

XXVIII. L.E.A.D. in Biblical Perspective
Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship
“Christianity 101 – Everyone a Theologian”
I Corinthians 15:1–9
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
September 29, 2019 • Morning Sermon

We are going to start by looking at I Corinthians 15. This is God’s Word and God’s Word is the truth. I Corinthians 15:1–9 says [1] *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

[3] *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. [9] For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I love the interchange of people wanting to ask me a question. When someone says to me ‘Pastor I have a question but it is not a theological one.’ My response is always ‘Then it’s not a question.’ Every question in life is ultimately a theological question.’ I agree with the systematic theology book that R.C. Sproul wrote in which he says ‘everyone is a theologian if they are a Christian.’ The reason I say this is because the fundamental issue of eternal life is that you know God and His Son Jesus Christ whom He has sent. If you break up the word theology you have *theo* which means God and *-ology* means knowledge of. So theology is the knowledge of God and eternal life is that you know God. How? It is through His Son Jesus Christ.

Life is theology and that is why it’s the number one foundation of the five foundations of discipleship that I am currently preparing to give you in a future study. This is another way of getting back to the basics of the growing Christian life. To be saved is to know God and you can’t know God until you have been saved by God’s grace. Now you can know about Him and even know some accurate things about Him but you can’t know Him intimately, personally or in a life changing way. The word know doesn’t just mean to know factual points but it means to know someone intimately and that’s why the Bible talks about the intimacy of a man and woman in marriage as they know each other intimately, lovingly, and personally. The result of this intimacy was Isaac.

When you know God you know Him accurately, intimately and personally. Now you will never know Him exhaustively. How can you know Him this way? First of all you have to be saved and you are saved by the grace of God, through the Word of God and the Spirit of God – you’re born again. Now you have a personal relationship savingly with Christ. Secondly, to know God you have to grow in grace, not for grace. It’s not if you grow God will be gracious. God has saved you by grace and His grace is poured out within you, now walk by that grace in humble reliance upon Divine grace so that you are growing in and by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. You grow through the Word and through the Spirit (for Jesus) which is the same way

you got saved. Thirdly, God has purposely purchased, designed and directed His church for those purposes in your life.

What is His church called? It is called the body of Christ. Christ is at the right hand of the Father and until He comes again the body of Christ that continues to seek and save the lost, and to grow God's people in grace, is what He does through His church. I love para church ministries and I am grateful for them but para church ministries is not God's design. He still uses para church ministries but God's design is His church. That's why He says in Ephesians 5:25, [25] *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* This is the church of Jesus Christ and the ordained leadership He has designed for it and gifted for it with its sacraments, oaths, covenants, mission, message and ministry. This is what He has put here with compelling evangelism to win the lost to Christ and for costly discipleship to grow the saved for Christ. This is why we went through Luke 14 a couple of studies ago.

Christ's call to compelling evangelism is that God saves those who need Him even though they do not want Him, by pursuing them with a compelling message (the Gospel), messengers (His people who have been trained in His church) and a minister (the Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit compels through the compelling messengers and a compelling message. Then when people come to Christ they are called to follow Christ and they come just as they are.

The second thing we looked at in Luke 14 was Christ's call to costly discipleship. Salvation is free but discipleship costs. Salvation is free doesn't mean it didn't cost it just means that Someone else paid it for you. The Gospel never advances without a cost. Salvation came to us because God sent His Son and it cost Him His life. The Gospel goes throughout the world at a cost. Look at all the martyrs and those who gave all so others could come to Christ. Whenever the Gospel advances it costs. For the Gospel to fill every area of your life it costs you to give up your rights, to give up you. I surrender all.

