

Christ's death, burial and resurrection

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[0 : 00] Let us now turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and reading again verses 3 and 4. Verses 3 and 4.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

Now here is the Apostles' Creed. Certainly this Apostles' Creed.

And also all the Apostles' Creed. And this is the Creed of all believers who follow apostolic doctrine.

Christ died. Christ was buried. Christ rose. The articles of the Creed are few, but eminently clear. He died. He was buried. He rose.

[1 : 37] And these are the foundation stones on which the Apostle Paul and the other Apostles erect their message in all their epistles. On these foundation stones, these three main planks of the gospel of the grace of God.

But these words are not just articles in a creed, for a creed can be cold and formal and academic, however accurate. But these words are not just words.

But these words are in fact the what and the woof of the gospel of Christ. As Paul says here in the very first verse, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.

Now if the gospel means glad tidings, and that is what it does mean, then here we have the glad tidings of the gospel in basic summary form.

Christ died, Christ was buried, and Christ rose. And Paul says in this we stand. If we are Christian believers, to this we are committed.

[2 : 46] And because of this we have been saved. Christ died for our sins. He was buried and he rose again. And because of this work of Christ we have been saved.

Unless, says Paul, you have believed in vain. It's therefore, very obviously, it's therefore possible for us to believe in vain.

To have a faith that is defective, and indeed worthless, and bubble-like. And how do we know if we are believing in vain, with a faith that is defective?

Well, Paul tells us. He says, you have a faith that is defective, if you do not keep in memory what I preached unto you. Or better, if you do not hold firmly to the word which I preached unto you.

And it is when we apostatize from the word and from the teaching of Christ and the apostles that we have reason to question our faith, to question its validity and reality and depth.

[3 : 55] But real faith, however weak it may be, is never in vain. May it be therefore that for all of us here this morning, our faith, in fact, is not in vain because we have laid hold upon and continue to lay hold upon what Paul has preached.

Christ died. Christ was buried. And Christ rose. Now there's one other thing I want to mention before we come to these words themselves. And it is this.

That what the apostles preached was not their own production or their own creation, but was in fact God's revelation. Now the apostle makes this very clear in the third verse here.

He says, I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received. It wasn't his own creation he delivered.

It was divine revelation he declared. What he himself received. And these words in verse 3 remind us, do they not, of the stately words which we shall be using quite shortly in the warrant for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

[5 : 07] Where Paul says, I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was we say to bread. Well it's the same thing here.

I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received. The gospel is not the product of Paul's fertile and pure mind.

It is the product of God. It is that which comes to us from the heart and mind of the eternal. And in its basic form we have it here in these three basic facts of the gospel.

These three planks. Christ died, Christ was buried, and Christ rose. For I have delivered unto you first of all that which I also received.

How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. Let us then look at these three main factors.

[6 : 07] What is the first then the death that Jesus died. And this engages our attention preeminently this morning. The death that Jesus died.

And it's described here as Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. And this verse brings before us most clearly I believe the reason, the necessity for Christ's death.

He died not because of the vacillating of Pilate, not because of the enmity of the Jews, not because of the brutality of the Roman soldiers, but he died because of the need of sinners such as we are.

Christ died for our sins and in view of them according to the scriptures. Now for one thing this is a fact of history.

You see I would state it here Christ died. It's a fact of history. A once for all event and never to be repeated event unique and unparalleled.

[7 : 21] Christ died. A fact of history. Now any student of history is concerned with his sources. And eyewitnesses are of inestimable value to students of history.

And the apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty. For most of them were with them from the beginning. And through their faithful recording of the event of Christ's death as sacred historians they tell us what took place at Calvary and more than that they bring before us other witnesses who were there and saw what took place at Calvary.

well what witnesses were there to substantiate this great fact that Christ died. Well I believe there was nature itself.

Nature was a witness to the fact of Christ's death. Do you remember the account in the gospels that when Jesus died there was an earthquake? That there was a rending of the rocks?

That the graves were opened? That the bodies of the saints arose from the grave? that there was darkness over the face of the earth from the sixth until the ninth hour?

[8 : 46] You see there's a clear and obvious connection between these events of nature and the fact that Christ died. Indeed the whole of nature groaned at the sight and the groaning of nature the very rending of the rocks and the rising of the dead and the opening of the graves that this very groan of nature was nature's testimony to the fact of this event of history Christ died.

