

*Series: “The Gospel Panorama: Seeing and Savoring the Good News”*

Main Idea: According to 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, the gospel changes everything. It’s a message we need to see and savor. This text gives us three important insights into the gospel.

- I. The gospel is a message to remember (1-2).
  - A. It must be preached.
  - B. It must be received.
  - C. It must be cherished.
- II. The gospel is reality (3-8).
  - A. Christ died (3).
    1. His death was for sinners.
    2. His death was according to the Scriptures.
    3. His death must be our priority concern.
  - B. Christ was buried (4a).
  - C. Christ was raised from the dead (4b).
    1. It was a historical event.
    2. It was a prophetic event.
  - D. Christ appeared to witnesses (5-8).
    1. He took the initiative.
    2. He made Himself known to individuals and to groups.
    3. He wants people to know that He is alive.
      - a. Knowing the truth about Jesus is a privilege.
      - b. Knowing the truth about Jesus involves responsibility.
- III. The gospel is producing lasting results (9-11).
  - A. The risen Christ reaches unlikely people (9).
  - B. The risen Christ works through unlikely people (10).
    1. Ministry involves our effort.
    2. Ministry is made possible by His grace.
  - C. The risen Christ deserves honor from all His people (11).

The bottom line: The gospel changes everything.

1. It’s why we have ‘the Lord’s Day’ (Rev 1:10).
2. It prioritizes everything else we do in life (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2).
3. It assures us we have a living hope (1 Peter 1:3).

This morning we’re beginning a new series entitled, “*The Gospel Panorama: Seeing and Savoring the Good News.*” The term “gospel” means “good news”. When we think of news, we’re typically talking about something verbal. But the reality is, this news was visual before it became verbal. And to help us learn and communicate the verbal, we’re going to use a visual representation of the gospel events.

At the end of today’s service, every family will receive one of these (or a similar version of it). This gift was made by a dozen or so men in our church family. It is a panoramic presentation of the work of Jesus Christ, as explained by Paul in today’s text. This gift is designed to help you as a family see and savor the good news.

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<sup>\*\*</sup>Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For a previous look at this passage, see the messages preached at WBC on 3/23/08 and 4/21/19.



But the Gospel Panorama, like the gospel itself, isn't merely for keeping, but sharing. The purpose of this tool is help us fill this community with gospel conversations this Easter season. Would you consider inviting your neighbors and friends to your home on Good Friday, giving them a Gospel Panorama, and discussing it with them? To help you, we've prepared a video tutorial that will be on our church website. Let's watch it now.

*Video explanation:* The Gospel Panorama

*Series Overview:*

March 19 "The Gospel Panorama" 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

March 26 "The Gospel Panorama: According to the Scriptures"

April 2 "The Gospel Panorama: Christ Died for Our Sins" Isaiah 53:4-6

April 9 "The Gospel Panorama: He Was Buried and Rose Again" Luke 24:1-12

April 16 "The Gospel Panorama: He Appeared" John 21:1-14

April 23 (possibly) "The Gospel Panorama: The Message We Believe and Preach"

*Scripture Reading:* 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

It's vital that we see and savor the good news regarding the death, burial, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ. That's not just my opinion. That's the conviction of a man who was killing Christians before Christ entered his life, who himself became a fearless preacher of the message he once hated.<sup>2</sup>

Paul wrote the letter we call 1 Corinthians in AD 55. He was in Ephesus at the time, and though miles away from Corinth, these dear brothers and sisters were on his heart. He'd received a visit from some members of the household of Chloe who informed him of some problems in the Corinthian church (1:11). He also received a letter from Corinth requesting counsel concerning various subjects (see 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1).

How do you help people that you care about when they are struggling? Here's one way. You help them *by reminding them* of truth they already know. That's what Paul did.

He says in verse 1, "Now I would remind you, brothers."<sup>3</sup> He doesn't tell us why he offers this reminder until verse 12, where he indicates that some people in Corinth were saying there is *no resurrection from the dead*. The Greeks believed the body was bad, so why would it be raised after it died? It won't be, some were saying. They probably weren't denying the reality of *life* after death, but rather *life in a body* after death.

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<sup>2</sup> It's important to be learning new truth from the Scriptures, and God's Word is full of yet unmined nuggets. But it's just as important to keep going back and reflecting on and reaffirming truth we've already learned. And there's no subject more vital to remember than *the gospel of Christ*.

