

Life after the Life After

KSBC 4/4/10

1Corinthians 15:1-11

Intro. Meaning matters. Sometimes meaning is never really understood. Sometimes meaning is misrepresented. Sometimes meaning is forgotten. Sometimes meaning is totally neglected. Easter Sunday in Lafayette, Indiana is a crisis of meaning. By that I mean basically what these words mean . . . Easter is a disaster and a catastrophe regarding the significance, importance, implications, worth, value and consequence of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. While the average person inside and outside of church can connect Easter and resurrection, the meaning has been forgotten or neglected.

Warmer weather, new clothes, family celebrations, bunnies, ham and chocolate . . . even hunting for all those lost eggs . . . may seem like the culprit that deflects our attention and affection from Christ, but that is not necessarily the case. Sometimes meaning is simply never really understood, it is misrepresented, forgotten or neglected. We need to be reminded about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its key significance to the saving and transforming gospel that we have heard and received. A visit to 5 different churches today could very well yield 5 different meanings for the resurrection of Christ. I am certain we do not understand the crisis of meaning before us today. Our distraction and forgetfulness is both dangerous and sad.

To a distracted and forgetful church, the Apostle writes with detail to explain the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ's resurrection guarantees the complete and total reversal of sin and death in the life of a child of God. Resurrection is more than life after death. It is life after the life after death. We will explain this more in the weeks to come as we continue our study of 1Corinthians 15. The first point that needs to be made as we understand and celebrate the meaning of the resurrection is to zoom out a bit and see the connection between Jesus' resurrection and the gospel. As a matter of fact, the scriptures set the stage for teaching the resurrection of Christ by referring us to what is probably a written creed often taught and repeated by the early church.

We begin our understanding of the resurrection of Christ with a basic refresher regarding the gospel itself. Foundational to your living your faith is a clear grasp of the basics of the gospel.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

cmp/ref 1:17ff

You are not yet convinced of two things: one, that the meaning you assign to the resurrection may need some help and second, that it is possible you have forgotten or neglected the importance of the gospel in living out your faith.

Let's address the second concern today. Here are 5 reasons why you should be more concerned about knowing and understanding the gospel than you currently are. In other words, you are in danger of giving up, being distracted and settling for less than abounding joy, not because of faddish influences around you, but because you have neglected, forgotten or never understood the meaning of the gospel. Meaning matters . . . especially with the good news that God rescues people . . . here's why:

5 reasons why you should be more concerned about knowing and understanding the gospel than you currently are:

1. The gospel originates in the heart of God. 15:3a 1:18;
2:4; 2:7-9

2. The gospel is transmitted to you through the preaching of the scriptures.
15:1, 3-4

3. The gospel is what you received by faith. 15:1-3

4. The gospel is what you currently count on to save you now and forever. 15:1-3

5. The gospel is neglected or forgotten to your great peril. 15:2

There are two essential components to understanding the meaning of the gospel. Both components are connected to the resurrection of Jesus Christ in meaningful ways.

1. Jesus saving sacrifice. 15:3-7

Note that the gospel has a ‘what’ component . . . the Apostle says that this is what I received and preached to you. This is what you received and stand in. The what of the gospel is described in three simple content clauses in verses 3-7. These three truth events define the gospel but do not exhaust the meaning of the gospel.

a. Christ died for our sins. 3

The phrase explained in reverse . . . with help from Isaiah the prophet . . . 53:5-6

- Our sins iniquities . . . the Lord has laid on him
- For on behalf of; that brought us peace; as a satisfying sacrifice
- Died wounded, crushed, stripes 1:18; 2:2
crucified
- Christ my servant 1Cor. 5:20 The
promised Savior, God in flesh

b. Christ was buried. 4

Confirms the reality of both death and resurrection. His crucifixion resulted in a dead body. His resurrection was the reanimation or giving life to a completely dead body.

c. Christ was raised from the dead. 4

- God raised Jesus to life after death. Rom. 4:16-17 existence to the nonexistent
- The raising happened and it remains in force. He is alive now in the same way his children will be alive forever as a result of the powerful gospel.
- According to the scriptures . . . the promise of the Bible is that God will act in grace to eradicate the curse and claims of sin and death.
- One way to view the appearances of 5-7 is as visible, physical proof that God endorses Jesus as the person he said he was.

These three truths form the core of the Christian message and faith and have, ever since these very appearances by the risen Christ to these people.

A second essential component of the gospel in addition to the ‘what’ of Christ’s saving sacrifice is God’s transforming grace.

2. God’s transforming grace.

8-11

Note that the gospel has a ‘how’ component. In other words, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ have saving and transforming power when applied to a person by the grace of God. The power of the gospel to transform dead, lost and condemned sinners is the power of God. He acts in love, mercy and grace to apply or interpret the benefits of Christ’s saving death and resurrection to your life.

God is on record as giving life to dead people. God’s raising Jesus from the dead is a clear example of how he graciously and powerfully reverses the impact of sin and death in your life. Rom 4:17

How does God’s grace and power transform a person . . .

- God appears in your life – he finds you. 8
- God humbles you. 9
- God changes your perspective. 10
- God gives you faith. 11

You are a child of God only because of the kindness and love of God enacted toward you motivated only by his grace and not in any way on your merit.

Meaning matters. Your confidence, steadfastness, hope and abounding joy are directly connected with the saving sacrifice of Jesus and the transforming power of God displayed in the resurrection.

Conclusion

We have taught this morning with similar starting points as the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 15. You are in need of a clear, compelling reminder regarding the gospel of Jesus Christ, of which

the resurrection is a core, anchoring truth. How should you respond to a clear and compelling reminder?

1. Repent and trust Christ . . . the gospel has been preached! Where Christ is lifted up in the gospel, God appears with transforming power! Church members, friends, family members, neighbors, children, students and teens . . . the gospel has been preached, now is the time to receive and believe.
2. Renew your allegiance to Christ right now. Your claim of God's grace in your life may be in vain. You have forgotten, been neglectful or perhaps have been working so hard for God that you are ready to give up. Set the complexities aside for a moment and re-up to what was preached to you and what you believed. Worship, pray, cry, repent, believe . . . work hard to receive grace.