for our Sins**

The purpose for Jesus' death on the cross was to die for our sins. Question: How would you define sin? It depends. It depends on: 1. Your understanding of the Bible. The amount of time you have spent studying, reading, obeying along with your experiences impact your understanding of sin. 2. The culture in which you live. The West is influenced by the Reformation defines sin like breaking the law. It is an action based in an attitude and is individually focused. It's more of a legal view. In Asian cultures generally, it is looked at as dishonoring God or bringing shame and is more group focused. It is more of a relational view. Question: What does Scripture say? We sin by action, because in our nature, we are sinners, rejecting and rebelling against God. We have dishonored Him, and willingly reject the relationship He offers. Sin is relational and legal. We all fall short of God's perfection, rebel against Him and reject the relationship He offers. When you share Christ with someone, make sure that person understands the problem is a heart problem called sin. Our internal sin leads to our sinful attitudes and actions. It is helpful to go back to creation, explain where sin came from and how it affected everything.

Everyone has sinned: Romans 3:23. We have all dishonored and disobeyed God. We have all broken His Law and taken His glory for ourselves. We deserve to die, but Jesus died in our place. This is the doctrine of substitution. The holy justice of God demands sin be punished. The holy love of God paid for sin in Christ, for those who receive Him by faith.

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:21** – God (the Father) made Him, (Jesus) to be sin (sin sacrifice) who knew no sin (He was sinless), that we (everyone who believes) could become the righteousness of God in Him (we receive His righteousness).

Now, when talking about Jesus, we must talk about the Jesus of the Bible. Many use the Name Jesus, but they do not believe the Jesus of the Bible. Jesus is God. He was without sin. He was perfect as God in human flesh. The eternal Son was born of a virgin and lived the perfect life. He died the perfect sacrificial atoning death in our place. The Creator was crucified by His creation on wood He created! Everyone dies, but He died for our sins. Second... He was...

### **D. 4a – Buried**

He was buried in a borrowed rich man's tomb. He went through burial practices in 1<sup>st</sup> century Israel. John 19:39-40 says there was about 100 pounds of myrrh and aloe used. Application: This all happened in history. The Jews and Romans knew where He was buried. He was in the tomb for 3 days. But... Third...

### **E. 4b – Raised Again**

He was raised again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day in the same body. This is vital! Without the physical resurrection of Jesus, there is no Christianity. Without the resurrection, we are still in our sins and we have no hope! It was not a spiritual resurrection, but physical. Sources outside of the Bible talk about it. The one

thing that would have stopped Christianity before it started was for the Romans or Jews to display the body of Jesus! They couldn't because He came out of the grave. He is alive! Next...

#### **F. 4c – According to the Scriptures**

2 times Paul refers to the Scriptures. First was in verse 3, second in verse 4. Question: What is he talking about? The Old Testament. It foretold Messiah would come, where He would be born, that He would die for sinners, be raised again, and more. One example is Isaiah 53. Written by the prophet Isaiah about 700 years before Jesus came. Paul pointed the Jews and the Gentiles to Scripture. Applications: Learn about Abraham, Moses, Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22. When we witness, use the Bible! Learn how to put the Bible together. There are connections between the Old and New Testament, we need to understand. One connection is fulfilled prophecy. Fifth...

#### **G. 5-8 – Seen by Many**

This was not a hallucination. He was physically there. People saw Him, touched Him, heard Him teach and followed Him. Read the Gospels and Acts and see the many times Jesus showed Himself alive. Paul gives a summary of those who saw Jesus. He does not give every detail. He mentions Cephas or Peter, and 12 disciples. Over 500 people saw Him, most who were still alive when Paul wrote this. The gospel is based in history and not a feeling or experience. It is not a myth, but fact and truth.

Application: Those who saw Jesus and believed were changed! Paul was a Pharisee who hated believers. He was going to arrest Christians and Jesus showed up! Paul's life was radically changed! If we have believed in Jesus, our life should be different than the world. We are not perfect, but we are different. One evidence of being a Christian, is a changed life. Has He changed you? Is He changing you? Knowing the Gospel of God's grace is critical, but how do we receive salvation and embrace grace?