<sup>3</sup> Our goal in preaching must never be novelty, but always faithfulness. Paul is writing to *remind* his readers of something they knew very well.

Is that a big deal? Is belief in the resurrection of the body a big deal? According to Paul, it sure is. He penned the longest chapter in this letter to address that question.

Our focus this morning will be on the first eleven verses. It's in this passage, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, that Paul presents the gospel panorama, a message we need to see and savor. This important passage gives us three important insights into the gospel.

#### I. The gospel is a message to remember (1-2).

Notice verse 1, "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand."

Repetition is a great teacher, especially when you're handling great truth, and there is no greater subject than the gospel. *I want to remind you of the gospel.* The word 'gospel' means "good news." But just what *is* the gospel? Paul will identify the gospel in verses 3-5, but before identifying it, he mentions three things we ought to be doing it.

**A. It must be preached.** "I want to remind you of the gospel I *preached to you.*" That indeed is what Paul did, as described in Acts 18. Paul went to Corinth, entered the synagogue every Sabbath, and testified to the Jews that "Jesus was the Christ" (5). Due to opposition, Paul had to leave the synagogue, but he didn't stop preaching the gospel. He went next door to the house of Titius Justus and kept preaching (7). In fact, one night the Lord actually spoke to Paul in a vision and said, "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city (9-10)."

And so Paul did. He preached the gospel for eighteen months in Corinth. Do you remember who first preached the message of Christ to you?

**B. It must be received.** "Which you received and on which you have taken your stand." Preaching the gospel is the first step, but merely hearing the gospel isn't enough. It must be *received*. And that's what happened. As Acts 18 records, many Corinthians, including Crispus the synagogue ruler and his household, "believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8)."

Of course, before a person can preach the truth of the gospel, he too must *receive* it, as Paul acknowledged in 1 Corinthians 11:23, "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you..." So the gospel must be preached, then received. But there's more.

**C. It must be cherished.** The Corinthians didn't simply *receive* the gospel. Paul says they *took their stand on it*. They made it the foundation of their lives. That's good, says Paul, but then he points out that a proper response to the gospel isn't merely a *past tense* matter.

He says in verse 2, "And by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain." Let's not rush past that little word *if*. The gospel saves people, and when a person truly has been saved by the power of the gospel, that person will *hold firmly* to it. If that person doesn't hold firmly to it, that person has *believed in vain*, that is, he or she has exhibited a non-saving sort of faith.

"You mean not all faith is *saving* faith?" you ask. That's right. This verse (and others) indicates that faith without a persevering devotion to the person and work of Christ is a vain, non-saving faith.

Keep in mind that Paul himself had preached to these readers. He shared Christ with them. He heard them give a public testimony of their belief in Christ, yet here he offers them a sobering warning.

*If you truly have been saved, then you will hold firmly to the word I preached to you. If you don't hold on, your faith is deficient and vain.*

Because I care for you, beloved, I must say this as clearly as I can. There are many people sitting in churches this very moment who are convinced they are saved and heading for heaven because they have *prayed a prayer*, or *walked an aisle*, or *were baptized*, or *joined a church*. But it's all *past tense*. They're not *holding firmly to the gospel* in the present. They have *agreed with* the gospel, but they don't *cherish* it. And they don't cherish it because they don't truly cherish *Him*.

This is eternally significant, dear friends, and why we need *reminders*. It's not that we forget the facts of the gospel. They're still there in our cranium, neatly tucked away, ready to be retrieved when needed. But the question is, are these gospel facts affecting our lives in the present? Are we thinking about them when we're closing the deal at work, or raising our kids, or planning next year's vacation?

Someone might say, "Wait a minute. Why should events that happened two thousand years ago matter to me today? Isn't it just a story that Jesus' followers made up?"

That's an important question. You may be asking it today. And it brings us to our second point. First, the gospel is a message to remember.

## II. The gospel is reality (3-8).

Listen to what the terrorist turned preacher says in verse 3. "For what I received I passed on to you." So, Paul says he didn't make up the gospel. He says he received it.

Peter, James, John, and the rest of the Twelve were apostles. They saw Jesus personally, and then shared what they witnessed, first verbally, and eventually this verbal message was recorded in what we call the New Testament.

But Paul received it in a different way, as he explains in Galatians 1:12. "I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."

And what precisely was this message that Paul received? He tells us right here. It's a four point message, and we'll be considering these points carefully in the next four weeks.

