

April 8, 2023 AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
1 Corinthians 15:1-8 – “More than 500 Witnesses”

- A. The problem of your school teacher, college professor, neighbor, friend, or family questioning the truth of God’s Word, especially Christ’s resurrection is nothing new.
- B. Corinth was a prosperous Roman trade city yet infamous for its pagan & immoral practices.
- C. Many within the Corinthian church came out of this same paganism & gross immorality. → **1 Cor 6:9-11**
- D. Even though God did a mighty work of grace in Corinth, the church needed lots of correction from Paul.

You are to hold fast to God’s Word & witness of His resurrection	I. HOLD FAST TO GOD’S WORD II. USE EVIDENCE FOR YOUR WITNESS
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I. **HOLD FAST TO GOD’S WORD** → **vv1-2**

- A. Notice 1st that each of us as Christians need to be reminded of the gospel.
 - 1. Because sin affects our hearts, affections, & minds, we are prone to forget what is most important.
 - a. In **Deut 6**, God warned Israelites about the dangers of material blessings in the promised land including great cities they didn’t build including cisterns, vineyards, & olive groves. He warned them: **“Watch yourself, that you do not forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (v12).**
 - b. Some in Corinth were in grave danger of forgetting God because their hearts were lifted up in pride. → **1 Cor 4:6-8**
 - 2. Until we go to glory, we will always be prone to forget. That is why we need to sit under the reading & especially the preaching of His Word as often as we can.
- B. You cannot stand in your accomplishments but only in the gospel preached **“in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word... preached to you, unless you believed in vain (vv1-2)**.
 - 1. Mention of someone believing in vain, might scare some of you. One might ask, “Can I truly believe the gospel now yet later believe in vain?”
 - 2. Anyone who truly has saving faith in Christ cannot believe in vain because they are **“sealed for the day of redemption”** according to **Eph 4:30**.
 - 3. One can say they believe & are saved but have a temporary, fickle faith.
Those who depart from Christian faith- **1 Jn 2** **“They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us” (1 Jn 2:19)**.
- C. What exactly is the gospel that we are to hold fast to? → **vv3-4**
 - 1. In almost every sermon recorded in the book of Acts preached Christ’s death & resurrection.
 - 2. You must hold fast to these truths & never let them go. Hold fast because your life depends on it!

II. USE EVIDENCE FOR & YOUR WITNESS → vv5-6

A. Some claim that we hold to a series of cleverly devised fables- mere stories without historical fact to back them up; nothing can be farther from the truth.

1. The notion of eye witnesses to establish the truth of a matter was first established by God. We read in **Deut 19:15** “... on the evidence of 2 or 3 witnesses a matter shall be confirmed”

a. This verse says that at minimum, 2 or 3 witness are needed to confirm or prove a fact— truth of any matter.

b. Modern law practice throughout world is rooted in this foundation.

1) Witnesses can include either eyewitness testimony or physical evidence such as fingerprints, genetic testing, or some other forensic evidence

2) Evidence is important in science as well.

Dr. Norman Geisler & apologist Frank Turek wrote a book entitled, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*.

2. Take the claim of Christ's resurrection from the dead & see how it stands in accordance to **Deut 19**. On the evidence of minimum of 2-3 witnesses a matter [fact] shall be confirmed.

B. This is a highly underutilized weapon in our arsenal when fighting against unbelief.

1. Some have misunderstood the presuppositional apologetic method of Dr. Cornelius Van Til.

2. Thom Nataro wrote in his book, *Van Til & the Use of Evidence*: “For Van Til, everything is evidence— every fact, every object, every event properly understood is evidence for Christianity. Furthermore, every bit of evidence, as he sees it, proves with absolute validity the truth of God's Word” (p59).

C. Still, keep in mind that some continue to persist in unbelief despite all evidence in the world; many of the Jews saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead yet persisted in their hardness of heart. People will not truly believe unless the Holy Spirit first indwells them.

1. God uses evidence to prove the faith.

a. Doubting Thomas required physical proof (**Jn 20:24f**).

b. For us, we have not seen nor touched Him yet we believed. “**Blessed are they who did not see, & yet believed**” (**Jn 20:29**). Blessed are you who have believed the eyewitness accounts recorded in Scripture.

2. The good news is that the Holy Spirit can & has used evidence to persuade many to repent & believe.

Review, further application, & conclusion: