

## 1 Cor 15:1-11 Bible Study

1. What are the key elements of the gospel? ie what are the most important things Christians believe? Make a list and explain why each element is “key”.

2. Read 1 Cor 15:1-2. Since chapter 7 Paul has been responding to things raised in the Corinthian’s letter to him. He begins each new topic in a similar way; see 7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1. He breaks the pattern here in chapter 15. Why? What does this suggest about ch. 15?

*It’s possible that this is not a direct response to one of their questions. It might be Paul’s own idea to raise this. Perhaps from what he heard from Chloe’s household (1:11) or reading between the lines of their letter, he realises that the issue of resurrection needs to be addressed (see 15:12). It is possible that Paul initiates this subject because it lies at the heart of all their troubles, hence the need to remind them of the gospel he preached at the beginning.*

3. Read 1 Cor 15:3-8. What are the elements of the gospel that Paul lists here? Compare it with your answer to Q.1. Comment on any major differences.

*What things did you include or omit? Why?*

*• Christ died; • He died for our sins (ie he took our place in God’s punishment for sins); • All according to Scripture; • He was buried; • He was raised on the third day (again according to Scripture); • He appeared to eyewitnesses – first apostles then others, lastly to Paul.*

4. What things in Paul’s list are you most likely to explain to someone who is not a Christian? Are there things you might **not** discuss?

5. Why do you think Paul includes that Jesus “appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time”? Why is this important for us to know?

*Paul is writing in the mid 50’s, less than two decades after Jesus’ death and resurrection. Of the “500 brothers”, many were still alive. At the very least, he is saying “go and ask them!”. The New Testament in many places leaves itself open to historical verification. History does not usually record lies as fact if they are recorded at the time they are said to have happened. And in this case, this historical reliability is central to the whole of Christian faith (see vv1-2) – if this history is false, the whole gospel is false. This is something worth explaining to people who are either looking into Christianity or who say it is all ‘made up’.*

6. Read 15:9-11. Why does Paul speak about himself like this? Is it false humility, since Christ had died for his sin and forgiven Paul? Is there something we can model in Paul here? See also Eph 3:7-8; 1 Tim 1:15.

*Paul never takes his salvation for granted. He does not forget from what he has been saved – though he knows with certainty that he **is** saved and forgiven. We are never to be weighed down by the memory of past sins that have now been forgiven, but we need to remember that we are all sinners saved by grace, or we will “think more highly” of ourselves than we ought (Rom 12:3) and even look down on others (cf Luke 18:9-14)*

7. How do you react when you are ‘reminded of the gospel’ (eg in a sermon, in a book, in a conversation with someone)? How can we better remind each other of the gospel?

*Talk about those ‘key elements’ of what Christians believe that we discussed earlier. Try to identify if people just ‘switch off’ because we ‘know all that’, or are genuinely encouraged, or just think ‘I wish X was hearing this’ etc.*

8. Have you had opportunity to explain the gospel (or some part of it) with someone recently? Share this in pairs or one or two share with the group. Pray for such opportunities in the coming week.