But then there were other groups that bore witness as well as nature. There were for example the Roman soldiers. They stood nearest to the cross and according to Roman law they fell heir to Christ's personal property the little he had.

but his robe they gambled for. A few feet away from the cross they gambled for his robe. Upon my vesture lot they cast and clothes among them share as Psalm 22 points out.

So there were the Roman soldiers and then there were the Jewish leaders. They followed Jesus to the cross which was indeed an unusual thing for many of them. And when they came to the cross they couldn't keep their tongues off him.

They insulted him they derided him they taunted him and they moved the impenitent thief to do the same. And so below Jesus as he looked from the cross below him there was a sea of scorn as the same Psalm says all they that see me laugh me to scorn.

[10 : 33] Nature bore witness the Roman soldiers bore witness the Jewish leaders bore witness and then there was this other group a small group his personal friends.

I said a small group yes that's smaller than it needed to be because of those who decided because of those who declined to follow him and also because of those who decided to depart at that time and the disciples forsook him and fled they were conspicuous by their absence and the group was smaller there around the cross than it need be.

And my dear friends it's still the same in the world today those who truly bear witness for the Lord Jesus is a group that is smaller than it need be because there are others who have not who although they believe in Jesus have not come into the ranks of those who profess him publicly.

But there the friends of Jesus were with the other groups witnessing to this fact of history that Christ died the soldiers witnessed in their apathy the Jews bore witness in their antipathy and his friends bore witness in their sympathy to which group do we belong apathy antipathy or sympathy among the friends of our blessed Lord may that be true of all of us that we are in this group that's the first thing we see then in these words a fact of history Christ died but the second thing is this that we have in these words the cost of liberty the cost of liberty the cost of our liberty the cross was not merely a fact of history if that's all we think of it then we have missed the point completely the point is that the cross was the cost the price that was paid for our liberty

Christ died to liberate us from our sins that's what that's what these words mean Christ died for our sins to put away our sins to liquidate to liquidate the debt to take us out of the red as it were Christ died for our sins and he did this by dying for them and thereby cancelling their guilt for sin is guiltiness and we were conceived in guiltiness and sin and when Jesus died and died for our sins he died not only to remove their guilt but as we said last night to remove their power to break their power and as Professor Murray points out this is the triumphal aspect of Christ's death this is the triumphal aspect he not only delivers us from sin's guilt but he breaks sin's power he breaks the power of cancelled sin he sets the prisoner free so that sin no longer has dominion over us we are crucified with Christ we have died to sin and are alive unto God through Jesus Christ so the Lord Jesus came to the cross to make an end of our sins once in the end of the world he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself and he has taken our sins from our shoulders and he has cast them into an open grave to be remembered no more my dear friends that's the glad tidings

[14 : 01] I declare unto you says Paul in verse 1 I declare unto you the gospel which I preached the glad tidings and here is the basic part of the glad tidings Christ died a fact of history witness to and Christ died for our sins the cost of our liberty from sin's bondage he died for our sins and will you notice most carefully the great confirmation we have that these things are so he died for our sins according to the scriptures that means then that Christ's death was not only historical and redemptive it was also prophetic Christ's death was not an afterthought on the part of God the Father it was not a supplementary plan a stopgap arrangement to save us Christ's death was the exact fulfillment of the prophetic and predictive utterances of scripture

Christ died according to the scriptures dimly yet definitely Christ's death is portrayed in the types and symbols of the ceremonial law and then more clearly Christ's death is portrayed in the gospels and Christ's death is portrayed in the Psalms and in the prophets and in most clearly and most clearly of all it is portrayed in the gospels and what was predicted in the gospels has been expounded for us in the epistles Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and my dear friends if Christ has died for our sins according to the scriptures and we believe in Christ then we do not have to die for our sins our gracious God will not require a reckoning at our great surety's hand and then at our own and if we do not have to die for our sins we have the great comfort of knowing that we will not die in our sins here is glad tidings again the gospel says Paul which I preached unto you but my dear friends if there's anyone here and you know in your own heart that you are still in unbelief and that there is in you an unwillingness to trust in Christ then what the gospel proclaims is not glad tidings but grim sorrowful tidings that you are dying in your sins and as such you must put an end to such death by trusting in him who died for the ungodly for that's what the unbeliever is he is living a life that is ungodly we must put our trust in him who died for the ungodly and be saved from wrath through him well that's the first foundation the first plank

