

Week 27 **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Text: 1 Cor 15:1-11

Icebreaker: What different ways have you heard the gospel explained?

1. Read this week's passage. What stands out from the text or sermon?

2. Verses 1-2 include the Corinthians' response to the gospel. They *received* it, *stand* in it, and *hold fast* to it. What do these different responses mean? Some may think of the gospel as a one-time encounter for the purpose of salvation. Instead, the different actions convey how the purpose of the gospel message is far more than "fire insurance" or simply "praying a prayer" at some point in the past. It's something that has ongoing significance in our lives on a daily basis. We currently "stand in it," meaning that it is our motivation and basis for how we live our lives in the present. We "hold fast to it" so that it is our sustaining hope in the world.

Application: In addition to receiving it, why do we also need to "stand in" and "hold fast to" the gospel? What does these look like in your life?

3. In verse 3, Paul reflects on the priority he gave to the gospel message when he first visited Corinth. What are the key elements of this message from what follows verse 3?

Christ's death, burial, and resurrection are central to the message. You could stop at that point and have a great discussion about the significance of the three parts of what Jesus did. You could also keep going...Every other element is also important. Christ's death was "for our sins." These things took place "in accordance with the Scriptures." The message Paul communicated was not something he derived on his own, but it was received by him from those who believed before him. In that sense, the gospel message can be traced back to the apostles. If we read on, we could also include the importance of the eyewitnesses to Jesus's resurrection.

Application: Paul says both that he had received the message from others and that it was “in accordance with the Scriptures.” How can both elements help reinforce the credibility of the gospel?

4. Paul includes multiple eyewitnesses to Jesus’s resurrection. What difference does it make that many saw Jesus alive?

Much has been made of the significance of this passage, and rightly so! Paul wrote 1 Corinthians around AD 54, meaning that this is approximately 20-24 years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. In short, it’s well within the lifetime of those who were the eyewitnesses. Paul’s testimony here is akin to saying, “If you don’t believe me, go ask them since many of them are still alive.” Our faith is built off historical events that include eyewitness testimony of hundreds of people.

5. *Application:* In verse 11, Paul suggests that whether he or the other apostles preached, the message is the same. What does this tell us about the consistency of the gospel message, and why is it important for the church to maintain this consistency today?

It’s likely that Paul had memorized the core of what he says in this passage where he says, “that Christ died for our sins...” Even so, consistency does not mean that Paul only presented the gospel as he does here. For comparison’s sake, you could turn to Acts 17 and read about how he presented the gospel in Athens. “Consistency” means knowing the essential core of the gospel from verses 3-4 and then being able to adapt that message for the context in a way that preserves rather than compromises that core message. The church must do this in every generation so that we too will “deliver” to others what we “also received.”