

- b. Truly, we are never worthy of this kind of love or of future glorification. It is all God's amazing _____ based on what Jesus did for us by dying on the cross for our sins and rising again. Thanks be to God!

XI. The Gospel Message

A. Defining the gospel

1. Romans 1:16 says, "*For I am not ashamed of the _____, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*" What is the gospel? The word *gospel* (EUAGGELION) means good news. Galatians 1:6-9
2. The gospel is the good _____ about the work God did for our salvation through Jesus Christ on a weekend in history nearly two thousand years ago. It is a message that must be believed. The four gospels give extensive explanation of that world changing event, but in brief, here are some verses that explain it.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:24a – *...[Christ] Himself bore our _____ in His body on the cross.*
 - b. Acts 5:30 – *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a _____.*
 - c. Acts 13:28-29 – *And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a _____.*
 - d. Acts 13:30-32 – *But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. And we preach to you the good news of the _____ made to the fathers.*
 - e. The results of believing the gospel are found in Acts 13:38-39 – *Therefore, let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is _____ from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.*
3. Paul explained the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He _____ again the third day according to the Scriptures.*
4. Concisely speaking, the message you must believe in order to be saved has to do with a particular person (Christ) and what He did on your behalf: Christ _____ for your sins and rose again.

B. The gospel is an objective message

1. The gospel is an objective message about the most important historical event that ever took place. It is the news report concerning what Jesus Christ _____: He died on the cross and rose again three days later. He did this to forgive us of our sins, save us from God's just wrath and provide us with eternal life.

2. The gospel is not a subjective, how-to message or a step-by-step _____ used to herd people through a process that leads to salvation.
3. The gospel does not change from person to person. It is the historically verifiable _____ of how God brought salvation to mankind through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

C. Essential components of the gospel from 1 Corinthians 15:3-11

1. 1 Corinthians 15:3a – _____ *died*... Christ is the person in whom you must believe for salvation. 1 Timothy 3:16
 - a. Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah from the Old Testament. He is the principle _____ of the gospel message. In order to be saved, a person's faith must rest exclusively on Jesus Christ. Luke 24:44-48, Romans 1:2-4, Hebrews 2:10
 - b. *Christ*, or CHRISTOS in Greek, is the translation of the Hebrew word _____. The term *Christ* has both deity and humanity built into its meaning. John 7:41
 - c. God foretold that the Christ would be a _____ being, the Seed of the woman. Genesis 3:15, John 1:14
 - d. God also foretold that the Christ would be _____. He was Emmanuel, God with us. Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; John 8:23-24; Titus 2:13
2. 1 Corinthians 15:3b – *Christ* _____... This describes the work of Christ for our salvation. Colossians 2:14, Hebrews 2:9, 1 Peter 2:24
 - a. Christ suffered _____ death for us on the cross in that He was separated from God the Father when He took all the sins of mankind on Himself. In Matthew 27:46 we read, "*About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'*"
 - b. Christ suffered _____ death on our behalf when His soul and spirit were separated from His body. 1 Peter 2:24 – *He Himself bore our sin in His body on the cross*. Luke 13:29b – *They took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb*. Luke 23:46, Hebrews 10:10
 - c. Christ suffered the implications of _____ death. Whether Christ was separated from His Father for one minute or one million years made no difference, since God lives outside the realm of time. Hebrews 9:26, 10:12, 1 Peter 3:18
3. 1 Corinthians 15:3c-4a – *Christ died for our* _____. Christ's died on our behalf in order to save us from the penalty we deserved for our sins. By suffering death for us, Christ saved us from having to face the death penalty ourselves and being separated from God for all eternity. Paul gave _____ very important verifications of Christ's death.
 - a. Proof #1 – Detailed prophecies fulfilled: 1 Corinthians 15:3d – *Christ died...according to the Scriptures*... The death of Christ was a prophetic _____ that happened exactly as the Old Testament foretold. Psalm 22:17-18, 69:11; Isaiah 53:3-6; Zechariah 12:10; Luke 24:46; Acts 10:43; Romans 1:2-4