Dr. Bill Bright, the founder of Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ), has had a wonderful impact in the history of this church and in evangelical Christianity. If you were ever with Bill Bright or you heard him teaching it would probably take about five minutes for him to say 'you have to surrender to the Holy Spirit. You have to be filled with the Holy Spirit.' You can't do this without Him and to have Him you have to give up you. If you're filled with yourself you can't be filled with the Spirit. That's why Jesus means when He says 'quit saying 'but first'' because there is no 'but first.' When you come to Jesus He is first because He is everything.

As you surrender to Him everything you are, you are now ready to fulfill His mission. Thirdly, we looked at Christ's call to His church and that is to be on mission, on message and in ministry. Discipleship and evangelism is the Christ-given mission of the church, which defines and directs every ministry of the church from Christ's ascension until His return. As Christians our mission is to make disciples. Our message is the Gospel of saving grace in Jesus Christ. Jesus delivers you from the fear of sin, death, hell and the grave and He delivers you from sin to Himself. When you come to Christ you can have everlasting life because you can know God and it's a gift. Then you follow Him by giving everything up to follow Him and then He reconnects you with those things to use them for Him.

When we are on mission we have four ministries. Up reach is our ministry of worship to God. You were made and saved to worship God. There is nothing more important in our life than the gathered worship of God's people in spirit and in truth and I understand providential hindrances. This ministry of up reach then goes to outreach through evangelism. Then there is the ministry of in reach where we love one another well and lastly is down reach which is the ministry of discipleship.

The mission of the church is narrow and focused. The mission of a Christian is broad and comprehensive. I Corinthians 10:31 says [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* Take Christ into all that you do and all your relationships, because everything you do is in Him, for Him and to Him and if you can't do it for Him then quit doing it. You are killing sin to walk with Jesus in every area of life. Micah 6:8 says [8] *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* If the church does not stay committed to its mission (narrow) then Christians will not be able to do their mission (comprehensive). The church is to be teaching the Christian to do all that God has commanded by making disciples.

The church has been placed by Christ to propel personal evangelism and discipleship. The church is not a political organization or civic organization or a philanthropic organization. If the church stays focused while on mission, on message and in ministry then Christians who start those organizations with their gifts and abilities then their endeavors will become an extension of the Kingdom of God. This is why it is so crucial that we that mission integrity. So what does it mean to disciple?

There are five essentials to a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship. All five of these flow out of the Great Commission and in the next several studies we'll take a closer look at them. The first essential is Christianity 101 where everyone is a theologian teaching God's people to observe all that Christ has commanded. The second foundational essential is the disciplines of grace where we are growing in grace. Titus 2:11–12 says [11] *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training (disciplining) us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.* There are private and public disciplines of grace that we'll learn about.

The third essential is stewardship where Christ might have the preeminence in all things and this isn't just our money. One of our elders' wife told me that we're all too busy and I agreed with her but then she said the reason we're all too busy is because of FOMO. I asked her what that was and it means – fear of missing out. Our kids these days don't really get to be kids because by the age of 4 they are put into all kinds of activities and the parents also get into these regiments. Then we miss out on the Lord's Day and His means of grace due to wanting to make sure we're involved with the right organizations. Our FOMO leads us into everything the world has to offer and then we miss God's Word and His Spirit. We end up going everywhere without digging deep. This is why I want to talk with you about the stewardship of your life, responsibilities and relationships. Sure money is a part of this for you are to be good stewards with all of your life.

The fourth essential is personal evangelism where everyone is evangelizing everybody everywhere everyday. As a church we train you to share the Gospel with other people. The fifth essential is worship where true worshippers worship in spirit and in truth. This is why God made you, saves you and sustains you. There is gathered worship and life style worship. Romans 12:1 says [1] *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* How can my life become worship to God in whatever I do? It's doxological, praise God from whom all blessings flow.

