



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany (C) – 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Focus: The Resurrection of Christ

word of life

“For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NRSV)

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Apostle Paul traveled to many communities to proclaim the gospel message of Jesus Christ. One of the communities who embraced the message was in Corinth. But the followers of Christ in Corinth struggled with several significant issues, including doubts about the resurrection. Perhaps it was not all the believers, but Paul believed it was enough of an issue to respond directly.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that he himself taught and proclaimed the good news of a risen Christ to them personally. Paul remembers both his proclamation as well as their reception of the good news. Once more, Paul encourages them. Hold fast. Be firm in your faith.

1. *How typical is it for a congregation to develop doubts?*
2. *What are helpful ways to respond when people have doubts?*

Paul’s response is grounded in an early creed. “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NRSV)

For the Christian, a conversation about resurrection begins with the resurrection of Christ. There is no resurrection for us without that first resurrection of Christ. Paul methodically lists those who witnessed the risen Christ. That list includes Cephas, the twelve disciples, more than 500, James, and the apostles.

3. *Imagine being a witness to Christ after his resurrection. Describe that scene.*
4. *Why was it important for multiple people to see the risen Christ in different settings?*

But there is one more name to add to the list who witnessed the risen Christ. It is Paul himself. Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus. But Paul believes he is the last one, the least among the group. Paul writes with a haunting humility. He doesn’t deny his own persecution of followers of Jesus. And yet, Paul offers these words, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:10 NRSV)

Paul was a witness to the resurrection, but he also embodied the hope of resurrection. Paul experienced the opportunity for a new life—devoted to the One who he once persecuted. Not only was Paul forgiven, but he was commissioned to use his passion and energy for good. Paul writes, “...I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10b NRSV)

5. *If you had a conversation with Apostle Paul, what might he say to you about the grace of God?*
6. *What might Paul say today about the resurrection of Christ?*

Word among

Faith is passed on from one generation to the next. Paul told the story of the risen Christ to the Corinthians who told the story to others. We pass on the faith through our storytelling, preaching, music, worship, interaction with each other, and loving service to others.

1. *Who passed on the faith to you?*
2. *Where did you first learn about Jesus?*

The people of Corinth had questions about the resurrection. We can easily relate. It is a challenging concept to embrace. Paul begins with an ancient creed which describes that Christ died, was buried, and was raised on the third day. Then, he appeared to many, many people. Jesus knew he needed witnesses—people willing to tell the story.

The old spiritual “Witness” begins by repeating a single line, “My soul is a witness for my Lord” and then recalls the stories of the Bible—of people such as Metuselah, Samson, and Daniel who were witnesses to Christ. The song concludes with an invitation:

O, who'll be a witness for my Lord
Who'll be a witness for my Lord
My soul is a witness for my Lord
My soul is a witness for my Lord

In some churches, the preacher in the sermon calls out for a witness—someone who will say “Amen”, someone who is moved by the message to do something, someone who will bear witness to the love of Christ.

3. *What does it mean for you to be a witness for Christ?*
4. *What if Paul and the others would have kept silent? Where would we be?*

faith practice in daily life

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

It is one thing to hear of Paul’s struggle to deal with his own persecution of the followers of Jesus and the grace given to him by God to move forward as a forgiven evangelist. Clearly, God intended to use Paul for good and not for harm.

But when it comes to our own lives, how does God intend to use us to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed? This is a question worth pondering.

5. *How is God nudging you to grow in your own proclamation of the good news of God in Christ?*
6. *What training or guidance might you need—if any?*
7. *Who in your personal life might you want to share about the good news of God in Christ?*

Prayer

Gracious God, you raised Christ from the dead. You opened the hearts and eyes of those whom he met—including the Apostle Paul. By your grace, open our hearts and eyes to the resurrection of Christ. Empower us to be your witnesses on this earth. Amen

last word

Pray that your eyes might be open
to opportunities to witness to Jesus this week.

Daily Faith Practices

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