

# Focusing On What We Have In Common

Human nature tends to make us notice and identify differences in people. We naturally fear what we do not understand. But Jesus brings unity and helps us focus on what we have in common.

## Introduction

Today we are going to follow up on last week's Easter message and talk about the importance of the crucifixion and resurrection. There are more than 7 billion (7,000,000,000) people alive in the world today. That means there are 7 billion ideas, 7 billion opinions, and 7 billion viewpoints about every subject. When we just look at the Church today around the world there are hundreds of different denominations. Some are large and some are small. Some don't call themselves a denomination, and others are proud of their denomination. But all of that is not important. What is important is that we all call on the name of Jesus Christ to be saved and to be our Lord.

## We Have This In Common

Paul is writing to the Church in Corinth and explaining to them to focus on what we all have in common and why it is important.

Let's read our text for today. Let's read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

(1) Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. (2) By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. (3) For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (4) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (5) and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. (6) After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. (7) Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, (8) and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Last week on Easter Sunday, many people said yes to Jesus. They asked for his forgiveness for their sins and accepted him as their Lord and Savior. This is awesome! If you did accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, or what we like to say, if you said "Yes!" to Jesus, please let us know at

<https://www.celllifechurch.org/i-said-yes-to-jesus/> People from many walks of life in many nations all have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and turned their life over to Him.

Paul is reminding the Church in Corinth of that, and we are reminding you of that today. What makes us Christian is this belief. What makes Christianity different from every other system of faith in the world is the crucifixion and subsequent resurrection.

Paul says in verse 3 of that passage, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance." This is the most important thing of our faith. It is the foundation on which we build our entire faith. Jesus is the cornerstone of the Church. Without him and the work he did on the cross, in the grave, and through the resurrection we would be fools and no better off than any other of the man-made faiths.



## Christian Denominations Have Some Differences

Different sects or denominations of Christianity do have some different beliefs. The Church likes to take on some of our natural tendencies to label and divide. We talk about being Pentecostal, Conservative, Evangelical, Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Apostolic, etc. Each of these has some different doctrinal beliefs that are different than the others. Some denominations are extremely close and even work together in tandem. Some of the Pentecostal groups will even share ministers between their churches. The Anglican church and Episcopalian church work very closely together. However, others are entirely closed off and do not work with anyone other than their own group. This is a shame because what binds us all together is exactly what Paul describes as the *first importance*.

We all have in common the same three beliefs. Jesus was crucified on a Roman cross, after three days in the grave he was raised from the dead by God, and that this was witnessed by hundreds of people before he ascended into Heaven.

When we started Cell Life Church we said we would work alongside any group, church, or denomination that believed and preached Jesus crucified, risen, and coming again. That is what is of prime importance. All other doctrines or beliefs are less important than these.

## The Unity of Cell Life Church

Cell Life Church International has all sorts of groups that have joined us from many different backgrounds in many nations. Some would align with a more Pentecostal view while others are more conservative. The important thing is we all believe and ascribe to the same statement of faith, which the prime components are Jesus, crucified, risen, and coming again.

Aside from the groups that have officially joined Cell Life Church, many groups and individuals that align with different sects of Christianity use our resources or teachings and help support the ministry around the world. Some of these are Calvinists (once saved, always saved) and some of these are Wesleyan (you can backslide and lose your salvation). Some of these believe in a pre-tribulation rapture of the Church while others believe in a post-tribulation rapture of the Church.

What is important is that we do not argue these points. We respect each other's viewpoint and focus on what we agree on; Christ crucified, risen, and coming again.

## Jesus Commands

We do as Jesus commanded in Luke 10:27.

### Luke 10:27

(27) He answered, **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"**

We love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. This is the most important thing we can do. Remember, once we say yes to Jesus and become a Christian, we are an Ambassador of Heaven for God on earth. We represent God and Heaven. We clothe ourselves with Jesus and rely on the wisdom and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to do all God has created us and called us to do.

The next most important thing we do is loving our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. That means what you would do for yourself you must be willing to do for someone else, whether they completely



agree with you or not. That also doesn't mean they should be a part of your faith group either. Our neighbor is anyone we come in contact with and we are to love them as we love ourselves.

### Christianity Is Different From All Other Religions

This passage also touches on the one unique thing that differentiates Christianity from all other religious belief systems. Christianity is the only faith that is all about bringing the individual back into a relationship with God and yet has no power to earn that right. We must accept the free gift of salvation from God through his Son's sacrifice paving the way for us to return to God. There is nothing we can do to earn it and we do not deserve it. There are no rewards for service or good behavior.

Every other religious faith in the world is based on the individual doing enough to earn acceptance or earn admittance into the afterlife. In other words, they are based on works. They are based on what the individual can do.

As Christians, we know and believe that we have no power to save ourselves and earn anything with God. Our only hope and path to God is through Jesus Christ who laid down his life voluntarily for all mankind.

### Conclusion

We have seen Christians arguing about doctrinal beliefs often. It is not healthy and does not do any good. Ultimately, each person is responsible for what is in their heart. I have not ever seen anyone argued into a deeper faith in Jesus.

We must focus on what we have in common as Christians which is we are all saved through faith by the grace of God, not by anything we can do ourselves. As we focus on what we have in common we are an attractive witness to others. When we argue doctrinal differences it turns people off who are watching us.

In all things remember what Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians. Christ crucified, risen, and coming in again are our prime focus and most important aspect of our faith. Without these Christianity is nothing.