- b. Proof #2 – The burial of Christ: 1 Corinthians 15:4a – *Christ died...and was _____*. The burial of Christ provides enduring proof of His death. The living are not buried. Acts 13:29
4. 1 Corinthians 15:4b-10 – *...and that He was raised on the third day...* The resurrection of Christ is an integral part of the gospel message that must be believed for a person to be _____ from the penalty of sin. The resurrection validated Christ's victory over both sin and death. Paul provided two important verifications for the resurrection. Romans 4:23-25
- a. Proof #1 – Detailed prophecies fulfilled: 1 Corinthians 15:4b – *...and that He was raised according to the Scriptures...* Just as precisely fulfilled prophecies prove the validity of Christ's death, precisely fulfilled prophecies also _____ the resurrection of Christ. Job 19:25-26; Psalm 16:9-10; Isaiah 25:8, 53:10
- b. Proof #2 – Multiple eye-witnesses: 1 Corinthians 15:5-9 – *...and was _____*... More than 500 eyewitnesses are presented as conclusive proof for the resurrection. 1 John 1:1-2
- 1) 1 Corinthians 15:5a – *...and that He appeared to Cephas...* Peter, one of Jesus' closest friends and one of the most well-known Christians of all time, saw the risen Christ. Later, Peter was martyred because he believed Jesus died for our sins and _____ again.
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:5b – *...then to the twelve [disciples]...* While still doubting Christ's resurrection, the twelve _____ saw Him. This statement may include Matthias from Acts 1:26, who also witnessed Christ's resurrection.
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:6 – *After that, He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.* Christ appeared to over 500 people at one time. Most of these witnesses were still _____ at the time 1 Corinthians was written and could have been questioned for verification.
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:7a – *...then He appeared to James...* The James referred to here is Christ's half-_____, who saw Jesus after He rose from the dead. Having grown up with Jesus, James could easily confirm or deny Christ's identity. It is significant that he did not call the resurrected Christ a fraud, but instead became a believer.
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 15:7b – *...then to all the apostles...* The _____, the ones Christ personally commissioned to tell the entire world about his death and resurrection, saw the resurrected Christ. Revelation 21:14
 - 6) 1 Corinthians 15:8-9 – *...And last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God...* The apostle _____, formerly a blasphemer and destroyer of the church, also saw Christ alive and believed in Him.

D. The only requirement for salvation: faith in Christ

1. It is significant that more than 160 verses in the New Testament show faith, or _____, in Jesus Christ as the only prerequisite for salvation.

2. Acts 16:30b-31 – *He said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They said, “_____ in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*
3. John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever _____ in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*
4. John 6:47 – *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who _____ has eternal life.*
5. John 8:24 – *Therefore, I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you _____ that I am He, you will die in your sins.*
6. John 11:25-26 – *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and _____ in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”*
7. John 20:30-31 – *Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may _____ that Jesus in the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*

E. Biblical facts about faith, or belief, in Christ

1. It is important to understand that the words _____ and belief are synonyms in the Bible. In Greek, believe (PISTEUO) is the verb while faith (PISTIS) is the noun. Both words (PISTEUO and PISTIS) have the same basic meaning: to trust in, to rely on, to have faith in or to believe.
2. It is not the size of a person's faith that matters; the important thing is the object in whom a person is trusting. Your faith is only as good as its _____. Jeremiah 17:5-8
 - a. Matthew 17:20 – *...for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard _____, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.*
 - b. 1 Peter 1:8 – *And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in _____, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.*
3. Faith is not some illusive concept. Faith is based on knowledge that comes from the Word of God. Romans 10:17 – *So, faith comes from _____, and hearing by the word of Christ.*
4. Faith is _____ a work, and therefore it is not based on merit. Since faith is not a work, and grace is God's favor apart from works, faith and grace fit together perfectly like a hand in a glove.
 - a. Romans 4:5 – *But to the one who does not _____, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.*
 - b. Romans 4:20a – *For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with _____.* Romans 11:6, Ephesians 2:8-9

5. It is important to know the Bible does not make a distinction between _____ faith and heart faith.
 - a. In New Testament times, the _____ of a person was considered to be a part of the heart, and the heart was the place in which faith occurred. Romans 10:10a – *For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness.*
 - b. Obviously, someone can intellectually know the _____ of the gospel without personally relying on Christ's finished work for salvation. In that case, such a person is not saved.
 - 1) However, we should be careful to _____ measure a person's sincerity by using terms such as head faith, heart faith, true faith or saving faith.
 - 2) Some of these terms have been added to recent Bible translations including the NLT, WNT, ABPE and CEV, but these qualifiers are not found in the original manuscripts of Scripture and can produce confusion and even paralyzing _____.
 - c. Biblically, a person either believes or does not believe. Belief in the gospel is personal reliance on Jesus Christ, on who He is and what He did to save you. If you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are _____, and if not, you are still dead in your sins.
 - 1) John 8:24 – *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will _____ in your sins.*
 - 2) 1 John 5:13 – *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may _____ that you have eternal life.*

F. Why it's important to present a clear gospel

1. Most believers nod in agreement when they hear the _____ gospel, but when you point out unclear gospel presentations, you may get many different responses, including shock, sadness, guilt, or even denial of the truth of the gospel.
2. The intent of this section is not to criticize but rather to challenge our thinking. This section is presented with the confidence that as Christians, we all want to be clear and _____ with the most important message on earth.
3. Since many of us were saved despite _____ gospel presentations, we might be tempted to think accuracy is not that important and that the unclear presentations we grew up with are acceptable, even though they are not entirely accurate.
4. However, we should strive to present the gospel message as _____ as possible.
 - a. Referring to clarity, in 1 Corinthians 14:7-8 Paul said, "*Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be _____ what is played on the flute or on the harp? For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?*"
 - b. Similarly, in Ephesians 6:19-20 Paul said, "*And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak _____, as I ought to speak.*"