

HIGHLANDS CHURCH

The Powerful Truth of the Gospel

Full Transcript

Ed Lutz
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Introduction: The Hope Found in the Risen Savior

0:31 The message today is hope what the world is looking for is the hope that we're going to see about today it's found in the risen savior jesus christ if you're new to highlands haven't been here for a while we've been going through the book of first corinthians and paul in acts 18 founded this church in corinth and so he's been writing to the believers here he's gotten word that there's all kinds of disagreements or some issues of disunity there's some disarray disorder so paul one by one has been checking things off the list trying to set this church straight trying to remind them of the things that ought to be and how they ought to live and so what we have here is really his final admonition on a really really important point he's going to take an extended amount of time on this last point

1:31 See these people for the most part are all believers in jesus christ so they believe that jesus christ was the savior who lived a sinless life who died to forgive people of their sins and then came back to life they believe in the resurrection of jesus but not everybody believed that as people we too will be resurrected so the most of the time that paul will spend in this chapter is on our future resurrection as christians see we have an incredibly glorious future incredibly glorious future but in this greek culture there they had this sense that well when our spirit leaves our body why

2:18 Would we ever in the next life want to be imprisoned again into this flesh so there's this misunderstanding of what that future resurrected body would look like

2:31 So paul is going to address that primarily in the entire chapter but the foundation of which he will talk about that reality is the resurrection of jesus himself they were good with that but this future bodily resurrection for us some of them are a little bit unsure on that but our message today is the reality of the resurrection of jesus christ we have a main idea and here's our main idea if you're looking at your outline here it is the truth of the gospel we don't miss that the truth this is true the truth of the gospel transforms the lives of those who receive it and

3:22

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and 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. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But 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. Whether then it was I or they, so we preached and so you believed.

Christ it's one thing to know the facts about Jesus but it's quite a different reality to know him intimately John in his letter to the churches in Asia Minor writes this in chapter 2 1st John verse 19 he's talking about people who are in the church but they're not really believers in

8:02

1 John 2:19

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

8:30 Believer stand firm hold to the end application point can I give you an application point here you see the gospel is not just something we hear and we receive Christian gospel we receive Christian gospel we receive Christian we receive Christian gospel we receive Christian it's not it's something we stand in we hold fast to it isn't just a one-time decision but it's a lifelong trust the gospel is the lifeline for the believer do you get that you see what he's saying there it's

9:04 Not something we abandon when things get difficult it's something we cling to because that's when we need it the most significant

The Gospel as First Importance

9:15 And look what he says in verse 3 for I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received not only do we stand in it but it should be of first importance Paul says of all the things I've been writing in this letter all the issues I've been bringing up one by one throughout the letter to the Corinthian church we get to the close of this letter he says now let me tell you what the big deal is it's this gospel that I preached this is a

9:52 Gift to you I'm not going to tell you that you can't have it you're going to have it when you're going to have it when you're doing it this is what to you I'm not going to tell you that you can't have it you're going to have it when you're going to have it when you're doing it this is what matters most this is what matters most in

10:00 July 2025 podcast an interviewer asked Charlie Kirk and some of you maybe have seen the clip he said if it all goes away if this whole ministry if this whole movement were to just go away how would you like

10:28 I want to be remembered for the courage of my faith. And then he says this.

10:34 And I don't know if he's thinking of this first, but he says, the most important thing is my faith. You see, the gospel is of first importance. Do you get that? Do you grasp that?

10:51 Question, is the gospel the most important thing in our lives? Moms and dads, as we raise our children, is it in everything we do and in everything we say? Is the gospel most important in our business strategy? Do we see our work as our calling by God to be a life for Jesus Christ? Is the gospel of most importance in our conversations with our neighbors? It should drive everything we do. It did Paul.

11:29 It should do that for us as well. Look what he says. For the gospel I deliver to you is first. Most important is verse three. I also received. Paul received the gospel. When did Paul hear the gospel? Each of us here probably heard a preacher or a friend, somebody in a relationship or through a broadcast told us the truth about Jesus Christ. Who told Paul?

Paul's Unique Reception of the Gospel

11:59 It's interesting. In Acts chapter nine, we see Paul. Paul breathing threats of murder against the church. We see Paul in Acts chapter eight, watching and giving hearty approval for the stoning of Stephen. Paul was persecuting the church. Formerly known as Saul, he was a persecutor. Christians feared Paul. But when did Paul hear the gospel? In Acts chapter nine, some of you know the story.

12:30 He's on the road to Damascus and Jesus appears. There's this incredibly bright light, probably the glory of Christ himself. And he hears a voice and he has a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. And he's radically saved. And Jesus gives him his mission. And he tells Ananias, he says, this is gonna be my vessel to take the gospel to the Gentiles. And he's gonna suffer, but he's gonna be my instrument.

12:59

Galatians 1:11-17

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

13:18 Teaching about Jesus Christ. Galatians one, verse 11, he says, "For I would have you know, brothers, "that the gospel was preached to me." It's not man's gospel.

