

The Utmost Importance – 1 Corinthians 15.1-11 pg 979 ctw: Psalm 118.19-24, Acts 4.11-12

Introduction: Does it matter: Which Preacher we follow? Exercising our rights as Christians, as citizens? Which gifts we have? Or finally that someone else gets the credit for the work you did? These are issues that Paul has covered in this first letter. All of them – NO! What does matter? The Gospel! Paul tells us 3 important characteristics of the Gospel:

1. Foundation of Our Faith

- a. We have heard it, believed it, based our lives upon it.
- b. All situations Paul addressed leads to having changed lives by the Gospel,
- c. The Gospel is key to our salvation. No other name is given by which men are to be saved. This is foundation to Love (13).
- d. Even central to our holidays...what is Christmas if Jesus was just another prophet? Another insignificant birthday? Then Thanksgiving, Independence Day, Memorial Day, Veterans Day – All come from Christian understanding & thankfulness.
- e. Meant to be shared. Paul passed it on, we are too. Mt 28.18-20

2. Valid for Our Lives

- a. Why we live it, pass the message on:
- b. Jesus' life, death and resurrection are according to Scriptures.
- c. Reject divinity of Bible, let's go legal: Law states 2 or 3 witnesses to establish matter, comes from Deut. 17.6. 1 witness is not enough to convict unto death, but need more or lots of evidence. But Gospel isn't just death, but more. Its life.
- d. Paul records all who are witnesses, which is about 520 witnesses, of whom most are alive still. Even biggest anti-Christian historian from that era, Josephus, testifies to this claim. No other "figure head" has such claims, not Joseph, not Mohammed, not Buddha, not even Abraham nor anyone else.

3. Grace for Even the Worse

- a. Here is key. Paul calls himself the least because of his zeal in persecuting the church, according to letter to Philippians.
- b. Yet God's grace motivated him to work in spreading news. Not to earn, but because of his thankfulness.

God can use us too. Doesn't matter what's in our past. Disney said, stumble, keep moving forward. Paul said to Philippians, forgetting what is behind me, the mistakes, he keeps pressing forward. So do we, since we are to follow Paul's example. (11.1). Let this Gospel encourage you, build you up and motivate you. Share God's love with someone near you this week. (*invite*) Perhaps you don't know Jesus, but now you heard the Gospel. How do you respond?