**A. Christ died (3).** "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures."

*Christ* died, says Paul. *Christ* is a title, meaning "the Anointed One", the Messiah God sent into the world on a rescue mission.

*Christ died*. The Living One stopped breathing and died. But His death was different from the deaths of other great religious leaders. How so? In three ways.

1. *His death was for sinners*. "Christ died *for our sins*." While it's true that Christ died in the place of sinners, here Paul says that Christ died, not simply *for sinners*, but *for sins*. That is, Christ died for the sins that sinners have committed.

Did you ever get in trouble growing up? Did your brother or sister ever offer to take your place and experience the punishment you deserved for your transgression? Usually it's just the opposite. "I didn't do it! Don't spank me! *He* deserves it!"

One of the problems we church-goers face is familiarity. We've heard it so many times that we tend to lose the wonder of it all. Perhaps it's happening right now. We're talking about something very familiar to us, the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. Christ died as a substitute for and in the place of sinners. He bore the penalty that their

sins deserve. But Paul reminds us that he's not talking about somebody else's sins. Paul makes it personal for the first readers, and us.

Christ died for *our* sins. When He died on the cross He had *us* in mind, and it was *our* penalty He endured, for our specific transgressions.

Think back to the sins you committed last week, or last year, or thirty years ago. He died for those sins, my friend. Amazing. Unthinkable. Yet this is gospel truth and we find it all over the Bible.

For instance, John the Baptist said this about Jesus in John 1:29 "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Paul declared in Galatians 1:4, "Who gave himself for our sins." And Peter likewise affirmed in 1 Peter 2:24, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

What makes Jesus' death unique? First, His death was for sinners.

2. *His death was according to the Scriptures.* "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." In other words, Christ's death didn't just happen. It was predicted. Where? In the Book. Which book? The Hebrew Scriptures. It's true. Christ died in fulfillment of a plan that God designed in eternity past and then recorded centuries ahead of time.

Let that sink in. *Centuries* ahead of time, God Himself predicted the gospel events. And they occurred *in accordance with the Scriptures*. That phrase is so significant that Paul says it twice, in verse 3, and then again in verse 4. We're going to take a whole message to explore this wonderful reality, the Lord willing, investigating how the Old Testament Scriptures predicted the coming Messiah.

Here's one example. This is what the prophet Isaiah prophesied seven hundred years before it happened, in Isaiah 53:5-6: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Again, that will be next week's message in the Gospel Panorama series. His death was *for sinners*, and it happened *according to the Scriptures*. And this leads to a very specific implication.

3. *His death must be our priority concern.* Notice again the phrase in verse 3, "as of first importance." "*First of all,*" says the KJV. It doesn't get any more basic than this. Christ died for our sins.

This truth is at the heart of Christianity. It is central to our message. We're not talking merely about one important fact amongst many others. This is *the fact* around which everything else revolves. We are here today, enjoying God and each other, because someone died for us.

Let that sink in. Someone died for us. That truth changes everything, doesn't it?

Even on a human level, it's powerful. For instance, back in 1943 on a dreary winter day, 903 troops and four chaplains boarded the SS *Dorchester*. One of the chaplains was Moody Bible Institute alumnus Lt. George Fox. World War II was in full swing, and the ship was headed across the icy North Atlantic where German U-boats lurked. At 12:00 on the morning of February 3, a German torpedo ripped into the ship. "She's going down!" the men cried, scrambling for lifeboats.

A young GI crept up to one of the chaplains. “I’ve lost my life jacket,” he said. “Take this,” the chaplain said, handing the soldier his jacket. Before the ship sank, each chaplain gave his life jacket to another man. The heroic chaplains then linked arms and lifted their voices in prayer as the Dorchester went down. Lt. Fox and his fellow pastors were awarded posthumously the Distinguished Service Cross.<sup>4</sup>

Do you think the men whose lives were saved by the sacrifices of those chaplains ever shared that story with anybody else? Do you think they told their family members and friends about the sacrifice the chaplains made for them? They couldn’t help but speak of it.

Brothers and sisters, Christ, the Son of God Himself, died for us, in our place, for our sins. This is why we can’t keep this message to ourselves, and if we are, it’s an indicator we’re distracted by lesser concerns. Paul said that what he received he passed on to the Corinthians, and what he passed on to them was *of first importance*.

This is so important that we’ll devote an entire message to it in two weeks, the Lord willing, in our Gospel Panorama series.

**B. Christ was buried (4a).** “That he was buried.” Why is that detail important? Think about it. Some critics say that Jesus didn’t really die on the cross.

