

## The Transforming Gospel

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

There are many different things we could emphasize as a church, but our vision is 'Rooted in the Gospel; Radical Transformation.' We will see from our Bible passage what the apostle says is of first importance.

### Here we stand

Despite the fact that they are a young church, Paul feels the need to remind the Corinthian church of the gospel. We have a habit of forgetting it.

The gospel matters because it is the foundation of the faith: the matters of **first importance**. But rather than being like a dead, concrete foundation, it is more like the living soil a tree is rooted in. He wants to remind them of the Gospel because it has power for the present, and for the future, and not just for the past. It is what you and I stand in now, and it has on-going, transforming power, that will see you through to eternity.

But the question is: what is the gospel?

### When a definition matters

The word 'gospel' means good, great, important news. But news about what? It is the news of Jesus' death for our sins, and his resurrection. So the gospel is about what God has done and is doing in and through Jesus; it is not about what we have to do. And Paul says we need to be reminded of this, because it is of first importance, and it is what is saving and transforming you.

But how does that work?

### Grace and the Power of Change

We know we are not where we want to be as individuals: there is this inner desire for change. That is because we were created in the image of God, but that image is now marred. Restoration to who we should be can only come through the gospel. Paul says it was God's grace that changed him from a persecutor to an apostle, and continues to empower his work.

So, how does the Holy Spirit use grace to bring about change in our lives? We can understand this by looking at three examples:

- **Deep, united community:** We can only bridge the numerous faultlines that could exist in a church by extending grace to one another as it has been shown to us. When we realize Jesus has welcomed us, even though we don't deserve it, through his death, we will know grace to extend to others. (Romans 15:1-7)
- **Forgiveness:** It can be very hard to forgive. But how can we? Only when we realize that we too have been forgiven much. When we realize that Jesus died for us that we might be forgiven, it can melt our cold hearts. (Colossians 3:12-13)
- **Selfless service:** we are often self-centred; but Jesus calls us to radical self-denial and a life of service. How can we do that? By understanding that he came as a servant to serve us. That he became poor that we might be rich. (Philippians 2:3-8)

So, as the gospel sinks into our hearts, we find our hearts changing with love and grace and service for others; all to the glory of God.