

“Resurrection Convictions”

1 Corinthians 15.1-11

Study of 1 Corinthians – Challenges FACED by church in CORINTH

Text Tonight > FOCUS on Challenges Faced by AUTHOR Apostle Paul

SOMETIMES GREATEST CRISIS – WITHIN – face yourself

REALIZE THAT YOU ARE WRONG – willing to change

Born in Tarsus, capital of Cilicia, Asia Minor – modern day Turkey

Father was Roman – named Paul from birth / Jewish name Saul

Jewish influence – most formative / Pharisee / student of Gamaliel

Strong Opponent of Followers of Jesus – Why?

NOT A STRETCH to SAY // Saul of Tarsus like Islamic Fundamentalist

Some of Paul’s Concerns // Devout Muslims Today

REASON FOR CRISIS v. 8 “he appeared to me also” RISEN JESUS

PAUL GAVE THIS TESTIMONY BEFORE KING AGRIPPA

“I was going to Damascus...about noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice...Then I asked, “Who are you Lord?” “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” the Lord replied. “Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant...So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven” Acts 26.13-19

IN A BIG WAY – PAUL WAS MOVED TO CHANGE HIS MIND

vs. 1-11 Preface to Main Theme of Chapter 15

IN THIS PASSAGE WE’LL SEE RESULT OF CRISIS PAUL FACED

## 1. Paul's Mind was Changed About the Law

v. 9 "I persecuted the church of God"

JESUS warned his Disciples "a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God" John 16.2

Paul told KING AGRIPPA "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them." Acts 26.9

THIS ZEALOUS DEVOTION BASED ON RELIGIOUS CONVICTION  
PARTICULARLY HIS COMMITMENT TO THE LAW OF GOD

Pharisaism – Law Religion – Fulfill Law and Be Saved

In Principle – they were Correct / IF you Could, you Would be  
Pharisees – Found it hard to keep Law so they ADDED MORE!

Any honest Pharisee must have felt overwhelmed by

1. WEIGHT OF LAW – 2. INABILITY – 3. SINFUL NATURE

Paul was an Honest Pharisee – Testimony of Struggle –

"I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what it was to covet if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire" Romans 7.7,8

COVET – Envious DESIRE for Someone or Something NOT YOURS  
ONLY COMMANDMENT DEALING WITH MOTIVES

Others FOCUS – Words/Actions – MORE DO-ABLE – Outwardly  
Coveting – 10<sup>th</sup> C – Makes person LOOK INTO HEART – Shocked!

Christianity – COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PRINCIPLE – not Law

Faith in Savior – Kept Law Perfectly – Died for its Penalty

## 2. Paul's Mind was Changed About the Gentiles

v. 1 “Now, BROTHERS”

AMAZING STATEMENT – Typical Jewish opinion of Gentiles

God created them as fuel for the fires of Hell

Devout Jew – calls Gentile Corinthians BROTHERS – Risked his life for Them

After Damascus Road Vision of Jesus – met by Xtian Ananias / got Scary Orders

IMAGINE VOICE CALLING: *Go to SYRIA, find ISIS, don't forget big Bible!*

Not great friend of Americans, or Christians – SIMILAR to task of Ananias

Ananias said “**Brother** Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you...has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit” Acts 9.17

FIRST WORD CHRISTIAN PAUL HEARD FROM another CHRISTIAN

NOW PAUL WRITES SACRED SCRIPTURE TO CORINTHIANS

Corinth – So notoriously immoral – “to Corinthianize” = Sex Act

“To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours” 1 Corinthians 1.2

PREVIOUSLY – SAUL THE PHARISEE

LIFE BUILT ON SHARP DISTINCTION btwn Jew & Gentile

Gentiles hopelessly Lost Race – very Few became Proselytes to JUDAISM

SHOCKING REALIZATION

1. LAW – as he tried to follow – Lead him AWAY FROM GOD

2. GRACE – principle of God's acceptance – not Law

**DISTINCTION btwn Jew & Gentile – ABOLISHED, no BASIS**

“there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised by that same faith” Romans 3.30

“God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles” Galatians 1.15

**BECOMES FATHER OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GENTILES**

**IN CORINTH - MOST GODLESS CITY IN ROMAN EMPIRE**

**BROKEN & BLINDED - ROAD TO DAMASCUS**

Paul – broken-spirited Rabbi / Most influential man in Human History

### **3. Paul’s Mind was Changed About Jesus**

Jesus not kind of Messiah Paul expected

Sought – Glorious King / Saw – Gory Criminal

Poor, weak man who could not save self from Executioner

“Though we once regarded Christ from a worldly point of view, we do so no longer” 2 Corinthians 5.16

