

I can't think of a better passage to look at as we celebrate our first anniversary as a church, reminding us of what is of FIRST importance for the church and for every Christian: the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's read [1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#):

¹Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But 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. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”

May the Lord bless His Word and empower the preaching of His Word by His Spirit. For [“the grass withers and the flower fades but the Word of our God abides forever.”](#)

In his preface to the New Testament, [William Tyndale](#) expressed his excitement over the gospel. He said that the word gospel “signified good, merry, glad and joyful tidings, that make a person’s heart glad, and make him sing, dance, and leap for joy.” At the age of 42, Tyndale gave his life for that gospel.

Is the gospel good, merry, glad and joyful news to you today? Does it make your heart glad? Does it make you sing, dance and leap for joy? Are you receiving this good news, taking your stand on it, being saved by it, holding fast to it? Are

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

you being humbled by it and energized through it? Would you gladly give up your life for the sake of the gospel?

[Jeff Louie](#) is a theology professor at Western Seminary in the San Francisco area. He is concerned that his students gain a good grasp of the centrality of the gospel so on the first day of Theology 1 he tells them what their final assignment in Theology 2 is going to be. He gives them the final exam on the very first day of class and here's what it is: "Give me the gospel in 500 words. Give me the gospel in 48 words. Give me the gospel in 12 words. Give me the gospel in three words. And finally in one word."

How would you do on that exam? Would you pass the course? How clear is your grasp of this good news, this exciting news that makes people dance and leap for joy?

Imagine you have a friend in the hospital. You go to visit her and you find her fighting for her life, and she looks at you and says, "I'm going to die shortly—can you tell me the gospel in a minute?" What would you say? Can you briefly and clearly announce the message of the gospel, this good news that saves people from God's wrath and transforms their lives through God's grace?

If you're not sure where to start, this passage that we read this morning is an excellent place to go -- Corinthians 15:1-22. Let's look at how Paul summarizes the gospel message beginning at verse three. He says in the first half of that verse: "*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received...*"

Let's think about that phrase for a minute. The gospel is not something we invent, it is something we receive. We don't arrive at the Truth; the Truth comes to us and lays hold of us. The gospel is a specific, objective, body of Truth. It's about something that has happened outside of us that nothing we do or experience will change. It is an objective body of Truth that we must receive, on which we must take our stand, and to which we must hold fast if we are to be saved.

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

Nothing matters more than the gospel. Paul says this is *“of first importance”* for the church, for the Christian and for the world.

Let’s look at the second part of verse three for the gospel in a nutshell: *“that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures...”* That’s the most important piece of the gospel content.

I’m still wrestling -- if I were in Professor Louie’s class -- with how I would describe the gospel in three words. I know I can do it in one. “Christ.” That’s not Jesus’ last name but His title.

Three words is a little tricky. But five? I can do it in five: *“Christ died for our sins.”* If you can say nothing else, say that. *“Christ died for our sins.”* Simple, right? But think about what we’re saying.

Colossians 1:15-20 says, *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”*

[When Christ, the Mighty Maker, died, for man the creature’s sin.](#)

Isaiah 53:6 says: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way.”* That’s sin. In Romans 3:23 we read, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* And as a result, Romans 6:23 states, *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Christ died for our sins. By reason of them; on account of them.

Christ paid the wages of our sin in His death. He died the death for sin that you and I deserve to die. He bore the death sentence of God’s holy law — the holy,

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

unchangeable, righteous law of God. He died for our sins, subjected Himself to their penalty, their punishment. He took the curse and condemnation that you and I deserve. He bore the wrath of the Lawgiver and Judge in our place. He suffered what we should have suffered.

And Christ's death for our sins can save you, if you will turn from your sin and turn to Jesus and say, "Jesus save me. I need You to be my Savior. Jesus, I believe You died the death I deserve to die in hell forever and I receive You."

He died for your sins instead of you, in your place, instead of you dying for them yourself. This is according to the Scriptures. You can read about His death for our sins in [Isaiah 53](#).

Then to underscore the fact that He really died, Paul tell us in verse 4: "*that he was buried...*" In other words, He didn't just pass out on the cross; He didn't just swoon; He wasn't just unconscious for a time. He was laid in the tomb, buried on Friday late in the day and there He lay throughout Saturday until the early hours of Resurrection morning.

