

A. What is the Gospel

What Paul is going to talk about in 1 Cor. 15 he says, is “the gospel”: “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you” (v. 1). “By this gospel you were saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you” (v. 2)

“I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins” and so forth. That brings me to the first of my eight summarizing words. (v.3)

I. The gospel is Christological, it is Christ-centered.

Christ himself is Emmanuel, God with us; he is the long-promised Davidic king who will bring in the kingdom of God. Jesus alone is the way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father except through him, Paul does not tell his readers, “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ”; rather, he says, “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2).

II. The gospel is theological. This is a short-hand way of affirming two things. First, as 1 Corinthians 15 repeatedly affirms, God raised Christ Jesus from the dead (e.g. 5:15). Second, the text does not simply say that Christ died and rose again; rather, it asserts that “Christ died for our sins” and rose again. Sin and death are related to God in Scripture.

III. The gospel is biblical. “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

The gospel is historical. Its truth is embedded in human history and revealed through a real person, who no denies really lived.

IV. The gospel is personal. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not merely historical events; the gospel is not merely theological in the sense that it organizes a lot of theological precepts. It sets out the way of individual salvation, of personal salvation. “Now, brothers,” Paul writes at the beginning of this chapter, “I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved” (1 Cor 15:1-2).

V. The gospel is universal. If we step farther into 1 Corinthians 15, we find Paul

demonstrating that Christ is the new Adam (vv. 22, 47-50). There is not a trace of ethnic segregation here. The gospel is universal.

VI. The gospel is eschatological.

It is not enough to focus narrowly on the blessings Christians enjoy in Christ in this age: the gospel is eschatological.

I Cor 15 tells us much about the Gospel.

(1) This gospel is normally spread by proclamation. This gospel, Paul says, “I preached to you” (1 Cor 15:1), and then adds that it is “the word I preached to you” (15:2).

(2) This gospel is fruitfully received in authentic, persevering faith. “This is what we preach,” Paul writes, “and this is what you believed” (1 Cor 15:11).

(3) A result is personal self-humiliation. When the gospel is properly understood and received in persevering faith, people properly respond the way the apostle does. Humility, gratitude, dependence on Christ, confession of sin—these are the characteristic attitudes of the truly converted, the atmosphere out of which Christians experience joy and love.

(4) This gospel is rightly asserted to be the central confession of the whole church.

Always be suspicious of churches that proudly flaunt how different they are from what has gone before.

(5) The gospel is boldly advancing under the contested reign and inevitable victory of Jesus the king.

.