**TELLS HIS TESTIMONY TO THE GALATIANS**

“I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: ‘The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.’ And they praised God because of me” Galatians 1.22-24

v. 1 GENTLE REBUKE – I should not have to remind you

**SOME CORINTHIANS did NOT have SUFFICIENT APPRECIATION**

v. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of **FIRST IMPORTANCE:**

**GOSPEL OF JESUS**

v. 3 “Christ DIED FOR OUR SINS”

100 years after Resurrection – **DEBATE** – btwn Xtian and Jew

Xtian – Justin famous Apologist // Jew – Trypho

“We doubt whether the Messiah could possibly have been crucified in this dishonorable way. For in the law it says that a crucified man is cursed. On this point you will not be able to persuade me.” Trypho

Paul – FORMERLY A DEVOUT JEW – Would have SAME CONCLUSION  
NEW UNDERSTANDING – JESUS WAS CURSED BY GOD

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree” Galatians 3.13

JESUS NOT PERSONALLY CURSED – VICARIOUSLY – FOR US  
HE TOOK OUR CURSE – BORE OUR SINS – PAID OUR PENALTY

“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” Galatians 6.14

v. 4 “HE WAS BURIED”

Empty Grave – IMPORTANT EVIDENCE – NOT QUITE EMPTY

Peter ran into the empty tomb and saw “the strips of linen lying there as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen” John 20.7

JEWISH BURIAL – BODY WRAPPED IN LINEN – 30+ k. of Spices

CLOTH IN THE SAME FORM OF BODY – collapsed by Spices

NOT HEAP OF CLOTH IN CORNER – like in YOUR DORM ROOM!

RESURRECTION – Not Resuscitation / Body was VAPORIZED

Transmuted into something, New, Different, and Wonderful GLORIFIED Body

v. 4 “that he was RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY”

“The resurrection of Jesus is the Gibraltar of Christian evidences” R.A. Torrey

Gifted Teacher – Miracle Worker – Followed with Interest & Curiosity

Looked like END MISERABLE FAILURE, FOLLOWERS RAN – EXECUTED

1 THING transformed followers: Scared Chickens to Courageous Servants

## RESURRECTION OF JESUS FROM THE DEAD

### BODILY CHARACTER OF RESURRECTION

Jesus did not merely appear to Disciples – they Touched him, Walked on Road to Emmaus, ate Broiled Fish on Lakeshore - Taught them for 40 days

Vs. 3 & 4 “ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES”

Paul must have kicked himself saying, *“how could I have missed this!”*

JESUS TOOK NEWLY CONVERTED PAUL – 3 yrs Seminary Arabia

TESTIFIED TO KING AGRIPPA ---

“I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles” Acts 26.22,23

Pharisees – despite their devotion to Scripture – missed MAIN THING

### JESUS TOLD THE PHARISEES

“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life” John 5.39,40

Jesus is MAIN THING – Miss Him / MISS EVERYTHING

READ with “eyes veiled to the glory of Christ” – same problem today

Jesus – KEY to Understanding Scriptures

Scriptures – KEY to Understanding Jesus

NOT ONLY DO THE SCRIPTURES PREDICT RESURRECTION

RESURRECTION CONFIRMED BY MANY WITNESSES

vs. 5-7 he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

*“He appeared to Peter – reason for his Pentecostal boldness*

*then to the Twelve – gathered behind locked doors on Easter night*

*more than 500 brothers at same time – where? Mtn in Galilee in Mt 28*

*(most of whom are still living) – go ask them, check it out!*

*James – probably Half-Brother of Jesus, now Leader of Jerusalem church*

*Denied him in Early Years – Convinced by Resurrection*

*All the Apostles – perhaps refers to Mt. of Ascension*

*ARMY of Witnesses = Imptc of Resurrection / NOT Exhaustive List*

*Ex. Women were first Witnesses and Preachers of Resurrection*

v. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

*LAST OF ALL to me also -*

1. No More Appearances- not Joan of Arc, Muhammed, or Joseph Smith

2. Paul’s Calling & Standing was EQUAL to All other Apostles

#### 4. Paul’s Mind was Changed About Salvation

MUCH OF PAUL’S LIFE SPENT TRYING TO SAVE HIMSELF

“If anyone thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more –

PERFECT PHARISAICAL PEDIGREE –

AS FOR LEGALISTIC RIGHTEOUSNESS, FAULTLESS” Philippians 3.4,6

RADICALLY DIFFERENT PRINCIPLE v. 2 “by this gospel you are saved”

