

October 22, 2017

## ***The Most Excellent Way***

***"I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed."*** I Corinthians 1:4-9

Do you have faith? You know we all do. All of us put our trust in something that we cannot absolutely prove. We are, as the author of Hebrews would say, certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1) We all have faith that there is oxygen in the air we breath although we cannot see it. All of us have faith that the water we drink contains hydrogen and oxygen although we cannot see them. The truth is we have put our trust in a lot of things we cannot see.

As Christians, where have we put our faith? Have we put our faith in the church? Have we put our faith in the preacher? Have we put our faith in the doctrines we hold? Have we put our faith in our own perfection? As Christians, where have we put our faith?

Paul would write to the Corinthian believers, ***"Now brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Sriptures, and that he appeared..."*** (I Corinthian 15:1-5)

The simple truth is this: If we have placed our faith in anything other than this gospel which Paul and others preached then we have placed our faith in the wrong thing. Why is this gospel so essential? Paul says, ***"By this gospel you were saved..."*** This gospel or good news is...

***"...Christ died for our sins..."*** All of us are sinners and, as we have discussed many times, no amount of obedience or service can erase the reality of a single sin. Each and everyone of us is a sinner and under God's Law of Sin and Death, all of us deserve to die and without Jesus we will die. God's grace is this simple reality; he allowed his one and only Son to die on the cross to satisfy the requirement of that Law. ***"...Christ died for our sins..."***

***"...he was buried..."*** Jesus died on the cross. His body was taked down from that cross and buried in a borrowed tomb. He really died and he was really buried for three days. Without his death on the cross there is no satisfaciton of the requirement of the Law and we are still in sin living without grace.

***"...he was raised on the third day..."*** Jesus death on the cross satisfied the requirement of God's Law of Sin and Death. His resurrection, then, is the foundation of our hope. In the resurrection Jesus proves that grace has entered the world. The Apostle will write, ***"...if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith...if Christ has not been riased, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins...If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."*** (I Corinthians 15:12-19)

The gospel is good news because it is the mechanism by which God gives us grace. If we put our faith in the gospel, in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, then we have hope for this life and for the next. If we put our faith in only a part of the gosepl while we reject the rest, we have no hope. If we put our faith in anything but the gospel we have no hope.

What does it mean to put our faith in the gospel? The gospel, by its very nature, is transforming. Those who have really put their faith in the death, burial and resurrection will be transformed by that faith. They have to be. If the Author of creation allowed his Son to die for my sins, to be buried in a borrowed tomb, and then raised him by his glorious power, all for me, how can that knowledge not transform my life?

