

Believe to Receive

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Delivered by Dr. Daniel Kitinoja at Calvary Baptist Church, Tilton, IL

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Well, good morning, kids.

Now, last time you kids stayed with us in the big service, the full service, you guys did an awesome job.

I'm gonna have at least one question, so when we have that, that'll be your opportunity to get your talking out.

And I have a message that I think is, well, probably the most important thing.

And I think even the passage that we're looking at, 1 Corinthians 15, talks about that.

Now, kids, have you ever heard a grandpa or a dad or even a mom for that matter, talk about their old glory days playing sports?

Usually when they do it, well, they only want to talk about, we usually want to talk about the time that we were the king and maybe not so much the time when we messed up.

And some of you older folks, you may remember there's an old TV character named Al Bundy.

And he was, he would talk about his football days and he said, I served my country playing high school football for Polk High.

And he scored four touchdowns in one game.

Now that's usually the story he told.

He probably never told the story by the time he fumbled.

But I'm going to share with you one of my stories.

And it is not a story where I did well in football.

In fact, here's what happened.

We were playing the Olmsted Falls Bulldogs, and we were a team that crushed everybody.

And so one of the things that was done unexpectedly, they kicked what's called an onside kick.

And if you kids don't know what that is, don't worry.

Here's what they are trying to do.

They are trying to trick you so that you will be caught off guard and accidentally fumble the ball.

And unfortunately, in my case, it worked.

Usually when they do an onside kick, it's at the end of the game when they're losing and trying all the tricks in the book to catch up.

Well, they already knew they lost before they took the field, so they started with an onside kick.

And that ball came flying and it hit me in the chest and bounced off of my shoulder pads.

And the other team got the recovery.

And when you think about football, so much rises and falls on catching the ball.

Same thing with baseball, whether it's a diving catch or basketball, catching a chess pass.

Sports and games, oftentimes, the success rises on whether or not we receive the ball.

Similarly, in the Christian life, catch this.

So much, the most important thing for us is that we receive the message that God has given us.

See, we have to believe in Jesus to receive salvation.

And that's what we're going to talk about this morning in 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

We're going to begin by reading verse 1 to 4, but keep your Bible open.

We'll look at the rest.

Paul is reminding some people who had forgotten the most important message, or perhaps they had bobbled the past a little bit.

I'll talk about what I mean when we get there.

Let's read.

Now, I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preach to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved.

If you hold fast to the word that I preach 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.

Let's pray.

Father in heaven, I thank you for today and for these children and the fact that you've given us the opportunity to minister to them.

I pray that you'd help them to listen and to hear and to pay attention and to not only hear, but understand and believe this most important message.

It's in Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

Well, the first thing we see in these verses right off the bat is you have to believe the gospel to receive it.

You have to believe it to receive it.

And part of believing and receiving includes hearing and also understanding and then putting your trust saying, yes, I know this is true.

So the first thing you got to know, kids, is that the gospel has to be believed to be received.

To be saved, to receive salvation, you have to believe it.

It's kind of like football.

Sometimes when the ball is passed, it'll hit the receiver's hands and it'll bounce off.

Sometimes the receiver doesn't realize the ball's coming and they're not paying attention and the ball goes right over their head.

Can I tell you something, as a guy who teaches Sunday school a lot, that happens a lot.

The truth of God's Word is passed, and sometimes even the adults are not paying attention and it goes right over their heads.

Sometimes it seems like we catch the truth, we're holding on to it, but then we drop it.

And then there's other times where we catch it, but we're juggling, barely holding on.

What am I talking about?

Well, we'll explain what I'm getting at here in a moment.

But first off, in football, just like in football, you've got to catch the ball, or it's an incomplete pass.

Young people, it is your church's mission and my mission this morning to get the Gospel to you, to pass along to you what we've also received.

But you have to receive it.

You have to catch it.

So how do you do that?

Well, you believe the good news.

Some people seem to receive the Gospel and then fumble it.

And as adults, sometimes we've seen where people have seem to believe, seem to have caught it, but we're not so sure after time goes on.

Sometimes, however, maybe some of you adults are there right now.

You've caught the Gospel, you believe in Jesus, you've trusted him, but you're bobbling it.

What do I mean?

Well, sometimes things come along and we start to doubt what we believed.

Sometimes things come along and we have messed up and we wonder, is it possible that I'm actually saved?

