

1 Corinthians 15 (1-2) – Don't Forget the Gospel!

Read vs.1-11. Good news can affect how you live your life. Some good news only has a temporary effect, like when someone did something right, or we passed the test, or things like that. Other good news has a more profound and lasting effect, like she says yes to our proposal for marriage. Some things we remember because we celebrate them regularly.

Our tendency is to forget or neglect some good news after a while. We appreciated it at one time, and we may still, but now it doesn't make a difference in the same way. For some things this is true and okay. Some things we never forget. A billion dollar gift would certainly change things. It wouldn't be something we ever forget; it would affect us for the rest of our lives.

Sometimes what we forget is relatively harmless

- We forgot Chick Fila was closed on Sunday

Sometimes it is a little more aggravating

- We forgot we had a coupon

Sometimes it makes us a little concerned

- We forgot to bring the extra diapers

Sometimes it means we are going to suffer for it

- We forgot to pay the bill

Sometimes it means we better run and hide

- We forgot the anniversary

The gospel is something that we are exhorted to remember (2 Timothy 2:8). Yet the gospel is something that we often forget, in very practical ways. Oh, we remember the content of the message, but we fail to live out the implications of that message in our daily lives. We tend to forget because we don't see the gospel as a practical power for everyday life. But this is what I am supposed to do for you as a preacher of the gospel. Not only to evangelize, but to show you how the gospel applies to all of life. The gospel is more than a message, it is a mandate. It is not just for eternity but for each and every day. This is about more than cheerleading for the truth of the gospel message; it is a call to live the truth of the gospel mandate. Evangelism is vitally important, but so is discipleship. The gospel is about both. It is about a living witness. A saving faith leads to a living faith.

In your daily life, are you remembering or forgetting the gospel?

The Corinthian church was having a lot of trouble. They were having trouble with apostolic authority. They were having trouble with apostolic teaching. They were being overly influenced by the culture. Most of the errors of the Corinthian church were practical and behavioral errors. Sounds like us. Yet all of these things were pointing to one main doctrinal problem. The central issue in this chapter is the Resurrection, which is the core of the gospel, and this was the heart of the problem. Some may have believed Jesus had been raised from the dead, yet they did not believe that believers would be raised from the dead (vs.12). Paul will show how inconsistent this is with the gospel. To deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to destroy the entire basis of the Christian faith. Such thinking shows that they had departed from the gospel.

The gospel and its implications are a preserving and fruitful force. It serves as the pathway to walk and serves as a guard against error. If things are not spiritually well, we can at some point trace it back to a problem with our forgetfulness of, or our misunderstanding of, the gospel.

Now I would remind you. The gospel can be forgotten, ignored by people who are believers. Paul felt the need to reintroduce the gospel to these people he calls “*brothers*”, who “*received*”, “*stand*” in, and “*are being saved*” by the gospel. It is possible for saved people to forget the fundamentals of truth. The Corinthians had thought they had gone beyond the gospel at points. They were looking for some secret, special, or superior knowledge, some experience, something more than the average and the basics that would catapult them into super spirituality. But if you leave behind the gospel, you are not moving forward, you are moving backward.

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The gospel I preached to you...the word I preached to you. The gospel is something that must be heard (Romans 10:17). The pride of the Corinthians had become so bad that it had cut them off from the one God had sent to them. They needed to listen to their spiritual father again (1 Corinthians 4:14-16). We do not grow beyond the need to be taught. We must always be willing to listen and learn and be corrected if we want to grow. We can become forgetful of, and ignoring the gospel when we become deaf to the people God wants to use to teach us.

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*Which you received...*the gospel must be believed, trusted in. The gospel is the Good News, it means we can have faith in God, and we must turn away from anything that would be contrary to His Word. Our total trust and loyalty must be to the gospel above all else. Think about how we received the gospel, and how we can forget it, fail to listen to and receive from it.

- We received the gospel with *humility*. We lose the “wise in our own eyes” mentality when we come to Jesus. To remain in tune with the gospel we must remain humble.
- We received the gospel with *gratefulness*. We weren’t grumbling against God. To remain in tune with the gospel we must remain consciously and practically thankful.
- We received the gospel with *repentance*. We were willing to lose it all for Jesus. To remain in tune with the gospel we must remain a confessor who turns from sin.
- We received the gospel with *faith*. We believed what God had said, like a little child. To remain in tune with the gospel we must remain in this type of dependence.

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In which you stand. The gospel is our life. We have no right to depart from what is our very standing before God. God work in the believer is powerful and permanent. If these people are really saved, if they have really received the gospel, they will remain standing in and for the gospel (Romans 5:1-2). The gospel gives us our very position in Christ before God. It can be forgotten, and so we must continue to hear it, receive it, and stand in it (Romans 8:28-39).

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And by which you are being saved. The gospel is how we are saved (finished work based on the finished work of Christ, justification). It is also how we are being saved (also based on the finished work of Christ but an ongoing work with the help of the Holy Spirit, sanctification). A saving faith leads to a living faith (Galatians 2:20). We must live in the gospel every day. The gospel and its implications are the basis for our growth, the indicatives and the imperatives.

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The gospel is a message but it is also a mandate. Ultimately, all Christian behavior should flow out of the gospel; the gospel is not only to renew our minds, but to inform our conduct too. We have to connect this to the areas where people live their lives. Don't forget the gospel! We forget the gospel when we fail to apply it. It is our comfort, and it is our confidence (Hebrews 4:14-16), but it is also our command. Here are just a few of the many examples that the scriptures give to us about this gospel informed living.

- Romans 14:9, 13, 19 (edification, love limits liberty)
- 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (purity)
- 2 Corinthians 9:12-15 (giving)
- Ephesians 4:32 (forgiveness), 5:25 (marital love)
- Philippians 1:27 (togetherness through trials)
- Colossians 2:13-15 (16-23: we don't need legalism / mysticism / asceticism)
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (reception, resurrection, reunion, encouragement facing death)
- 1 Timothy 2:1-6 (prayer for the salvation of other people)
- 2 Timothy 1:7-10 (shame and suffering)
- Titus 2:11-14 (good works)
- Hebrews 10:19-25 (worship, encourage, exhort, assembly)
- 1 Peter 2:19-24 (righteous conduct)
- 1 John 4:10-11 (love for fellow saints)

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If you hold fast...unless you believed in vain: The gospel demonstrates our salvation. If you hold on to the gospel this is all true of you (brothers who have received, stand in, and are being saved by the gospel). Unless they believed in vain, that is to say, they did not really believe. It is not saving faith; it was professed, temporary, hypocritical faith. It was not real faith because it wasn't held onto (cf. Hebrews 6:4-6). There are always temptations to stray from the gospel.

Remember "don't forget the frosty?" It isn't "don't forget the gospel" as if it is an "add on", or tacked on the end so we can be doctrinally and theologically correct. It is the very substance, source, sustenance and stability we need. If we have not believed in vain (vs.2), then our work in the Lord is not in vain (vs.58). Vs. 3-4 give us the content of the gospel. If you believe it, you will want to live like it. If you don't care it calls into question whether you have ever really been saved. Some of the Corinthians were in such a position. The question is are we?

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