

EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, MORRIS, MANITOBA
DEVOTIONAL FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 15, 2020

I CORINTHIANS 15

There are times I have wondered what the criteria used by the person who divided the Word of God into chapters and verses. One thing I know, when he got to the Book of I Corinthians, he got it right. It is such an appropriate reminder for all of us, especially just after celebrating Easter.

The Apostle Paul, starts with a reminder of the gospel. The gospel that is possible because of the death and resurrection of Christ. Notice that he not only reminds his readers, us included, of the fact of the death and resurrection, he reminds us of the purpose of this event.

The purpose is to pay for our sins. He also tells us that the event happened according to the scriptures. It happened in response to the plan of God and the prophecies of those who wrote scripture in times past (according to the scriptures).

Paul goes on to share a long logical argument to demonstrate that Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. His argument is that if Christ had not been resurrected then there would be no hope of us being resurrected. But, Christ had been resurrected. So, we too have the hope of resurrection. He follows this with a discussion of what this means to those who have believed the gospel. Death has lost its sting and the grave has lost its victory. What a hope we have.

All of this great information is book-ended by a theme we sometimes miss when reading this passage. In verse one, Paul mentions that it is in the gospel that we have taken our “stand.” Without using the same words Paul mentions this stand again in verse fifty-eight. “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm.” Although these have been translated as commands, they are written in such a way that the emphasis is on our standing. More of a fact of our position than something we must do. Because of the resurrection, as part of the gospel, and its fact as shown in Paul’s argument, we have the privilege of standing strong, firm and constant in our hope and ministry.

This true story illustrates it well. One beautiful early summer evening, a number of years ago, a group of four teens got into a car and drove down Wellington Crescent in Winnipeg at a high rate of speed. They had just graduated from high school moments before and were out to celebrate having completed this milestone in their lives. They failed to negotiate a curve on the winding street and hit a tree head on. All four teens were pronounced dead at the accident scene. I drove by the scene several days later and noted that although the tree had some bark missing on the side, it was hit, it was standing strong. It was totally alive and had not been moved in the incident. That tree was standing firm, unmovable. It was not something that the tree did by action. It was

something the tree did because of what it was. A Christian is one who stands firm, steadfast, because of who Christ is and what Christ has done. The fact of Christ's death and resurrection are the grounds for the stance that God has given us through his grace. In this place we can "abound in the work of the Lord, always knowing that our service is not in vain." What a wonderful place to be.

Prayer: Lord, thanks for raising Christ from the dead and giving us such a secure hope in Him.

We love you and are glad to serve in this wonderful place you have put us.
Amen.