

Life Group Notes
Sunday 07 May 2017

Speaker: Richard Walker

Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Title: Fix Your Eyes on Resurrection Glory

Paul has spent the bulk of this letter answering the questions the Corinthian Christians have asked him and correcting their dodgy practice after hearing what has been going on. Now he wants to take their eyes off all these secondary issues and onto what really matters.

See "Dead Come Alive" by "Full of Eyes," [here](#).

Verses 1-2: An Appeal In Love.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of their opinions were on the various issues, Paul wants to fix their eyes on the gospel he preached. He is nervous that their pursuit of all these secondary things, whilst good in themselves, is rendering their understanding of Jesus and their proclamation of him, incoherent. As when Jesus told the parable of the sower, (Matthew 13:22), he said: *As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.* When all is said, and done, we must be clear that the Cross of Jesus is the foundation of our identity (who we are now) and the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our hope (where we are going).

Verses 3-4: The Big Picture

The beginnings of the first Christian creed. Paul isn't giving them his own opinions, he is reminding them of the big picture of history, which is not only that the death and resurrection had happened, but that it was predicted and prophesied hundreds, even thousands of years before it happened. The good news of the gospel blesses us, but it does not serve us, we serve the gospel. Ask not how the gospel is relevant to your life and rather ask how you can make your life relevant to the gospel, for, in the end, it's all that matters.

Verses 5-8: Appearances Evoking Faith

Paul cites several different occasions where Jesus appeared to people after his resurrection. The list is neither chronological nor exhaustive, so what is Paul's editing principle here? Probably the best clue is in 1 Cor 15:12. It would appear some in the church no longer believe the resurrection. So, he cites a list of instances where those who did not believe were lovingly confronted and brought / restored to faith by Jesus himself:

- Peter (Cephas): Matthew 16:23, 26:69-75 John 21:15-19
- The Disciples / Apostles: Mark 16:9-14
- The 500+ crowd: Matthew 28:17

- James, Jesus' brother - tradition say that did not believe his brother to be the Messiah until after the resurrection, but then became one of the pillars of the fledgling Jerusalem church: Acts 15:13, Galatians 2:9
- Paul: Acts 9.

Verses 9-11: Grace Slays Self Importance and Cultivates Obedience.

Just as we did not choose the time and place of our physical birth, neither did we pick and choose the time of our spiritual birth. Paul was out to destroy God's beloved bride - the church, yet God not only had mercy on him but also turned him into (arguably) the most eloquent presenter of the gospel (after Jesus) the world has ever seen. That kind of mercy can only cultivate obedience. There is no room for complacency or triumphalism.

Questions:

- Are you so busy pursuing the "good things of life" that your understanding of and witness to the gospel is becoming incoherent?
- Do you really believe that Jesus rose from the dead? If so, why doesn't it shape your life priorities as much as it should? What are the excuses you are making?
- Is your expectation in life that the gospel serves us, or that we serve the gospel as a response to grace?
- If the grace of God is really that good, why do we get so puffed up, and why are we so sluggish to obey God's commands?