Years ago someone came up with the “swoon theory” which proposes that Jesus merely fainted on the cross and then resuscitated in the tomb when the cool air hit Him. To believe such a theory, frankly, you have to ignore the facts. The centurion was convinced that Jesus had died. He’d seen the blood and water pour out of His side once the Roman sword pierced Him. He’d given the report to Pilate, confirming Jesus’ death. He knew that Pilate had given Joseph of Arimathea authorization to take down Jesus’ body and bury it.

And that’s what Joseph did (see Luke 23:53). He handled Jesus’ lifeless body, transported it to an unused, rock hewn tomb, and placed the body on the cold, stone slab. He *buried* Jesus’ body, a fact that Paul emphasizes here.

His burial confirms His death. He really died. And He was placed in a real tomb. Of course, He didn’t stay there long!

**C. Christ was raised from the dead (4b).** “That he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” This statement says two important things to us regarding His resurrection.

1. *It was a historical event.* “He was raised on the third day,” says Paul. In Jewish thinking a part of a day was treated as a whole. Good Friday was the first day, Saturday was the second day, and Sunday was the third day. He was raised *on the third day*. So no, His resurrection isn’t merely some inspirational fable, as Liberal theologians suggest. It was a *historical* event.

Furthermore, as was His death, so His resurrection. This day was foretold.

2. *It was a prophetic event.* “He was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures.*”

King David recorded these prophetic words in Psalm 16:9-10, “Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.” David affirmed that God would not leave him in the grave. He also affirmed that the Lord’s “Holy One” would not see decay. And He didn’t.

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<sup>4</sup> *Today in the Word*, April 1, 1992.

Jesus Himself announced in Matthew 12:40, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish [a reference to Jonah 1:17], so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Is Christ’s resurrection important? Absolutely! Anyone could claim that his death took care of the penalty of sin, but where’s the proof? A dead Savior is no help to us. If He’s not able to overcome death, why would we think He could help us do the same?

But Jesus Christ did, and He can! This is front and center in the gospel panorama. Christ died for sinners. Christ was buried, and then raised from the dead.

The Lord willing, we’ll explore this further in three weeks, on Resurrection Sunday.

**D. Christ appeared to witnesses (5-8).** Notice verses 5-8, “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.”

Note that verb, *appeared*. Paul uses it four times. He appeared. He appeared. He appeared. He appeared. In fact, Paul identifies six appearances of Christ in his gospel panorama.<sup>5</sup> of Christ’s ten appearances.

It’s significant how much attention Paul gives in his gospel panorama to Christ’s post-resurrection appearances. One verse to His death. One verse to His burial and resurrection. Then four verses to detail His post-resurrection appearances.

Paul emphasizes three important details.

1. *He took the initiative.* Christ appeared to Peter... Christ appeared to the Twelve... Christ appeared to five hundred...and so on. People didn’t initiate these encounters. The risen Christ did.

2. *He made Himself known to individuals and to groups.* He appeared to Peter—that happened on the Sunday evening of Jesus’ resurrection (Luke 24:34).

Then He appeared to *the Twelve*, a reference to the apostles, originally twelve men but minus Judas (and Thomas) when Jesus made Himself known to them that Easter Sunday evening (John 20:19-23).<sup>6</sup>

After that the Lord appeared to more than five hundred brothers, at the same time, according to Paul. This appearance is not mentioned elsewhere, but apparently it was well known even to the readers in Corinth since Paul offers no other explanation. Indeed, he indicates they could verify this appearance by talking to the eye witnesses since some were still alive.

Then Jesus appeared to *James*, a reference not to the two men known as James who were apostles, but to the half-brother of Jesus. This James didn’t believe in Jesus during His earthly ministry (John 7:5), but became a believer after His resurrection, perhaps as a result of this encounter with the resurrected Christ. James later became a key leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13).

Next Jesus appeared to *all the apostles*, and this could refer to any of several occasions (such as when Jesus appeared to Thomas and the others a week after

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<sup>5</sup> There are actually other appearances in the NT that Paul doesn’t mention, such as Jesus’ appearance to the women, including Mary Magdalene, to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and to the seven disciples who went fishing in John 21.

<sup>6</sup> The designation *The Twelve* simply referred to the apostolic band, even if all twelve men weren’t present, much as the designation “The Big Ten” refers to a conference that today actually has more than ten teams.