[There in the ground, his body lay—
Light of the world by darkness slain...](#)

But praise God! Christ died for our sins and was buried but He did not remain dead. He was not under the power of death for long. It was a brief duration that came to a speedy end because...

[Then bursting forth in glorious Day,
Up from the grave he rose again!](#)

Paul stresses that in verse four: "*that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...*"

[Psalm 16:8-10](#) speaks of the resurrection of Christ: "*I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.*"

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

And in [Isaiah 53:10-12](#) after speaking of the sufferings of Christ, we read of His subsequent glory. It says, *“Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.”*

[Romans 4:25](#) says, *“He was delivered for our offenses [that’s His death on the cross for our sins], and was raised again for our justification.”* This is an essential part of the gospel.

[On Good Friday, 1987](#), a theologian was asked by *The Washington Post*, "What if Christ didn't rise?" and she replied, "If the bones of Jesus Christ were found tomorrow, it would make no great difference to me. I would go on going to church as would the majority of Christians."

Well I wouldn't. Not if it could be proved that the resurrection never happened. I'd quit my job and I think I'd quit going to church. And you know, Paul would have too. If *The Washington Post* could have interviewed Paul and asked him the question, "What if Christ didn't rise?" he would say, "If Christ had not raised from the dead, [“we are of all people the most to be pitied.”](#) Our faith is in vain without the resurrection. You take the resurrection out of the gospel and you have neutered the gospel - you have made the good news into bad news. You have cancelled it out. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, along with His death for our sins and His burial, are matters of first importance for the Apostle Paul.

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel

New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

He's been dealing with all kinds of issues here in Corinthians: divisions in the church, partisanship, the relapse into pagan ways of living, believers suing one another, marriage between believers and unbelievers, re-marriage, divorce and singleness and the abuse of spiritual gifts. But you can sense that he's building himself up to the climax of his letter here in I Corinthians 15. It's almost like he's relieved. Now these questions are all important.

Yes, I agree, but let's open the door, let's open the windows and let's let in the fresh air of the gospel. Let's let the gospel blow over us here as we conclude this letter to Corinthians with this amazing exposition of what the gospel is. And it's centered on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is at the center of Christianity, the core, the foundation, the substance of the Christian faith. You take out the resurrection of Christ and the whole body of faith and Christ becomes infected with cancer and dies. So Paul shows us this resurrection is "*of first importance*" by placing the discussion of this truth last in his letter so that it will make the final and most lasting impression upon those who hear it.

Paul substantiates the fact of the resurrection by bringing out the eye witnesses who saw the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are many who saw Him in His bodily, physical resurrection. [Verses five through eight state:](#) *"...that 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. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me."*

It's historically verifiable. Paul wants to underscore the fact that Jesus was not a resuscitative corpse. He really rose from the dead in a literal physical body. In that body, He is presently at the right hand of God the Father in majesty on high. And in that same glorified body, He will one day return to the earth.

Rejoice in glorious hope! Jesus the Judge shall come,
And take His servants up to their eternal home....



Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

[Rejoice, The Lord is King by Charles Wesley](#)

!

Christ is alive. Christ is returning. That's what Paul is stressing here. This is what is "*of most importance.*" A fact of history: Christ died - He rose from the dead - a verifiable fact of history.

Though all of these other matters are important, [Geerhardus Vos](#) rightly observes that they "belonged ... to the periphery, the outcome, not the root and center of Christianity. But with the resurrection, it was a totally different matter. Here the heart, the core, the very foundation and substance of the Christian faith were (was?) at stake. Paul felt that if on this vital point a serious departure from the truth were allowed to develop unhindered, then sooner or later, by the inexorable law of organic disease, the whole body was doomed for destruction."

Paul's conviction is clear from the first two verses. If the Corinthians and if we do not hold on to the gospel of Christ -- eternal God, the Son who died and was buried and Who literally rose from the dead -- then we are believing in vain, our faith is empty. It might impress others but God sees that it is an empty shell.

When we talk about the resurrection, we're not talking about a symbol, or a mythical idea that can be true for me, even if it is not true for you -- we're talking about a fact of history, and one that is "*of first importance.*"

The great scholar [Gresham Machen](#) wrote: "If religion be made independent of history, there is no such thing as a gospel, for 'gospel' means 'good news,' tidings, information about something that has happened. A gospel independent of history is a contradiction in terms."

