

## Three Indisputable Testimonies For The Truth Of The Gospel.

Text: 1 Cor 15:1-10

Suggested Hymns:

310, 335, 103, 293, 423

1) The Testimonies Of The Heart

2) The Testimonies Of The Scriptures

3) The Testimonies Of Eye-Witnesses

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 1 Corinthians 15:1-10, <sup>1</sup> *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, <sup>2</sup> by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.*

<sup>3</sup> *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.*

<sup>6</sup> *After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.*

<sup>8</sup> *Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

In this Epistle St. Paul defends the Gospel against those who doubted certain statements of the Gospel, and especially against those who doubted that fundamental article of the Creed which deals with the resurrection of the dead.

It seems that there was a dispute in the Corinthian congregation as to the doctrine of the resurrection, and that some of the members denied that the dead will rise again.

St. Paul addresses these doubters just after our text, and says to them, <sup>12</sup> *Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?* He shows them how inconsistent it is to believe that Christ rose from the dead, and not to believe that the dead will rise.

He says to them, <sup>34</sup> *Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.* Where is the Christian who has not been assailed with doubts as to certain parts of the Gospel?

The Gospel of Christ is utter foolishness in the eyes of the world, and as long as we are in the world, we hear objections to the Gospel and denunciations of the Gospel, and the Gospel is drawn into ridicule.

Besides, our own sinful flesh is opposed to the Gospel; *the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God;*<sup>1</sup> and our own human nature revolts against the things which the Gospel proclaims.

Should any one be surprised, then, that serious doubts as to fundamental truths may arise in the hearts of the Christians? But how does a true Christian deal with the doubts arising within him? Does he nurse and fondle them? Does he find delight in them?

No; they are not welcome visitors to him. He tries to rid himself of them, and he does get rid of them. They are passing shadows which may obscure his vision for a time, but they must fade away into nothingness when he considers the indisputable testimonies for the truth of the Gospel.

To convince all those people who have been assailed with doubts of the divine truth of the Gospel, St. Paul sets forth three indisputable testimonies for the truth of the Gospel.

Let us consider, then, the *Three Indisputable Testimonies For The Truth Of The Gospel*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

## **1. The Testimonies Of The Heart**

Our text begins, <sup>1</sup> *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,* <sup>2</sup> *by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.*

The Apostle is saying: *My dear Corinthian Christians, how can you entertain any doubt in your minds as to the divine truth of the Gospel which I have proclaimed to you, and which you have received and believed? Do you not stand in this Gospel? Are you not being saved by this Gospel? Have you not experienced in your own hearts the wonderful power of this Gospel? Or am I to think that you have forgotten everything that I have preached, and that you have believed in vain?*

St. Paul obviously refers to that testimony for the divine truth of the Gospel which the Holy Spirit effects or creates in the heart of a Christian. It is the testimony of the heart which makes a Christian sure that the Gospel of Christ is not a delusion, but the divine truth.

If a person is attentive when the Gospel of Christ is preached to him; if he does not resist God's Holy Spirit when he is told what the eternal Son of God did for the whole fallen world, how in His boundless love He kept the whole Law and thereby worked out a spotless righteousness for all people, and how He suffered and died on the cross and thereby atoned for the sins of all people, so that through His blessed work all may have life everlasting.

If a person hears this precious Gospel and does not wilfully and maliciously resist the Holy Spirit's pleading, but receives the Gospel into his heart, — why, then he cannot help himself, he must be convinced that this Gospel is the divine truth.

He will experience the Gospel's wonderful power. The Gospel will fill his heart with the peace of God, and with the firm conviction that all his sins are forgiven. The Gospel will comfort him in his afflictions, and enable him to bear all his crosses with patience and fortitude, in the hope that all his sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in him.<sup>2</sup>

Let me appeal to you, my dear Christians! Tell me, by what power have you been upheld in all your trials and tribulations? Was it not the power of the

Gospel, of that precious Gospel which the children of this world despise because they know nothing of its wonderful power?

Tell me, is there anything sweeter than the Psalms of David and the choice sentences in the Bible in which the Gospel is set forth? Has not this precious Gospel often dispersed your gloom and sadness, and filled your hearts with unspeakable joy?

Behold, this is the testimony of the heart for the divine truth of the Gospel. It is the testimony of God's Holy Spirit in the heart. If you have this testimony, then any doubts which may come to your mind will not disturb you.

And if an unbeliever should produce ever so many arguments against the Gospel and put questions to you which you cannot answer, you will tell him: *Say what you please, I know what I have experienced, and for myself I have the experience that the Gospel is the divine truth.* Scripture says ***“I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”***<sup>3</sup>

What enabled the holy Apostles to face the whole world, to oppose philosophers, kings, and princes, to endure ridicule, persecution, and death in defence of the Gospel? What enabled old Polycarp, St. John's pupil, to endure martyrdom for Christ's sake at the age of ninety years, and to say: *“Eighty-six years have I served my Lord, and He has never done me a wrong; how can I deny my King who has saved me?”*

What enables and induces Christians at all times and in all generations to cling to the Gospel in spite of all opposition, and to abide by the Gospel? It is the testimony for the divine truth of the Gospel which they have in their own hearts, the testimony of God's Holy Spirit which nothing in the world can overthrow.

## 2. The Testimonies Of The Scriptures

Now, the unbelieving children of this world cannot and will not deny that the Gospel changes people's hearts, and influences them in the most wonderful way. But what is their explanation of this wonderful phenomenon? They say that it is nothing but enthusiasm and fanaticism, a delusion into which Christians are lured by their own fancy.