I'm going to give you an overview of Christianity 101, the first essential, in this study and Christianity 101 answers five questions. The first question is what is truth? This is called the doctrine of Scripture. Joh 17:3 says [3] *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* A few verses later Jesus prays this to the Father

for them in John 17: 3 which says *[17] Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.* Pilate asked Jesus what truth is and the Bible tells us that Thy Word is truth. The Bible doesn't say God's Word contains truth or becomes truth. The Word of God is inspired by God and it infallible and inerrant. II Timothy 3:16–17 says *[16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

In other words, for me to know how to live for Jesus I have to get into God's Word. You can't be saved or grow without God's Word and His Spirit. Can you have the Word of God and not know the God of the Word? Yes, but you can't have the God of the Word without the Word of God. The Word of God is always working with the Spirit of God. Put no confidence in the flesh for it is the Spirit who gives life. The Word profits and the Spirit uses the Word. Why do you think Satan attacks the Word? It is because of its power. Satan will also distract you from the Word. I Corinthians 1:21 says *[21] For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.*

So why isn't the Word important? Is it because you don't want to be saved from the penalty, power and practice of sin? It's not the preachers. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Satan would love to distract you from your Bible reading and preaching. II Timothy 2:15 says *[15] Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.* We are not saved or grow by intuition. We are saved and grow by Divine revelation. Where do you get the Divine revelation? You get it from the Word of God. So the first question is what truth is and the priority it takes in my life.

Secondly, who is God? This is the doctrine of God. The reason we don't ask this question first is because until you get into the Word of God you can't know who God is. Yes we see there is a God by looking at His creation but you would never know He was Father, Son and Holy Spirit without the Bible. You would never know that Father gave His Son for you to save you from your sins without the Bible. You would never know the Spirit of God comes upon when you are saved to dwell within you and helps you grow without the Bible.

There are three 3's that we are going to learn about God. The first three is that God dwells in three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I teach the preeminence of Jesus but the Gospel is a Trinitarian Gospel. The Father gave His Son. The Son gave His Spirit. You are saved by the Trinity at work in your life. It is One God and three Persons. The second three is that God has done three great works – creation, redemption and providence. He made you, saves you and sustains you. It is in Him that you live, move and have your being (Acts 17:28). The third three is holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. There is none like Him.

I love when King Nebuchadnezzar becomes a Christian because he says 'then my reason returned to me' (Daniel 4:34). God has no need for us upon the earth for He does as He pleases. He is Sovereign and that's what begins to make sense in life. That's where I get my confidence. My confidence is not in my nation. I love my nation but nations rise and fall. My confidence is not in other people. There is only One who is faithful, eternal, unchangeable and sovereign whom we can rest everything upon and that the One who is Thrice holy. You have to get a big God to lead a big life for God and you have to get a big God to take care of even the little things in life for God.

The third question is who am I? This is the doctrine of man. I am made in the image of God. We are part of Adam's race. The other day I was have a wonderful conversation with my African American brothers and sisters and one said 'every time we're handed literature it shows

a white Jesus.’ We talked about the answer to that. First of all this is making images of God which breaks the commandment of having no images before God. Secondly, we don’t make white, brown or black Jesus’ for Jesus is the second Adam and that means there was a first Adam. Every piece of the DNA that shows up in our skin tone was in Adam. Then natural selection began to bring it forth. When Jesus comes He is the second Adam and saving people from every tribe and nation. I can say ‘no’ to the Darwinian view of race.

There is one race called the human race with multiple ethnicities and multiple cultures but only one race. Then Jesus comes, the second Adam, and He has a race which is the elect of God from every tribe and nation that belong to Him. This is how I find out who I am and I’m not a cosmic accident or a mutation that happened to work out through the process of violence. We were made male and female to image God. We were made with purpose and for a relationship. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The more I enjoy Him the more I will glorify Him and the more I glorify Him the more I’ll enjoy Him. Now I can get an anthropology from the Bible because I have a theology because I have a place to go that is inspired, infallible and inerrant. This leads to a fourth question.