#### **H. Ephesians 2:8-9 - We Receive Salvation by Faith**

**Read Ephesians 2:8-9** - For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Most believe one can achieve salvation. They believe if you work hard enough, do enough good, be a good person, or not be as bad as someone else, pray a prayer, then they will get into heaven. Some believe if they are sincere enough, get baptized as a child or adult, give enough or are religious enough, then God will forgive them. These views are man centered religion and an offense to God. God has provided one way, through the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Manmade religion says you must DO, to achieve salvation. God says the work of salvation is DONE, and you receive salvation. How? By faith. Salvation is a gift of God by His grace, we receive by faith, or trusting what He says. Question: What is grace?

Grace is God's goodness extended to those who do not deserve it. We are His enemy outside of Jesus. But He, as an expression of compassion calls people to salvation through the Gospel. We do not earn it.

We do not deserve it. We cannot do anything to keep it. It is all based on God's good character. We are saved by grace through faith. But, we also live by the grace of the Gospel. Question: What is faith?

Faith is trust in action. We express faith in many ways every day. We trust our cars will start in the morning. We trust that public transportation will be on time. We trust we will get paid for our work. We are trusting technology will work now for you to see and hear me! In salvation, we trust in what Jesus did for us. We trust that God gave His Son as a sacrifice in our place, so that when we believe in Him, we have everlasting life – John 3:16. We receive salvation by faith, and we live by faith too.

## **I. Grace in Our Daily Lives**

Some believe the gospel is only for salvation, but not for life. That is not true! Believing the gospel impacts our lives. How? Here are some examples. I will refer to the Scriptures, which you can read in context later. That's your homework...

2 Corinthians 5:17 - in Christ, we are new creations. Perhaps you struggle with guilt. You have confessed it to God, asked forgiveness of the others. But you still struggle with what you did in the past. In Christ, God has forgiven you completely. You are a new creation. This doesn't mean we won't struggle. We do. But don't burden yourself with what God has forgiven you.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 - Paul talks about the ministry of reconciliation. In Christ, God reconciled us to Himself. He brought us back into a right relationship with Him. Is there someone you need to reconcile with? Perhaps a family member, church member, former friend, or co-worker? If you were wrong, then confess it to him or her. If you were wronged, then take it to God and ask Him what to do, because either way, He tells us to take the step towards reconciliation, when possible.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 says to run from sexual sin and glorify God with our body because we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This is for singles and those married. If you look at pornography, stop. If you are tempted to cheat on your spouse, don't. Rebuild the relationship with your spouse, asking God for help. I know it may be complicated, but we start with what God says.

Colossians 3:21-25 talks about slaves and masters. We could say employees and employers. If you have a job, you serve Christ. It is from Him you receive a reward. It can be hard but do it for Him and be His witness in your workplace or school. These are just a few examples of how we can live out the Gospel of God's grace.

What if you were betrayed, as an individual, family, church, or ministry? How does the Gospel connect to this? The Gospel speaks of confrontation. God confronts us in our sin, and He tells us to confront others with theirs, as needed. Grace and forgiveness are extended. Jesus was betrayed by nearly everyone when He was crucified. He did not try to get personal vengeance. Romans 12:19 state we as Christians are not to take personal revenge, as well as Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 5:39. There's more, but this gives glimpses into the Gospel connection to the pain we go through.

Conclusion: The summary of the God's gospel of grace is: 1. Jesus died for our sins, 2. He was buried, 3. He was raised on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, 4. According to the Scriptures and 5. He was seen by many. We receive salvation by His grace, through faith, and not by works. Have you believed in Christ? Have you received His salvation as a gift?

If not, this is your opportunity. It's not a formula or magic prayer. Pour out your heart to God. Turn from your sin and trust in Him. Here is an example prayer which you can say in any language...

*Lord, I am a sinner and have broken your Law. I have dishonored and offended you. I rejected the relationship you have offered by your grace until now. I cannot save myself. I put my faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, and trust in His death and resurrection, according to Your Word. Forgive me of my sins. I want to serve You as Lord and Savior of my life. Amen*

If we have trusted in Him, are we living for Him? Have you been Biblically baptized? Have you committed yourself in membership to a local church to grow, serve and be accountable? Join OIC. Are we living out the change the Gospel brings in our lives, our relationships, our work, and our attitude? If so, by God's grace, praise Him. If not, we need to ask God and ourselves... why?

I shared about one trip to China. We don't know what happened to those we shared with, or with the little girl. We can't control others response to the gospel, but God tells us to proclaim the gospel and make disciples. God's gospel of grace is for all people, at all times, for all nations and all languages. Share Christ with someone this week and leave the results to God. May He show us how the glorious gospel changes lives!

Prayer...