Resurrection Sunday, in John 20:26), or the occasion of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20), or the day of Christ's ascension.<sup>7</sup>

And last of all, says Paul, Jesus appeared *to me*. Paul was not one of the original apostles. He did not spend three years living with Jesus, watching His life, hearing His teaching, and so on, as Peter, James, John, and the rest of the Twelve did. Paul refers to himself as “one abnormally born,” using the Greek word *ektroma* which means “born out of due time.” It is translated “stillborn child” in Numbers 12:12, Job 3:16, and Eccl. 6:3. It can refer to an untimely birth, an abnormal birth, even a monstrous birth. It's the word for miscarriage and even abortion.

David Prior comments, “Apparently the word was used as a term of abuse. Perhaps it had been hurled at Paul by his opponents. He was not a handsome man (2 Cor. 10:10), and they may have combined an insult to his personal appearance with a criticism of his doctrine of free grace. We can imagine such opponents declaring that, so far from being born again, Paul was an abortion.”<sup>8</sup>

Think of the contrast. When Jesus appeared to the Twelve, it was after they had spent three years learning from Him, three years of preparation and training, and His resurrection appearances launched them into service. But when He appeared to Paul, or ‘Saul’ as he was known then, Saul was on his way to arrest and kill Christians. As one commentator put it, Paul's ministry “had been born without the due period of gestation.”<sup>9</sup> Yet the Risen Lord broke into Saul's life on that road to Damascus, and he became a new man!<sup>10</sup>

This is the climax of the gospel panorama, dear friends. Christ appeared, again, and again, and again. What does that tell us? Something very profound.

3. *He wants people to know that He is alive.* He wanted people to know then in the first century. And He wants people to know now. Here, and everywhere. Brothers and sisters, this is vital for us to see today.

**a. Knowing the truth about Jesus is a privilege.** But more than that.

**b. Knowing the truth about Jesus involves responsibility.** Do we believe that Jesus Christ died for sinners, then left His tomb, and is alive today? Yes, we do. And if we do, it's because someone told us, and now we have the responsibility to tell others.<sup>11</sup>

This brings us to our third point. The gospel is a message to remember. The gospel is reality.

### III. The gospel is producing lasting results (9-11).

Paul talks about three results in verses 9-11.

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<sup>7</sup> I am indebted to Craig Bloomberg for his insights concerning the appearances; *1 Corinthians*, p. 296.

<sup>8</sup> David Prior, p. 261 (quoting Barclay, p. 145?)

<sup>9</sup> Quote by George Nickelsburg, in Craig Bloomberg, p. 297.

<sup>10</sup> It's worth noting that two of the people in this list did *not* believe in Jesus prior to His resurrection, that being James and Paul. Why is that significant? Some say that Jesus' resurrection was merely a story fabricated by loyal followers who simply couldn't imagine life without their leader, so they made up the story of His return from death. But the evidence says, *No way!* James and Paul certainly had no motivation to make up or add to the resurrection account!

<sup>11</sup> Craig Bloomberg, p. 308. “Christianity lives or dies with the claim of Christ's resurrection. To be sure, it is possible to believe in Jesus' resurrection and not become a Christian, but without the bodily resurrection Christianity crumbles. Finding the bones of Jesus would assuredly disprove our religion!”



**A. The risen Christ reaches unlikely people (9).** “For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

Paul calls himself the *least* of the apostles.<sup>12</sup> He took it a step further in Ephesians 3:8, “Although I am *less than the least* of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

I am the least. Did Paul have a problem with self-esteem? No. He just never forgot what he was, nor what changed him.

Paul later described his self-perception this way in a letter he wrote a friend: “Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 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. 1:13-16).”

“But you don’t know what I’ve done. I’m not the Christian type.” Have you heard those words? Or said them? My friend, did you ever kill a person simply because he was a Christian? Paul did. Many times, apparently. Yet the risen, gracious Christ Himself entered his life and made him a new person. And He will do so for you, if you’ll humbly ask.

But there’s more. It’s not just that Christ *reaches* unlikely people.

**B. The risen Christ works through unlikely people (10).** “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain<sup>13</sup>. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”

Paul loved grace. He knew he was saved by grace, and he served by that same grace.

So if Christ has saved us, dear friends, He saved us so we can serve Him. And He makes that service possible, by His grace.

You say, “I do want to serve God. What does it take?” Two things, according to Paul.