And sometimes, something shows seeds of doubt and we wonder, is this really true?

And so maybe right now you're bobbling, but I want you to know, if you have really caught the Gospel, have really believed in Jesus Christ for salvation, God will make sure you hold on to it.

And how do I know that?

Because I've bobbled, I've wrestled with doubts from time to time.

But when we believe the Gospel, we become God's friend again.

We become God's friend again.

And some of you who are adults are maybe thinking, is that really true?

Is that a good expression of the Gospel?

Can I tell you adults, this is for the adults, because they're not so sure about this.

The Bible talks about salvation in several different ways.

We're justified.

We're born again.

We become children of God.

We're sanctified.

It talks about it in all of these different ways.

And one of the things it says also is that we are reconciled.

It means that we are friends of God.

In the Book of Romans, Chapter 5, it talks about that.

He's saying, he's talking to them, he says, You who have believed the Gospel, here's what you got to know.

Verse 10 in Romans 5 verse 10.

If while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

That word reconciled means that we who didn't use to be God's friends are friends again.

Now kids, maybe in your life you've had this happen.

You had somebody that you were good friends with, and for whatever reason, you don't talk anymore.

How many of you guys have ever seen friends get in to fight?

Hey kids, this is a good question for you.

You ever see friends get in to fights?

Yeah.

What about?

Yeah.

All the time.

I think somebody said all the time.

It was the same way when I was a kid, and it happens when you're an adult too.

But sometimes friends, they can get over it.

Guys, we're really good about this.

We can get it.

Literally, I got into a fist fight with a kid, and the next day it was like it never happened.

We reconciled.

We didn't talk about our feelings.

We just went on.

But sometimes that doesn't happen.

And when we have offended each other, and we start going in different directions, we need something to come along to help us become friends again.

Sometimes parents will get involved and say, we've got to get these kids back together.

Years ago when I was in high school, I had two good friends, Brian and Rich.

And for whatever reason, and I still don't know to this day, why it was that we stopped being friends, but then we reconciled again.

We never talked about, we just started talking again.

It was a strange thing, we were reconciled.

Well, when we believe in Jesus Christ, we who used to not be friends with God, are friends with Him again.

And that's because of our faith in Jesus.

You see, Jesus came so that we could know God again and be saved.

A part of that then includes the forgiveness of our sins and then being welcomed into God's presence.

So you see the gospel, it has to be received to be, has to be believed to receive salvation.

And the gospel is good news that can save you.

Look at verse 3 and 4.

Let's read these again.

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.

I want to tell you something, this message is so important, but I can tell you, I remember sitting at a Bible study, not at our church, and a pastor was asked, what do I got to do to be saved?

And he stumbled around and seemed to have forgotten this basic truth.

You're ready?

Jesus Christ died for our sins, to pay for our sins, and rose again.

That, children, is the Gospel.

And some of you probably said, I already know that.

Good.

Have you believed in it?

It is the most important thing that can save you.

That's why Paul says, I deliver to you as of first importance.

And that is why today I'm going out of my way to explain it to you.

So this is the Gospel message.

Let's look at these pieces.

Number one, Christ died to pay for our sins.

Hey, kids, here's a good question for you.

What is sin?

What is sin?

What do you think?

I see that hand.

What is it?

Something you do wrong.

Yes, wrong according to whom.

You're right.

God, you meant to say God.

I actually saw it on your lips, but you kind of got scared or something.

Wrong according to God.

What are some examples of sin?

What do you think, kids?

Don't worry, you're not, yeah, go ahead.

Lying, yeah.

Yep.

What else?

What's that?

Being mean to your parents.

Yeah, Sam, I see your hand back there.

What do you got, buddy?

Can you guys repeat it for me?

Fighting your parents.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Fighting your parents would qualify.

Anything else?

Trinity, what do you got?

Fighting with your brothers.

It's not always her fault, okay?

But it does happen.

Kids, I see.

Yeah, Rowan, what do you got, my guy?

Do you know what he was gonna say?

No, okay.

He stood to deliver, which was a good big deal, but he can't.

Hey, I'm proud of you for standing up, my guy.

I do that too, I stand up here to preach, and I've got it all thought up, and I go, what was I gonna say?

And occasionally, I've talked for a sentence or two and said, what did I just say?

