

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

(Notional Theme) .....Artistry of Fishing .....

When considering fishing, What is core too that activity?

Bait?

Line?

Hook?

Fish?

You Character/attitude

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 is a classic passage reminding us of what is core about our Christian faith - both its content and character.....

This issue - the core of Xn faith - is never very far from the headlines .....

Though there are ancient creeds identifying core Faith Content - there are some Christians who would like to add matters to this core - among them might be statements about human sexuality, gender roles, worship traditions, food laws etc.....

In 1 Cor 15:1-11 - Paul outlines the core elements as being the things that constitute the 'Good News' - News (and its core elements), we should stand on and hold to .....as the news that saves us?

Before we look at the core elements - lets spend a few moments reflecting on the phrase - 'by which you are saved' - what does this mean?

In what sense does the 'Good News' save us?.....

1. We who were 'Far from God' - have been brought near to God..... Romans 5 - while we were still enemies Christ dies for us. Children of God. [Note it does not feel to many that we are far from God because in the mercy of God we all currently enjoy the good ness of God in general terms - beauty, truth and goodness - abound even where the specifics of the 'Good News' are unknown. These graces should cause us to 'seek after God'. ]
2. Saved from:
  1. Sin
  2. Judgement
  3. Futility - [The Gospel Enlarges us. We are made in the image of God and so when the son of God appeared to inform the full shape of that image role then we, when we imitate his character and love, become the very best people we can be. We are saved from a life of 'missing the mark' to that of approaching the mark. - Saint Paul - verse 8 - 9 - no sin or futility too much ]
  4. From despair - We can sometimes think that we are unlovely and unlovable. We can feel failures. But the Good News informs us that we are valuable and, even after failure and sin, there is hope because God is 'for us' and ever shaping us in love.
3. Not saved from adversity but loved in the midst of adversity.

So what are the core elements?

- vs3 - Christ died for our sins  
[according to the scriptures]
- vs 4 - He was buried
- vs 4 He rose again
- vs 5 - 7 - He showed himself - to many .....living eyewitnesses  
....

- vs 8-10 - Grace ..... - undeserved favour - the Example of St. Paul - reveals a core aspect of how God deals with us - graciously.

This grace shapes the way we stand on things ..... and the way we hold things .....

We do not hold to alienate and belittle

We do not stand or hold without listening -

St. Paul because all things to all people ....

sure of his core - he can swim with any tribe ....

see 1 Cor 9:19-23

We stand and hold gently - ever in dialogue ..... graciously ....

Yes - we have a core - a good news - and as it is the Good News for all - so we will seek to give it the best possible chance to be heard - and then we do by prefacing and 'salting' our declaration by: listening, sharing, caring, walking with & loving.

Our Good News is about `grace (God to us in Jesus) and it demands nothing less from us!

Grace acknowledged - promotes humility - a life of worship  
Grace applied - promotes gentleness and and patience - being the first to listen and serve.

Sometimes this is not easy ....

we then practice 'a willed gentleness .....

[You might find the following R.S. Thomas' poem helpful ....

## They by R.S. Thomas

I take their hands,  
Hard hands. There is no love  
For such, only a willed  
Gentleness. Negligible men  
From the village, from the small  
Holdings, they bring their grief  
Suddenly to my back door,  
And are speechless. Seeing them  
In the wind with the light's  
halo, watching their eyes  
Blur, I know the reason  
They cry, their worsting  
By one whom they will fight  
Daily the sky mirrors  
the water, the water the  
Sky. Daily I take their side  
In the quarrel, calling their faults  
Mine. How do I serve so  
This being they have shut out  
Of their houses, their thoughts, their lives?