1. *Ministry involves our effort.* “I worked,” says Paul. Indeed, he did work. He labored night and day, with tears, in order to reach people for Christ. Are we working for Christ? Not to earn His favor, but to show our gratitude for it, and with this assurance.

2. *Ministry is made possible by His grace.* “Yet not I, but the grace of God,” said Paul. “To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me (Col. 1:29).”

What a difference grace makes! In His grace the risen Christ reaches unlikely people, saves them, and transforms their lives. In His grace, Christ also works through unlikely people to reach more unlikely people.

Paul concludes in verse 11, “Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.” In other words, it’s not about the messenger. It’s about the central figure in the message we preach.

**C. The risen Christ deserves honor from all His people (11).** It’s all about Him.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> We find the same word in Matthew 25:45, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the *least* of these, you did not do for me.”

<sup>13</sup> The word “vain” (NIV “without effect”) comes from the Greek word *kenos* which means ‘empty’ and ‘without result or purpose.’ It appears in 1 Corinthians 15:14, “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is *useless* and so is your faith.”

This, beloved, is the gospel panorama. It is a message to remember. It is reality. And it is producing lasting results, in and through us.

The bottom line: The gospel changes everything. It's a message to see and savor.

Let's talk about three implications.

1. *It's why we have 'the Lord's Day' (Rev 1:10).* In Revelation 1:10, the apostle John says simply, "On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit." John mentions the Lord's Day. What day is that? It's Sunday, the day that Jesus rose from the dead.

Unfortunately, we often think of Sunday as the weekend, sort of the end of the weekend, but the Bible presents a different perspective. Sunday is not the end of the week, but the beginning, the first day of a new week.

And it's not a day for me, nor even a family day. The Bible calls Sunday the *Lord's Day*. Yes, every day belongs to the Lord (Rom 11:36), but this day is His special day, for this day is the day He did what no one else has ever done. He rose from the dead. And we affirm our belief in the gospel panorama by beginning every week, joining together with His people, worshipping Him, on His day.

2. *It prioritizes everything else we do in life (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2).* For many people, Easter is a big day, and rightfully so. But the truth is, we ought to view every Sunday as the big day, the most important day of the week.

It was for Jesus' first followers. Listen to Acts 20:7, "On the first day of the week, we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people...until midnight." What did they do on Sunday? The Christians met together to remember Christ (that's what breaking bread is all about) and learn His Word.

They did something else on Sunday, according to 1 Corinthians 16:2. "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income." Notice the pattern. Do this on the first day of *every* week.

God has given us a day that reminds us of what His Son did for us, and that we now belong to Him. We gather on this day every week to prioritize Him for everything we will do in the six days that follow. Next week, we'll do it again, then again, and then again. This is the rhythm of life for the people of Jesus.

3. *It assures us we have a living hope (1 Peter 1:3).* Peter begins his first epistle with these words: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

What do we have? A living hope. How did we obtain it? Through the pinnacle event in the gospel panorama, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, it's the gospel, and particularly His resurrection, that assures us that we have a living hope. And every time we gather, and break bread, and open His Word, we are making a statement. We are saying, "We have hope because of what He did for us. He died for our sins. He rose from dead. He appeared to witnesses. And now, by simple faith in the message those witnesses passed on to us, we are a saved people, who exist because of Him and for Him, forever.

**Closing Song: #170 "One Day" (all five verses)**

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<sup>14</sup> 1 Cor 8:6 "There is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came, and for whom we live."

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning we launched our new series, "*The Gospel Panorama*," by considering carefully 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. Take time to re-read the passage. What stands out most to you from this passage?
2. According to verses 1-2, Paul wrote this section to remind the church members in Corinth of the gospel. Why do people who already believe the gospel need to be reminded of the gospel? What does Paul mean by the statement in verse 2, "unless you believed in vain"?
3. What exactly is the gospel? What is the content of the gospel message, according to verses 3-8? This morning, every family at WBC received a wooden gospel panorama. Take time as a group to practice sharing the gospel by using the panorama. If you need help, check out the tutorial video on our church's website.
4. When was the first time you heard the gospel? Who was the instrument that God used to share it with you? How did you respond when you first heard it? How long did it take until you were saved by it?
5. Who are some people God has placed in your life with whom you have shared the gospel who have yet to believe it? Spend time praying for these individuals.
6. Pray for our upcoming Gospel Panorama outreach on Good Friday. Consider working together as a community group to organize an event to proclaim the gospel message to your neighbors and friends by using the panorama.