Christ died the death that Jesus died now we come to the second one and it is the burial that Jesus received Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried he was buried now there is a very hard materialistic philosophy abroad which regards the destination of the body as a matter of complete indifference by all means let there be a decent burial and for many people it is just for decency sake but the destination of the body is something that is of no importance in the eyes and in the minds of many so long as the burial is done in a decent way well Christ's body had another destination than the tomb into which he was placed and so has the body of every one of us another destination according to the deeds done in the body and according to the life lived in the flesh but for the moment let us pause and take note of Christ's burial the disposal of the body that was taken down from the cross and two things

I want to notice here and the first is the place of his burial in the work of redemption the place of his burial not the geographical place but the redemptive place of his burial in the total plan of God now some Christian people view Christ's burial as neither here nor there they say that it is really of no importance the great thing is that Jesus said it is finished well of course that's a great thing but to say that the burial is of no importance and has little relevance is indeed shallow and incomplete thinking because Christ's burial was in fact the final stage of his humiliation when Jesus humbled himself he knew that it was not only to humble himself to the cross but to go down into the tomb when Jesus said it is finished that certainly ended his conscious and active sufferings but it says nothing about the body in which he suffered further humiliation awaited that body after the sufferings and after he said it is finished further humiliation awaited it it had to descend into the grave and burial is a going down burial is a descent burial for Jesus was another part in his humiliation it was the last stage of his humiliation and when he went into the tomb he went into the very stronghold and citadel of death and there he remained under the power of death for a time it had to be it was part of the humiliation of Christ just as surely as the cross was part of his humiliation his humiliation consisted in his being born that in a low condition made under the law undergoing the misuse of his life the wrath of God the curse of death of the cross and in being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time therefore we must not say that it is irrelevant and insignificant there was a place in the redemptive purpose of God for the disposal of

Christ's body it was to go down further into the tomb the last part of his condescending of his condescension well if that is the place of his burial in the work of redemption I want to notice secondly the significance of his burial in the work of redemption the significance of his burial and the significance is simply this that it was a proof that he had really died in fact it was an additional proof that Jesus had really and truly died the first proof was as we read there in John's gospel the first proof was that when the soldiers came round they broke the legs of the first thief and of the third and of the second but when they came to Jesus they break not his legs why because they saw he was dead already and the brutal soldiers knew very well what a corpse was like what real death was like and so they break not his legs and if that were not enough proof of the reality of his death then the supreme proof was the destination of his body he was buried now this is the answer to the anti-supernatural school abroad in the churches today who view

[22 : 25] Christ's death many of them as a swoon as a faint so that people only thought he died the fact of his real burial testifies to his real death and a real death was necessary in order to atone for sin and to meet fully the penalty of a broken law and when our blessed Lord in his perfect nature went into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea he sanctified the grave for all believers and because he was under the power of death only for a time for a specified period he has removed the terrors of the grave for all who believe in him and again although it is not said so specifically in the text his burial was according to the scriptures according to the scriptures the prophet

Isaiah says he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death because he had done no violence neither was any deceit in his mouth thou shalt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption says the psalmist in psalm 16 referring to Jesus in the tomb in the grave the death that Jesus died the burial that Jesus received and now we come to the resurrection that Jesus accomplished where the text says and he rose again the third day according to the scriptures now if the burial of Jesus proved the reality of his death then the resurrection of Jesus proves the efficacy and the efficiency of his death he rose again the third day according to the scriptures and the resurrection proves the sufficiency and efficacy and suitability of the death of the Lord

Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus itself was impressively attested as is seen in this chapter which deals mainly with the resurrection of Christ he was seen by Cephas then he was seen by twelve then he was seen by five hundred Christians at once then by James then by all the apostles and then by Paul himself as one in an untimely birth one born out of due time now in this supernatural event when Jesus rose he left the grave closed undisturbed and he left the tomb through the great stone that was still over the face of the tomb over the opening of the tomb he walked through the stone and he walked away from his own grave which confirms the reality and bears testimony to the reality of his resurrection now I want to say two things about the resurrection of Christ in closing and the first is this that