The fourth question is what’s wrong? This is the doctrine of sin. I love the answer G.K. Chesterton gave when a lady asked him ‘What’s wrong with the world?’ He said ‘Ma ’dam the answer is simple – me.’ We are born with a bad heart, a bad record and we live a bad life. We are born in rebellion against God with confusion and death but He brings life. We see what is wrong in Genesis 6:5–6 which says *[5] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [6] And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.* The only reason we’re not as evil as we would be is not because we have a spark of restraint but it’s because of God’s common grace who keeps us from being as evil as we would be. So it is the doctrine of sin that is what is wrong.

So the fifth question is, how can we be right? Praise God for it’s the Gospel. As the church we’re going to teach all the God commands in discipleship but the foundation is the Gospel. When there was no way God made a way and He is the One who delivers us from it all. Romans 8:1 says *[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* He delivers us from the penalty of sin. He delivers us from the power of sin because you have been born again by the grace of God. He is delivering us from the practice of sin as we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. He delivers us from the position of sin for in Him we no longer do the deeds of Satan but we cry out to God saying, ‘Abba Father.’ You have been adopted into the family of God and now you have a new home, a new record, a new heart, a new life and a new family.

Now by God’s grace you have the opportunity to renew your mind. When you come to Christ you don’t get a new mind but you do get the Word of God and the Spirit of God so that you can renew your mind. Romans 12:2 says *[2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* I don’t preach to you God’s Word for you to build a theological encyclopedia but I ask God to help me preach the Word so that as they know it their lives are changed. Small groups help you learn His Word with the intention that your life is changed because of His Word.

The word ‘conformed’ in Romans 12:2 is the word for metamorphosis, like when a caterpillar crawls in and a butterfly comes out, straining through that tiny hole. If you cut a bigger hole you won’t get a butterfly for it’s through the struggle coming out that the beauty is

given. As you go into the cocoon of God's Word and God's Spirit in the means of grace in discipleship, what comes out is someone becoming increasingly more like their beautiful Savior through the suffering that comes in this world. In Christ we have no fear of death, hell or the grave, for God has delivered us from that to Himself. We belong to Him and He belongs to us. That glorious Gospel we get the opportunity to preach and proclaim.

Here is the takeaway. The objective of evangelism is eternal salvation and the objective of discipleship is life transformation by the Spirit of God with the Word of God, beginning with the Gospel, but not ending with the Gospel. When I was a new Christian and new minister my thoughts were that the Gospel is what we use for evangelism and then over here is discipleship where we go beyond the Gospel, but I realized as I grew in grace that you never go beyond the Gospel for when you teach the whole counsel of God you are going deeper, higher, further and wider with the Gospel.

This is why we say the Gospel of grace is the foundation, the formation and the motivation of the Christian life. You are not saved because of how well you are being discipled. You are giving yourself in discipleship because of how glorious your Savior is. Then it becomes the formation in your life. Have you faltered in your Christian life recently? I hope you don't say 'no' because the Bible says if we say we have no sin then we're liars and the truth is not in us (I John 1:8). Every time that happens you don't go to a confessional booth on how to do penitence, you flee to Jesus. You may need to confess your sins to someone you sinned against but you always go to Jesus for is our Priest and [9] *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (I John 1:9). Sinner, you who are weary come home as the hymn says.

What is discipleship? It is obedience to God's Gospel commands. Why do you obey? It is because you love Him. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15). Why do you love Him? It is because of the Gospel, for He first loved you. So why don't we get into the Gospel? There are all kinds of reasons and therefore we don't impact the world. I recently got emails from three of our elders who all sent me the same thing. It had to do with a news outlet that said where the fastest growing churches are in the world. It said it was Iran and that's a closed country. Why is it the fastest growing?