13:35

Galatians 1:15-18

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.

14:22 Now what do I do? Not Paul. "Nor did I go up to Jerusalem "to those who were apostles before me." What'd he do? "But I went away into Arabia,

14:35 "and I returned again to Damascus. "Then after three years, "finally, he goes up to Jerusalem "and visits Peter, visits Cephas, "and stays with him 15 days. "And then he meets James and the other brothers." I think what he's saying is, I had this three-year personal discipleship by Jesus Christ.

14:57 Paul was taught theology 101 by Jesus himself. Incredible, incredible. Jesus is the one who taught Paul the gospel. So that's the gospel that he received, and that's the gospel that he was preaching. Now go back to 1 Corinthians 15.

15:18 That's the significance of it, first importance. But we can have confidence in it. Why should we have confidence in it? Let me give you two reasons. Because the Old Testament testifies of it, and there are eyewitnesses to it. The Old Testament tells us about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

15:41 And over 500 people were eyewitnesses of Jesus himself. Look what he says in verse three. Well, just real quick, it says, "That was I received that Christ died "in accordance with the Scriptures." That's the Old Testament. "That it was buried and was raised again "on the third day according to the Scriptures." Those are the Old Testament passages. Well, where in the Old Testament do we see that Jesus is mentioned? Well, part of it's through prophecy. Part of it could be through this idea of typology. Right, you think of the sacrifice of Isaac.

Confidence in the Gospel: Scripture and Eyewitnesses

16:15 That could be a foreshadowing or a type of what would be to come when God would send his son to be the sacrifice for sins. But we see in Matthew 12, Jesus has said, "You know, Jonah was in the belly of the fish "for three days, so I will be in the ground for three days." You see, the eternal Son of God would taste human death.

16:38 Luke 24. There are a couple of discouraged disciples. They're walking on the road to Emmaus. Jesus shows up, has a conversation, eventually reveals himself, and it says that he, starting with the book of Moses and all the way through the prophets, he showed that all the Scriptures gave testimony of him. That would have been a wonderful conversation to just kind of eavesdrop on, wouldn't it? Acts 2, this is amazing. Acts 2 is preaching a sermon, sharing the gospel, and after Pentecost, and he actually quotes Psalm 16. What is Psalm 16? Well, because Peter uses it in reference to Christ, we realize Psalm 16 is a prophecy about the death and resurrection of Jesus. He says, you will not allow your loved one to taste death.

17:33

Psalm 16:10-11

For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life.

17:50 Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, the suffering servant. So besides the testimony of the Scriptures, we have people who saw him. If you want to prove that you rose from the dead, you know how you do it? You show up. You show up. Jesus showed up to multiple people, really over a period of 40 days. Which is remarkable. Look what he says in verse five. He appeared to Cephas, which is beautiful. That's Peter. Remember, Peter denied Christ. Peter's considered the leader of the disciples, those men. What a beautiful thing that Christ would restore him there. Then he appeared to the 12.

18:36 Over the next two weeks after his crucifixion, he would rise again and he would appear to the disciples. The 12, really the 11, right? Judas at this point had taken his life by hanging himself. But the word the 12 was really just the title. So if you say the 12, that was the collective group that the disciples were known as.

- 18:58 And then he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive.
- 19:06 At one time, 500 people. Now, imagine you're in a courtroom. You're sitting on the jury panel. This is before DNA. This is before video.
- 19:21 But they're gonna bring forth eyewitnesses. And one by one by one, they march witness after witness who was there, who was an eyewitness. And 500 people, one by one, give the exact same testimony. That's overwhelming evidence. Could've been disproven, but they all told the same story. This wasn't a mass hallucination. These were actual eyewitnesses. They saw the person of Jesus Christ.
- 19:57 Then he appeared to James, the half -brother of Jesus, who during his life, growing up, didn't believe Jesus was the son of God, but then later came to believe in him as his savior. And then in Acts 1, he appears to all the apostles. Right before he ascends into heaven, all the apostles are gathered. And then he says, last of all, he appeared to me. The Apostle Paul, we saw that.
- 20:25 Application point number two. Boy, you gotta anchor yourself on this. I was talking to somebody earlier, and they said, Ed, this is an anchor message. And it really is, because here it is. The resurrection is not wishful thinking. You get that? It was confirmed by hundreds of witnesses who not only stake their lives on the veracity of it, but many of them died for it because they had seen the risen Christ. It's not a blind faith. It's a historical reality.
- 21:03 People have been trying to disprove the resurrection for 2,000 years. No one has done it yet. Christian, the weight of the evidence is on our side. You gotta believe that. You gotta anchor yourself in that. The burden of proof. The burden of proof is not on us. It's on those who choose to discount it.
- 21:23 Well, as we wrap up our message, let's look at verses nine through 11. The gospel's significant. And we can have confidence that Jesus is, in fact, alive.
- 21:38 And when we receive that, it radically, radically transforms people's lives. Paul's an example. He says in verse nine, for I am the least of the apostles, unto you. you. I am unworthy. I love his humility. I'm unworthy to be called an apostle. Why? Because I persecuted the church of God.
- 22:04 We talk about guilt and shame. Paul murdered believers. But God in his grace saved Paul, forgave Paul, and commissioned Paul.

