

Paul- states this is the most important thing that must be known. He wants to remind us of the Gospel. In a world of bad news here he says is some good news. Jesus (God) took on human flesh to identify with us. Yet he didn't sin as we do. He died in our place. Paul declared for the reason of taking away sin. And he rose three days later. God has loved us in Jesus, dealt with our sin problem in Jesus, God has conquered our enemy of death in Jesus this is Good News.

Paul gives us 4 reasons bolstering his claim of a resurrected Christ...

1. Jesus Christ died! Jesus underwent a flogging which is a brutal beating... people died from that alone. Then they took Jesus... nailed him through hands and feet. The bible say's Jesus died and breathed his last. The professional executioner that was there to declare his death just to be sure speared in his side causing water and blood to pour out thereby guaranteeing Jesus died.

Paul says that Christ died for our sins. The penalty of sin is death. God is a holy, righteous and good; offence against God results in the penalty of death. We have all sinned and fallen short of Gods glory. The penalty of sin must be paid. The consequence of death must be faced. Out of love and grace and mercy God paid the penalty for our sins, as our substitute on the cross.

2. Jesus was buried. We know that Jesus body was taken off the cross and it was prepared for burial. His body was laid into the tomb and a large stone was rolled across the tomb to guarantee that no one would tamper with the body. The seal of the government was placed over that tomb to ensure no one would tamper with the body of Jesus. To further guarantee a guard was posted to ensure it wasn't stolen. Jesus was buried!

3. Paul is saying; Jesus Christ, unlike anyone who has ever lived, unlike any religious teacher who was ever taught, unlike any miracle worker who has ever gone before Jesus Christ conquered death. This makes him uniquely distinct from anyone who has ever lived or will ever live. Jesus Christ rose and all of Christianity hinges on this significant and central issue of the resurrection of Jesus. Paul bolsters this amazing claim of the resurrection of Jesus with evidence about the eyewitnesses...not only did he rise from the dead but that he appeared...

4. People witnessed the risen Jesus. Friends (Peter), Family (James), Crowds (500) and enemies (Paul). Paul's final argument for the resurrection was that he had seen him too. He hated Jesus, he despised Christians. One of the first introductions to Paul in the book of acts is participating in the executions of Stephen for worshipping Jesus. Pauls disposition was to murder people who worshipped Jesus until he saw the resurrected Jesus... and upon seeing Jesus restored to life Paul was struck with the fact that Jesus was and is God who has taken away sin and conquered death and deserves our worship alone. Paul is essentially saying this. I would not lie. I wouldn't have such a sudden change of heart, change of life if indeed it was not factually true.

V9 Paul concludes. 'For I am least...' He is saying God does not choose us because we are good people, lovely people, or deserving people. God chooses us in spite of who we are and in spite of what we've done. Paul says that is grace. This is God's love in action, this is God's mercy in action, this is God's kindness at work. It is all by grace. Paul says I am saved by grace.

1. What did God speak to you about on Sunday and what are you doing as a result?
2. One or two share how they became Christians
3. Take bread and wine and thank God together
4. Discuss how different people responded to hearing Jesus was risen in the bible. How do you think you would you have responded?
5. How have you known God's grace on your life?
6. Can you be as bad as Paul and still know Grace?