One of their leaders said, as I paraphrase what he said in his language, "We are growing because of disciples, discipleship, and disciple making. Disciples forsake the world and they cling to Jesus until He comes. Nominal Christians don't. Nominal Christians are those who have professed conversion but there is always something else that is first. Disciples do not get engaged in a cultural war but a spiritual war. Nominal Christians don't. Disciples cherish, obey and share the Word of God. Nominal Christians don't. Disciples choose Jesus over anything and everything. Nominal Christians don't. Nominal Christians run when the trials come. Disciples don't." This leader says it much more powerfully than me.

I will ask you this; what are you? I even ask myself for am I the nominal Christian who dies in a pile and runs or have I already died to myself and live unto Jesus so that on that day I can share the Word? Am I a disciple? Am I a Christ follower who has said to God, 'I surrender all'? I know God will show me things that I have not yet surrendered but when He does I am ready for to the altar they go. God will you let me put myself there? Romans 12:2 says [2] *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

I had the privilege to lead a man to Christ in Miami, Florida. Two weeks after he came to the Lord I went by his house to see him and he was sitting in his recliner just weeping. He was a

deep sea vessel fishing commander and I said ‘Jack, what are you crying about?’ He said ‘I’ve been a Christian for two weeks and I don’t know anything. I have listened to men who know Jesus and I don’t know anything. I want to and I can’t believe how much of my life I have wasted on what really didn’t count.’ I sat down and wept with him and then said ‘When I was 21 I was right where you are, so I’m here and our church is here so let’s dig down deep together.’ This was no FOMO – fear of mission out.

This is discipleship that begins with worship. All of this is what Jesus did. He had big groups from 70 to 12 to 3. Get in the funnel. Don’t get into FOMO on something else. Get into worship, small groups, smaller groups and in the Word not just for theological knowledge but life transformation. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You so much for the privilege to be in Your Word and to make our way through this text. Thank You for Jesus and for Your patience. Thank You Holy Spirit. Thank You for giving us this glorious Word over 1500 plus years with 40 plus human authors so that we can the Author’s message to us who made us, saves us and sustains us. Come quickly for us Lord Jesus. God, please help us as we move into getting the foundations right, with everyone a theologian that doesn’t just spout knowledge but that knows their God intimately, accurately and in every area of life and where we don’t yet know Him, come Jesus, for I pray in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Power Point

CHRIST’S CALL TO COMPELLING EVANGELISM

God saves those who need Him even though they do not want Him, by pursuing them with a compelling message, messengers, and a minister.

CHRIST’S CALL TO COSTLY DISCIPLESHIP

Salvation is free, but Discipleship Costs.

CHRIST’S CALL TO HIS CHURCH—ON MISSION—ON MESSAGE—IN MINISTRY

Discipleship and Evangelism is the Christ-given Mission of the Church, which defines and directs every ministry of the Church from Christ’s Ascension until His Return.

- The Mission of the Church is narrow and focused.
- The Mission of a Christian is broad and comprehensive.
- If the church does not stay committed to its Mission (narrow) then Christians will not be able to do their Mission (comprehensive). {note}

LIFESTYLE OF EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP FOUNDATIONS

- I. Christianity 101 – *Everybody is a theologian*
- II. The Disciplines of Grace – *Growing in Grace*
- III. Stewardship – *That Christ might have Preeminence in all things*
- IV. Personal Evangelism – *Everyone Evangelizing Everybody Everywhere Everyday*
- V. True Worship – *True Worshippers who worship in spirit and in truth*

CHRISTIANITY 101

FOUNDATIONS #1

- I. What is Truth? – *Doctrine of Scripture*
- II. Who is God? – *Doctrine of God*
- III. Who am I? – *Doctrine of Man*
- IV. What's Wrong? – *Doctrine of Sin*
- V. How can I be Right with God? – *Gospel*

LIFE TAKEAWAYS

The objective of Evangelism is Eternal salvation; the objective of Discipleship is Life Transformation by the Spirit of God with the Word of God, beginning with the Gospel.

The Gospel of Grace is the Foundation, the Formation, and Motivation of the Christian Life.