I don't say that aloud, but I'm thinking it.

So if I'm thinking that, everyone else is thinking that too.

Sins, yes, these are the things that separate us from God, and we've all sinned one way or the other.

Therefore, we need to be reconciled to God.

And thus, Jesus was, he died to pay for our sins.

Guys, I'm gonna give you a hypothetical, especially, but for you guys who have brothers or sisters, imagine this hypothetical, a made-up situation.

This is a story.

You have broken a rule.

That's actually likely to have happened, but you broke a rule.

Everyone knew you broke a rule, but your brother or sister said, Mom or Dad, I'll take their punishment for them.

I'll take their spanking.

I know you're gonna ground them.

I'll be grounded for them.

You guys are like, all the teenagers are like, that's definitely hypothetical.

Um, yes, I was the one playing on my Nintendo when I was supposed to be sleeping.

Or I was, you was my brother who did it.

And I, but I'll, you can take, so we, that's what we do.

Sometimes we take the video games away.

I know my brother did it, but you can take mine away.

I'll take his punishment.

Well, guess what?

Jesus, when he died on the cross, he took our punishment.

But it was a lot worse than a spanking.

And he rose again the third day.

He was buried, he rose again.

And then I want to point out one other thing.

The Bible calls him Christ Jesus.

And I remember a few years ago in the youth group, Chrissy will remember this because she was in the youth group with us.

I just randomly said one day to the students, you know, Jesus Christ, Christ is not his last name.

And one of the kids said, what?

Christ is a title.

It means that Jesus is God's one and only chosen king.

And he was anointed.

Anointed is a special ceremony that God used to mark people out for special responsibilities.

And in this case, it was, he was anointed with the Holy Spirit to serve as God's chosen king and our savior.

And so Jesus is God's one and only king.

Now, here's the thing.

Now, this is a gospel message.

And sometimes, however, one of the reasons people, I said, bobble the football, they bobble the gospel, they believe it, but then they start, they wonder, is it really true?

Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

Well, here's the thing.

Lots of people saw Jesus alive after he rose from the dead.

Let's read verses 5-8.

Wherever verse 5 is, He appeared to Cephas, that's Peter, and then to the twelve.

Then he appeared to more than 500 at one, 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

Fallen asleep, he's not talking about taking a nap, he's talking about, well, they've died.

But he said, Jesus was appeared, he appeared to 500 people in the same day.

So when he says, most of whom are still alive, you know what he was saying?

If you're not sure that I'm telling you the truth, you can go ask them.

They were what we call eye witnesses.

They were eye witnesses, they saw Jesus with their own two eyes alive after he had been crucified.

So this is a big deal.

Then he appeared to 500 brothers in verse 7.

Then he appeared to James.

James is the half brother of Jesus.

Then to all the apostles.

Last of all, as one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

So lots of people saw Jesus after he rose from the dead.

Let's talk about him really quickly.

Number one, he mentioned the apostles.

The apostles, now they're an interesting group.

They followed Jesus everywhere, and they acted like they were really tough followers of Jesus.

But when Jesus was arrested, they ran like frady cats.

You guys ever see a cat get scared and then they jump?

That's what the apostles did.

They jumped and they ran and hid because they're like, Will, if they're going to arrest this Jesus that we've seen heal people and kill him, we're next.

So they ran like frady cats.

And they were also very sad because they had believed in Jesus.

They thought he was the king and the savior, but then he died and they couldn't understand, how could our king, the Messiah die this way?

And so they were afraid and sad, but then when they saw him, they were happy and no longer afraid.

And they were no longer frady cats.

They were as bold as lions and they went everywhere, telling people about Jesus.

If you believe in Jesus, you can be bold as a lion and tell others about Jesus.

You say, what do I say?

Christ Jesus died to pay for our sins and he rose again.

And then James, James is the half-brother of Jesus.

Now kids, how many of you guys would enjoy having a brother around who, well, your parents were like, can you just be more like your brother James, or your brother Jesus?

Because Jesus never did anything wrong.

He never lied, he was never mean, he didn't get into fights.

And so they'd be like, why don't you marry in Joseph?

That's the parents.

Hey James, why don't you just go be a little more like Jesus?

Why do you always got to do that?

And James didn't believe in Jesus.

He didn't, I'm guessing he, I would have a hard time listening to it all the time.