A gospel without the resurrection of Jesus Christ never saved anyone. Paul never lost sight of this. When he was an old man, nearing the end of his life, he told Timothy in [2 Timothy 2:8](#): "*Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant*



Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to imprisonment as a criminal..." And for this gospel, Paul died. The gospel of the crucified, risen Savior. When you think about what is this message of the gospel, I hope you notice in verses three through eight that Christ is the active subject of almost all the verbs. The gospel is about what Christ has done, not about what we do. The gospel is what Christ has done on the cross and the resurrection, not even so much about what He taught -- that's secondary. "*Of first importance*" is what He did: He was buried, He was raised, He appeared and He's coming again. The gospel is about what Christ has done.

[R.W. Dale](#) has wisely said: "The real truth is that while He came to preach the gospel, His chief object in coming was that there might be a gospel to preach." We have nothing to preach if He had not come and done this. If you were to summarize what we preach -- the gospel -- in one word, it's easy: CHRIST. It's the gospel. And so when I come to die, as the [song](#) says, "Give me Jesus." When I see my sin, "Give me Jesus." When I'm aware of my struggles, when I'm wrestling with doubts and fears, "Give me Jesus." Christ is the center. Our faith is in a Person; not even in a system of doctrines. Our faith is Him, in Christ, alone. We believe Him. We preach Him. We look to Him.

[Spurgeon](#) said:

"Our faith is a person; the gospel that we have to preach is a person; and go wherever we may, we have something solid and tangible to preach, for our gospel is a person.

If you had asked the twelve Apostles in their day, 'What do you believe in?' they would not have stopped to go round about with a long sermon, but they would have pointed to their Master and they would have said, 'We believe him.'

'But what are your doctrines?'

'There they stand incarnate.'

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

'But what is your practice?'

'There stands our practice. He is our example.'

'What then do you believe?'

Hear the glorious answer of the Apostle Paul, 'We preach Christ crucified.'

Our creed, our body of divinity, our whole theology is summed up in the person of Christ Jesus."

Now what does that mean for us? What does this mean to us as a church? We hope to see the Lord build a church that will be thriving here ten years from now, fifty years from now, one hundred years from now. As the chairman of our elder board said this morning, "if this is just a one year marriage it would be a tragic thing", right?

At our elder meeting Tuesday night, one of our elders was praying, thanking the Lord for what He has done in our church this past year. He was asking the Lord to continue His mercies toward us as a church. Then he paused and said what we want most is this: "Come, Lord Jesus!" I just said, "Amen!"

What would be better? Being back here in one year for a second anniversary or being with Christ? Don't you long for Him to come again? Wouldn't it be glorious if He came today? That's our [blessed hope](#) - our ultimate hope. But on our first anniversary as a church, it is our prayer that as long as Jesus waits to return, we will be focused on that which is "*of first importance.*"

So as we look at this passage, I see a number of applications for us as a church.

1. We must never forget the basics

What is Paul talking about here? The Basics. I challenge you in your Christian life, think about the problems you encounter, the temptations you face, the doubts and fears and anxieties that arise. The relational conflicts. All the things we

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

struggle with as Christians and when you boil it all down to its core, is there any struggle we're facing that does not amount to the fact that basically we have forgotten the basics? Is there anything we encounter and face as Christians that is not answered in this basic gospel message: Christ lived, died, risen, alive, returning. We must never forget these basics.

I think that's a temptation, because we want to sound insightful, we want to sound profound. Preachers want to say something you've never thought of before. We want you to think, "Oh, isn't he wise?" But Paul is very careful in the whole letter to the Corinthians. Remember back in 1 Corinthians 2 where Paul states, "I determine, I resolve not [to know anything among you except Christ and Him crucified](#). I did not come to you [with lofty words of wisdom](#) or persuasive speech. I did not come to impress you with my rhetoric or wisdom." Christ is the wisdom of God and He's the power of God.

Paul is drilling down to those basics here in chapter 15. Why is He the wisdom and power of God? Because He died and He was raised from the dead. I'll tell you, that's profound. That basic truth is enough to keep your mind reeling for the rest of your life.

I like how [Jared Wilson](#) puts it. He says: "There is a Beautiful Monotony of the Gospel...One fear we must put aside in our quest for greater gospel-centrality is that it will not preach week to week. That people will get bored."

Now I admit that preachers of the gospel can be boring - I've been there and done that. But the gospel's not boring. The gospel is resilient...it is versatile.