Christ's resurrection is the proof that his work was finished and our great concern is with the finished work of Christ and his resurrection is the proof that his work was finished that he did what he had come to do and that he did it in such a way as to be accepted by the father so that Christ's resurrection is the receipt stamped with a divine signature that our sin is removed that our debt has been liquidated and this receipt has been given to us as it were and put into the hand of our faith he was raised again and that resurrection was the receipt signed by God that the debt for which he died when he died for our sins has been forever and forever cleared Paul says elsewhere that Jesus was raised again for our justification so that we might be put right with

God and be righteous in his sight through the imputed righteousness of Christ therefore the resurrection lays the basis of our justification as surely as the atonement for the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus are inseparable so here then are glad tidings who is he that condemneth it is Christ that died yea rather that is risen again who is even at the right hand of God and the fact of Christ's risenness having the keys of death and of the unseen world swinging from his girdle is the proof that his work was finished accepted by the father and that we are therefore accepted in the beloved and then also his resurrection is the guarantee of our own his resurrection is the guarantee of our own because I live says

[27 : 59] Jesus you shall live also and this is the whole argument of chapter 15 if there is no resurrection of the dead then Christ is not risen but Christ has risen and therefore so must we for he has risen and has become the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep in other words Jesus is the first chief to enter into heaven the first of a great harvest that is to follow and the harvest is taking place and multitudes are entering into heaven Jesus being the right the first chief and you see all this our resurrection our forgiveness our justification our spiritual resurrection our physical resurrection it's all guaranteed it's all tied up it's all according to plan it's all according to the scriptures Christ rose even

Job could say so long before the event I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth and after my skin worms destroy this body yet in my flesh shall I see God whom I shall behold and not another though my rains be consumed within me the prophet Isaiah says he shall see his seed he shall prolong his days yes prolong them forever and ever throughout eternity and again referring to psalm 16 thou wilt not leave my soul in hell neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption when he desired life of thee thou life to him didst give even such a length of days that he forevermore should live these verses in psalm 21 refer to the exaltation of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ the the the first of his four stages of exaltation his resurrection that's the first stage then his ascension then his present session and finally his coming again well now these are all glad tidings and you see

Paul says here which these glad tidings these this gospel message I have declared unto you which you have received and I have declared it unto you wherein you stand wherein you stand I declare unto you the gospel which I preached which also you have received and wherein you stand my dear friend is that true or false as far as you are concerned today is that true or false yet you standing you are standing solidly by faith in what Jesus has done and in what Paul has declared of what Jesus has done are we standing on the solid foundation of Christ's death and resurrection as the only means of our salvation and if so then we are clothed with righteousness divine and we can rejoice in the joyful sound and here is the joyful sound just in a few notes but they are precious notes they are meaningful notes and they are rich as they sound out

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures he was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures may we stand in this great truth for time and through death right into eternity and be able to thank God for this gospel this joyful sound this glad tidings that even now tell us that by faith in Christ we have passed from death unto life our faces are set towards Jerusalem and we march to Jerusalem to that city the beautiful city of God all because Christ died and was buried and rose again and our faith and our confidence are in him for time and for death and for eternity let us pray our gracious

God we give thanks to thee this morning for these words that are at the very foundation of our eternal hope Lord we thank thee for the work of Christ for the finished work of Christ for the work of Christ testified to by the father in his resurrection for the resurrection that is the guarantee of our resurrection and reception into glory we thank thee for every aspect of the person and work of our adorable Lord may it be that we stand in him that we stand in his righteousness that our faith is not in vain that our faith is a real faith and has linked us with our eternal God with a link that will never be broken not even by the powers of hell or darkness and we ask oh Lord our God that thou would make these things precious to us may we not take them for granted may we take nothing in the gospel for granted but marvel ever at the gift of eternal life at the gift of the Lord

[34 : 09] Jesus Christ himself to us thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift and as we go on to remember in the way that he himself appointed his dying love will thou Lord bring these matters before our minds and impress these issues upon our hearts that we might be greatly moved and stirred within at every thought of his goodness every thought of his humiliation every thought of the fact that he died and died for our sins according to the scriptures oh that we ourselves would die more and more unto sin and live more and more unto righteousness bless us then we humbly pray and lift on us the light of thy countenance for Jesus sake amen