The Transforming Power of Grace

- 22:19 Verse 10, but by the grace of God I am what I am. Isn't that true? Isn't that true? that true? Every single one of us in this room who know Jesus Christ, we're nothing in ourselves. Who we are is only because of Jesus Christ. I love that. And his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked hard. Matter of fact, harder than any of them, though it was not I. Where did Paul's strength for working hard for the gospel come from? But the grace of God that is with me. So whether then it was I or they, the other apostles, we preach so people would believe.

23:02 Let's just talk about grace just for a moment. Been around church for a while. I think we have a common definition of grace. Grace is God's unmerited favor shown toward us, right? We don't deserve anything. It's when God gives us something we don't deserve. And that's a really good definition. That's how I learned it. But it's so much more than that.

23:22 For the Christian, grace, get this, it's the power by which we live the Christian life. It empowers our lives. When you wish God's grace on somebody, you are asking God's blessing for them to live strong and faithful lives in the power of the gospel. Here's the definition. Grace is the action, power, or influence, check this out, or force of God's disposition. It's who he is.

23:55

Titus 2:11-12

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

24:20 What's it do? The grace of God, what does it do? Bringing you to God. to God. Bringing salvation, training us. Grace has an element of training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self -controlled, upright, godly lives in the present age. It's the power of living. So when we wanna live in the power of God's grace, it's a reliance upon the strength and the favor of God so we can be effective ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

24:53

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

25:12

Ephesians 6:19-20

And also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

25:47 Corrie Ten Boom, Holocaust survivor says this. The measure of our life is not in its duration, but in its donation.

26:00 It doesn't matter how long we have here. It's what we do with the time we have. Get that? I know a lot of people have lived long lives who have been pretty insignificant. And I know people who have had relatively short lives whose impact is profound. It's not the duration.

26:21 It's the donation. It's the contribution. It's how we steward the time, talents, and treasures that God gives us as faithful stewards for the kingdom of God.

A Call to Bold Gospel Living

26:31 I wanna give a special word of encouragement. To the younger generation, Gen Z, even Gen Alpha.

26:44

Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

26:53 I was listening to a pastor this week. And he said something that was really ministered to me. And you need to hear it, but can I encourage you? We all need to hear it. These were his words.

27:10 The most powerful thing God can give us is his presence. His presence in the midst of difficulty. The most powerful thing God can give you is his presence in the midst of difficulty. You see, in Matthew 28, it's the Great Commission. Jesus is getting ready to send his disciples into the world. Go take the gospel. And let me tell you, it's hostile out there. He's preparing their hearts. But get ready, gear up, take the gospel, be bold. And then he says this at the end of that statement. He says, Behold, I am with you always even to the ends of the age. Behold, I am with you always even to the ends of the age.

27:59 I am with you always even to the ends of the age. My generation, model

28:06 The love and boldness of Christ. My generation, model the love and boldness of Christ. Encourage those younger in the faith. Walk with them. Serve alongside of them. Continue to disciple and pour into them. Because together we are called for gospel impact.

28:29 Couple takeaways. And then we'll wrap up. First, make the gospel your foundation. Build your life on it. Will you do that?

Closing: Stand Firm and Share the Good News

28:41 Two, keep it beautifully simple. Don't complicate it. Jesus died, he was buried, and what's the good news? He rose again. And trust in the resurrection.

29:00 That's a historical reality. And because you can trust in the veracity of it, go share the good news. Go share the good news. And Christian, live in the power of God's grace as you do so.

29:19 Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the hope. Lord, your gospel message is significant. And matter of fact, it is the most important thing we have to share.

29:36 Thank you that we can have confidence that it's true. And as we rely on the truthfulness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

29:50 May we proclaim the message that can transform lives and see more people come to faith in Jesus Christ. In whose name we pray, amen.

30:04 While we're standing in worship of Christian, may you continue to stand in the gospel. Stand firm. Stand firm. Again, I don't know how you came in here. I know you're in the church. I you're in the church. I know the Lord brought you. But if you need some prayer, if you need some encouragement, our care team is down front. We would love to be able to come alongside and just listen, pray with you. If you've

never given your heart to Jesus Christ and sought forgiveness of your sins and surrendered your life to him, today's the day. It would be no greater privilege than for our team to help you start your relationship with Jesus. Jesus. So we would invite you to come as well.

^{30:51} Well, church isn't over until you love somebody. So encourage one another. And boy, we could sure use it, right? And after you love and encourage people, be bold. Proclaim the gospel. Go live on mission. God bless you.