Jared Wilson goes on to say, "Because the enemy and our own flesh will test our commitment with the 'plausible argument' ([Colossians 2:4](#)) that the gospel will just sound so one-note. We are tempted to think the repetition will have the unintended effect of boring people or making the gospel appear routine and commonplace. But the gospel is resilient. It is miraculously versatile. It proves

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel

New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

itself every day for those awake to it. Because it is the antidote for all sin of all people, power effectual for every type of person no matter their background or circumstance, it is God's might to save every millisecond and therefore every Sunday. The gospel is indeed one song. But it is a song with many notes...When we 'get' the gospel for what it really is — the power to save, the most thrilling news there could be, the declaration that God's Son died for us and then came back to life to be the risen Lord and supreme King of the universe, not just the entry fee for heaven but the currency for all of life — we revel in the new creation it unleashes in its wake at every turn. We never get tired of hearing it. It's the new song that never gets old. And the Christian's heart says, 'Play it again. Play it again!' we will cry."

That's how we feel about the gospel. We must never forget the basics.

2. We must carefully guard the center

Lots of good things could compete for the center of our attention as a church, things like...

- Doing good for society
- Transforming culture
- Separating ourselves from the sinful world
- Exposing the sins of the culture
- Maintaining a biblical view of the family
- Protecting the sanctity of life & fighting against abortion
- Upholding biblical principles of manhood & womanhood
- A Christian political world view
- Morality
- Devotion & piety
- Obeying the Ten Commandments
- Church growth
- Reaching the next generation
- Studying the Bible
- Having the right hermeneutic

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel

New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

- Giving solid exegetical sermons
- Fighting against evolution
- Becoming prayer warriors
- Studying the end times
- Holding to the true view of the doctrine of predestination
- Proper doctrine of the gifts of the Spirit

All of these things are important; all these things are good and worth studying. The need to be explored but none of these things are the center. Christ is the center. The Good News of what He has done for sinners like us. His blood was shed so now we can be saved. He's thrown himself into the fray and fought the fight with sin, death and hell and has triumphed, so we can be victorious in Him.

[Tullian Tchividjian](#) says, "Because we are so naturally prone to look at ourselves and our performance more than we do to Christ and His performance, we need constant reminders of the gospel."

This is the center. We must guard that center.

3. We must take the gospel personally

Not, "Oh, isn't that amazing how Christ died for those sinful people over there?" No. "Isn't it amazing that He died for such a wretch like me?"

Not, "Oh, look at His patience and compassion with those who mocked Him, reviled Him, spat on Him, beat Him, and crucified Him." No, take it personally:

"Behold the man upon the cross
My sin upon His shoulder
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished!"

[How Deep the Father's Love](#) by Phillips, Craig & Dean

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel

New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

[Were You There?](#) (an African-American Spiritual)

Yes, I was there. I crucified Him.

What Does It Mean to Take the Gospel Personally?

A. It means in verse one that you love to hear the gospel preached. Paul is reminding them of when they reveled in hearing it preached and they've gotten distracted and have lost the center. Paul is saying in verse one, "I want to remind you. Do you remember what it felt like to drink that living water for the first time? Do you remember the freshness and the vitality and the liberation of your soul and spirit when you heard that gospel?"

When you take that the gospel personally, you love to hear it preached. You can say,

Tell me the old, old story of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.
Tell me the story simply, as to a little child,
For I am weak and weary, and helpless and defiled.

Tell me the story slowly, that I may take it in,
That wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin.
Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon;
The early dew of morning has passed away at noon.

[Tell Me the Old, Old Story](#) by A. Katherine Hankey & W. Howard Doane

B. To take the gospel personally means you receive it as the most exciting, thrilling news you've ever heard because Peter says in [I Peter 1:11-12](#) that angels long to look into these things, that Christ died for our sins and that He was raised from the dead. That's not monotony to the angels. The angels look at that with an amazed, child-like wonder and they say, "[Glory to God in the highest!](#)" There is no better news than this. Really!

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel

New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

[Tim Keller](#) says, “If it doesn’t have this effect on you, you haven’t heard it.” If it’s not thrilling you, you might have a whole lot of Bible knowledge but you have not heard the gospel. Your ears are deafened. Your mind is dull. Your eyes are blinded. And you need to pray, “God open my eyes that I would receive this gospel trust as the thrilling news that it is.”