Your big brother is the best and you're garbage.

Okay, the parents probably never said that part.

But you got the picture.

Jesus was special.

James didn't believe it until Jesus rose from the dead.

In fact, James thought Jesus was crazy.

Cuckoo.

He thought he lost his mind until he rose from the dead.

And then Paul.

Paul didn't believe in Jesus as Savior.

He didn't believe he was the king.

In fact, he was so angry that people were believing this and then telling other people.

So here's what Paul did.

He got the ancient, we'll call him the ancient Roman police to go with him.

And they went around arresting all the Christians because they were talking about Jesus.

He was very angry.

He didn't believe in Jesus.

But here's what happened.

One day when he was traveling around trying to find Christians to arrest, all of a sudden this resurrected Jesus that he didn't believe in shows up.

Here's what happens.

He's got this group of people and all of a sudden Jesus shows up and strikes everyone blind.

And Paul, and he says to Paul, Paul, why are you persecuting me?

Why are you trying to hurt me?

And so Paul's, I think he's thinking, please don't be Jesus.

And then Jesus says, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

Because every time that he went after one of these disciples of Jesus and arrested him, he was hurting Jesus.

So then all of a sudden Paul becomes a believer.

Now he who did not believe in Jesus, believed and he received salvation.

My prayer for you this week, children.

Kids, listen up, you're doing so good.

My prayer this week is not only that you'd hear it, because I know it goes on.

We get lots of people, lots of commotion.

And I've been talking for about 20 minutes.

So you probably zoned out.

So here, number one, that you heard it.

That Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay for your sins and rose again.

That you understand it and that you believe it.

But here's what I want to do.

And you got homework.

This is easy homework.

And your parents also have homework, or your grandparents, or if somebody else took you to church today.

In your bulletin, there's this little white sheet of paper.

I include one every week.

It's got an outline, but at the bottom, it has questions that you can use to talk with your kids about the gospel to make sure they understand it.

Like a lot of things, if you can remember when you were a kid, parents, you need things to be repeated a few times.

Because sometimes it weren't listening real well.

Sometimes you got to hear it again before it sticks.

But parents, you can do this.

You can talk with your kids about Jesus and their need for salvation.

And so that little white piece of paper in the bulletin, that's my way as a pastor and a fellow parent of trying to equip you to talk to your kids about Jesus.

And here's a thing I've come to know.

Your kids may not understand everything they need to understand at the beginning, but this gospel message was designed to be understood by children.

One of the things that happens to us as we, and I was telling some friends this week, I'm away to my small group that I go to, I said, you know, one of the things that happens is, because I study the Bible so much, I've gotten to where I over complicated the gospel.

And the gospel is a very simple message.

Jesus died to pay for our sins and rose again.

And you might have believed that a long time ago, very simply as a child should.

And after 30, 40 years of knowing Jesus, God's added to that knowledge base, and that's the way it should be.

But it is a very simple message.

You can share it with your kids, and they can understand it.

Let's kid, when you talk to your parents, maybe today over ice cream, or maybe in the car, whatever, I'm hooking you up for some ice cream.

Listen to what they're saying.

And parents, I want to encourage you, as you share, ask them if they understand it.

Ask them if they believe it.

And kids, here's what happens.

There's three things that usually people do once they believe the gospel.

Usually, they pray, because the Bible said whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

If you're believing in Jesus, we pray for them, pray for salvation.

Number two, we usually get baptized, so talk to your parents about that.

And when they think you're ready and I think you're ready, well, we'll baptize you.

And the third thing is that we take Lord's Supper.

We're going to take Lord's Supper now.

And Lord's Supper is an interesting thing, kids.

We take this little wafer and we drink a little bit of juice.

It's not enough to fill you up.

And if you're thirsty, it's not going to quench your thirst.

But here's what it does.

It reminds us of the Gospel message, that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and rose again.

You've heard me say it repeatedly.

That's on purpose.

And number two, when we take this meal, this simplified version of the last supper, here's what happens.

We remind ourselves and we proclaim to others that Jesus Christ died and rose again.

So I'm going to read to you some passages of scripture.

One passage of scripture.

It describes for us how to take the Lord's supper.

Here's what he writes in 1 Corinthians 11.

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread.

And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is broken for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way also he took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread at Calvary it's once a month, first Sunday of the month, and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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