HE DESCRIBES ALL HIS EFFORTS AT SELF-SALVATION adding:

“I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith”

Philippians 3.8,9

“I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ”

Galatians 1.11,12

v. 2 “By this gospel YOU ARE BEING SAVED” Continuous Action

JESUS DID NOT JUST SAVE FROM YESTERDAY’S SINS

BY FAITH HE HAS EVEN SAVED YOU FROM TOMORROWS

SALVATION EXPERIENCE – BIGGER THAN ONE POINT IN TIME

Stretches from ETERNITY PAST – chosen by God – unto ETERNITY

FUTURE – dwell forever in his presence

PARADOX – GOD does EVERYTHING / DEMANDS EVERYTHING

v. 1 RECEIVED / TAKEN THEIR STAND / v. 2 HOLD FIRMLY

Words are Decisive Acts – Firm Commitment

More than just raising hand with every head bowed and every eye closed

Paul HAD DEVOTED HIMSELF – False System, Empty Promise

NOW RECEIVED GOD’S SAVING TRUTH IN CHRIST at RISK of LIFE

v. 10 “I worked harder than all of them”

Call to Salvation = Call to Service

WHEN JESUS SAW RABBI SAUL OF TARSUS HE SAW

PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

## 5. Paul's Mind was Changed About Himself

PERHAPS HARDEST CRISIS – change very character / identity

AS APOSTLE – Paul was often FRIENDLESS & MISUNDERSTOOD

HIS Pride becomes HIS Shame

ANNUAL CONVENTION OF PHARISEES – Key Note Address

“How I Killed Followers of Jesus”

Converted Rabbi Saul of Tarsus – Christians understandably AFRAID

Devoted Jew – hated by his own people whom he deeply loved

King Agrippa said your great learning is driving you insane

Apostle to Gentiles – Jewish Apostles – PREJUDICED & JEALOUS

Intellectuals – Fool, bodily resurrection, unbelievable message

Powerful – scoffed at weakness of naked Jew nailed to cross

Missionary – SHARP DISAGREEMENT with Barnabas

Church Planter – Fought with Jewish Leaders & Government Officials

Preacher – Did not have the ELOQUENCE of APOLLOS

Letter Writer – Peter said “some things are hard to understand” 2 P 3.16

Prisoner – he was also preaching to the guards and soldiers

Physical Appearance – tradition says he was painfully ugly

CALLING TO APOSTLESHIP – BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW

v. 8 “abnormally born” – critics: Paul was Not Born Again – was Aborted

Word for a DEAD FETUS – Abortion or Miscarriage

BORN POST-MATURELY – long after the Apostles who knew Jesus

v. 9 “I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God”

Re: Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure – Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Theme– REGRETS – easily curl up on couch w/ container Ice Cream  
2 Liters of Chocolate Ice Cream!

v. 10 – CRITICAL JUNCTURE – How to respond to Problems

REAL PROBLEMS – NOT EMPTY ATTACKS – REAL GUILT

NOT an ICE CREAM Pity PARTY– Himself as the only Invited Guest

GREATNESS OF PAUL – knew Grace of God – not just Theory of Salvation

Grace of God – Living Experience / Life-Changing Reality / Solid Hope

vs. 9,10 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

HONEST ADMISSION – I did it

HEART-FELT ACCEPTANCE – God forgave me

HUMBLE ANALYSIS – God enabled me

HEAVENLY ADVANCE – God gets glory, men are saved

Embraced Grace v. 9 “Persecuted church”

TIMOTHY – “I am the worst / chief of sinners. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life”  
1 Tim 1.15,16

v. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

Enabled by Grace v. 10a “I worked harder than all of them”

Exalted Grace v. 10b “not I, but the grace of God in me”

v. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Extended Grace v. 11 “whether I or they – we preached – many saved”

**MAYBE WE NEED SPIRITUAL MRI – FULL BODY X-RAY**

See how we’re limiting what God can do in us – Prejudices, Wrong Ideas,

**FAILURE TO Receive HIS FORGIVENESS FOR PAST – MOVE ON**

**PAUL TELLS CORINTHIANS**

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” 1 Corinthians 11.1

1 Corinthians 15:<sup>1</sup> Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup>and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup>Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup>Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup>But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. <sup>11</sup>Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.