C. To take the gospel personally means you take your stand upon it. Look at verse one: “*Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand...*” Or as the NIV says, “*...on which you have taken your stand.*” When you take this gospel personally, you say that the greatest privilege and honor you can imagine is to stand firm on [Christ the Solid Rock](#) and to [Stand Up for Jesus](#). You are [not ashamed of the gospel](#). You are not a chameleon. You are not an anonymous Christian.

D. And to take the gospel personally also means you are being saved by it. I love the continuous sense of salvation that comes up in verse two. It’s an on-going work of God’s Spirit in your life. God’s grace is abounding and it’s making you long to be like Jesus. And it’s turning you from your selfish pride to love the cross on which Christ died...

Grace abounding, strong and true
That makes me long to be like You
That turns me from my selfish pride
To love the cross on which You died

[Grace Unmeasured](#) by [Bob Kauflin](#)

And people in your life can see that a change is taking place. They are seeing that you are being saved. God’s Spirit is at work in you -- the virtues of Christ are being formed in you. The [Fruit of the Spirit](#) is being evidenced in you – you are being saved by the gospel.

Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

That's what it means to take it personally. And it also means, look again at verse two...

E. You are holding fast to the gospel. If you drop it, if you lose interest in it, if you fall away from it, there's strong evidence that you have not believed in it. Because true faith perseveres. True faith cleaves to Christ. True faith does not just put on the gospel as a jacket to fit in respectably with the gospel crowd and then throw it off whenever it's convenient to fit in with those who deny the gospel.

There's a strong condition here in verse two: By which you are being saved, IF you hold fast to the word I preach to you. Because if you truly believed, you will hold fast. You can not deny Christ; you can not turn away from the gospel. If you do not persevere in the gospel, Paul says, you've believed in vain. It's an empty profession and you have no title to the benefits and blessings of the gospel.

F. To take that gospel personally means you are being continually amazed and humbled by it. I just love the way Paul speaks in verses eight through ten. Look at them: "...as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me." He's never gotten over that fact: Jesus came to me. I'm not worthy to be called an apostle, "*I persecuted the church of God.*" Yet God has been gracious to me. "...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."

Like [John Newton](#) said: 'I am not what I *ought* to be. Ah! how imperfect and deficient. I am not what I *wish* to be. I abhor what is evil, and I would cleave to what is good. I am not what I *hope* to be; soon, soon, I shall put off mortality, and with mortality all sin and imperfection. Yet, though I am not what I *ought* to be, nor what I *wish* to be, nor what I *hope* to be, I can truly say, I am not what I *once* was—a



Nothing Matters More than the Gospel

New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge, 'By the grace of God, I am what I am.'

Those words were actually spoken around a breakfast table more than two hundred years ago. They are the words of John Newton, converted slave-trader, pastor, and hymn-writer of *Amazing Grace*. He spoke those words to a fellow pastor and friend one morning after breakfast. They show us how the gospel continually amazes and humbles those who hold fast to it.

Are you humbled? Are you amazed at what God has done for a sinner like you? Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

G. To take that gospel personally means you are energized by it. Are you energized by the Gospel because Paul says this gospel makes me work hard? Look at verse 10: "*God is at work in me.*"

H. It also means that you are committed to advancing the gospel. And are you committed to advancing it? Look at verse 11: "*Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*"

The [ESV Study Bible](#) says, "Paul doesn't care who gets the credit for the gospel's advancement, only that it advances." And as we celebrate our anniversary today, may our hearts be in prayer for all the churches up and down this Fox Valley corridor: for Riverside Community, Christ Community, Hosanna Lutheran, Redeemer Fellowship and for all other churches where the Word is preached. May we pray that the gospel advances, not only through us but also through them. Why? Because nothing matters more than the gospel. That is the absolute truth. May it always be true at New Covenant Bible Church and by Gods' grace may it always be true of you and of me.



Nothing Matters More than the Gospel
New Covenant Living Series #28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Pastor David Sunday

May 1, 2011

Lord, we thank you for this glorious gospel. We thank you for its power in our lives. We pray that nothing would matter more to us than the truth: the fact that Christ died, was raised from the dead, is seated at Your right hand in power and majesty and He must reign until He makes all His enemies a footstool for His feet and then, He shall come again to judge the living and the dead. We love this gospel, Lord, and we love what You have done for us through it. And we would love to tell it to others so make us bold to be Your witnesses this very week, Oh Great God we pray. Amen.

New Covenant Bible Church

4N780 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60175

(630) 584-2611 ♦ www.newcbc.org

All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.