We must, therefore, look for another testimony for the divine truth of the Gospel, for a testimony which appeals to the unbeliever also, and that is the testimony of the Scriptures.

The Apostle says, <sup>3</sup> *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*

Why does the Apostle mention twice the words “according to the Scriptures”? He evidently means to produce a second testimony against the Corinthians’ doubts as to the resurrection, - the testimony of the Scriptures.

He is saying, *My dear Corinthians, what do you have the Scriptures for?* Look into that sacred volume! Search the Law and the Prophets! Has not the great redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ been predicted in them?

Did not Christ die for our sins, was He not buried, did He not rise on the third day, according to the Scriptures, that is, exactly as it has been foretold in the writings of Moses and the Prophets? Is not this a most wonderful thing, the agreement of prophecy and fulfilment? Is it not an indisputable proof that Almighty God has His hand in this work, and that in spite of all your doubts the Gospel of Christ must be the divine truth?

In fact, one should scarcely think that a person with a sane mind, having such evidence before him, the prophecies in the Old Testament and their exact fulfilment in the New, could entertain the least shadow of a doubt as to the divine truth of the Gospel.

Can any one deny that the description of Christ which we have in the New Testament corresponds exactly with the description of the Messiah which we have in the Old Testament?

Did not the Prophets say that the Messiah was to be a descendant of King David, and is not Christ a direct descendant of Israel’s great king on His mother’s side? Did not Micah say that He was to be born in Bethlehem, and was not Christ born in that little town of Judea?

Did not Isaiah say that He was to be the son of a virgin, and was not Christ born of the Virgin Mary? And as to Christ’s work, His sinless life, His preaching, His astounding miracles, His suffering, His death, His resurrection,

His ascension into heaven, — have not all these things been predicted by Moses and the Prophets in their minutest details, and must not a person be blinded if he does not see that they have been literally fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Search the Scriptures, my friends, if any doubts arise in your minds as to the truth of the Gospel! The Word of God will vindicate itself. You will find that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. The testimony of the Scriptures is able to dispel all your doubts and to confirm you in the faith that the Gospel is the divine truth.

### 3. The Testimonies Of Eye-Witnesses

Still, the unbelievers are not satisfied with the testimony of the Scriptures. And what argument do they produce to overthrow the testimony of the Scriptures? No argument whatever; for they cannot deny the records; they cannot deny what is written.

All they can say is: *It is impossible*. What is impossible? It is impossible, they say, that the things which have been recorded in the Old Testament should be so literally fulfilled in the New Testament.

The New Testament must have been fixed so as to correspond with the Old Testament; it must be a piece of fraud. It is impossible that Christ could have risen from the dead; there is no evidence, no positive proof for that. Alas! here the unbelievers are deprived of their last resort, and absolutely nothing is left to them wherewith they might defend themselves. For to the testimony of the heart and of the Scriptures is added the testimony of eye-witnesses.

The Apostle says, <sup>5</sup> *and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.* <sup>6</sup> *After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.* <sup>7</sup> *After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.* <sup>8</sup> *Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.*

The Gospel of Christ is based upon the fact of His resurrection. If Christ's resurrection stands, then the Gospel stands which proclaims forgiveness of sins and life eternal because of Christ's vicarious sufferings, death, and resurrection.

If Christ's resurrection falls, then the Gospel falls, and our hope of an eternal blessed life in the hereafter is an idle dream. But praised be the Lord! There is

not another fact in the history of this world which is better attested than the fact of Christ's resurrection.

For there are eye-witnesses, not one or two of them, but great numbers of them so that a deception was not possible. And these eye-witnesses were not dreamers and unreliable persons, but intelligent people, honourable, trustworthy people, whose characters were beyond reproach.

Christ was seen by them after His resurrection. They conversed with the risen Lord. They received instructions from Him. They ate and drank with Him. They saw Him with their own eyes ascending into heaven.

St. Paul saw Him after His ascension, when he was on the way to Damascus to persecute the Christians, and he was converted by the risen Christ.

He calls the Corinthians' attention to the fact that after His resurrection Christ appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom the majority were still living to testify to them what they had seen with their own eyes.

What, then, can the unbeliever say in the face of the unanimous testimony of these eye-witnesses? All he can do is to call men such, as the holy Apostles, liars and impostors, and to show thereby that unbelief has no foundation whatever.

Must not Paul's example alone convince him that the Gospel is true? Can he deny the Gospel's divine power in Paul, who says, *<sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me?*

If the testimony of such a humble man has no value in history, where do you get your competent witnesses?

So today, we have heard three indisputable testimonies for the divine truth of the Gospel, the testimony of the heart, of the Scriptures, and of eye-witnesses.

Let us keep them in mind, and with them dispel all the doubts which may arise in our own minds, and silence all objections.

Let us glory in our faith which overcomes the world,<sup>4</sup> and thank God because He has given us such overwhelming evidence of His precious truth.

Let us hold fast to, and not be ashamed of, the Gospel of Christ, which is *the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.*<sup>5</sup>

Let us triumphantly exclaim with St. Paul, *I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,*<sup>39</sup> *nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*<sup>6</sup>  
Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14

<sup>2</sup> Rom 8:18

<sup>3</sup> 2 Timothy 1:12

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 5:4

<sup>5</sup> Romans 1:16

<sup>6</sup> Romans 8:38–39