

BASIC THEOLOGY • CHRISTOLOGY, PART 2

The Work of Christ

Virgin Birth • Sinless Life • Death, Burial, and Resurrection

Central truth: Jesus Christ was uniquely qualified to save us, actually accomplished our salvation, and rose bodily in victory.

Key passage: 1 Corinthians 15:3–8, Galatians 4:4–5, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 3:23–26, John 19:31–34, 1 Corinthians 15:6

1. Opening: What Did Jesus Come to Do? 1 Corinthians 15:3–8

Christology studies both the person of Christ—who Jesus is—and the work of Christ—what Jesus has done and will do. We have already considered His person: Jesus is one divine Person with a fully divine nature and a fully human nature. This lesson follows that truth into His saving mission.

The work of Christ is larger than one lesson. It includes His incarnation, teaching, miracles, obedience, atoning death, resurrection, ascension, present intercession, and future return. Today's focus is the heart of the gospel: His virgin birth, sinless life, death, burial, and resurrection. His return will be considered later in Eschatology.

FAMILY DISCUSSION • If someone asked, “What is the gospel?” which events from Jesus' life would have to be included?

2. The Virgin Birth: God the Son Came to Us. Galatians 4:4–5

The term virgin birth describes Jesus' miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His birth from the virgin Mary. Jesus did not begin to exist in Bethlehem. The eternal Son of God took to Himself a true human nature and entered the world as a real baby. He was conceived without a human father, yet He was born from a human mother.

This reveals God's initiative. Salvation did not begin with humanity climbing up to God. God came down to rescue sinners. The incarnation is grace from beginning to end.

This identifies Jesus as the promised Savior. Matthew connects the event to Isaiah's promise and names Him Immanuel—“God with us.” His conception by the Holy Spirit displays His unique identity as the Son of God.

This confirms His true humanity. Jesus was not merely pretending to be human. He experienced birth, growth, hunger, fatigue, pain, temptation, and death. He can represent us because He truly shares our humanity, though without sin.

3. The Sinless Life: The Righteous One Stood in Our Place. 2 Corinthians 5:21

Jesus lived under God's law and obeyed the Father perfectly. He faced real temptation, yet never sinned in thought, desire, word, or deed. His sinlessness was not passive innocence. Throughout His life, He actively loved God with all His being and loved His neighbor perfectly.

He is qualified to be our sacrifice. The Old Testament sacrifices had to be without blemish. Those sacrifices pointed beyond themselves to Christ, the spotless Lamb. If Jesus had sinned, He would have needed judgment for His own guilt. Because He was sinless, He could bear the guilt of others.

He is the righteousness we need. Our salvation is not built on our record but on Christ's. He fulfilled the obedience we have failed to give. United to Christ by faith, believers are counted

righteous before God—not because God ignores sin, but because Christ has fully satisfied God’s righteous demands.

He is our sympathetic High Priest and perfect example. Jesus knows the pressure of temptation without ever surrendering to it. We can approach Him for mercy and help. His example also shows that obedience is not opposed to joy or freedom; true human life is a life wholly devoted to the Father.

WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION • Why did our Savior need to be sinless?

4. The Death of Christ: Romans 3:23–26

Jesus’ crucifixion was a real event in history, carried out under human authorities. Wicked people rejected and killed the only perfectly righteous Man. Yet the cross was not an accident or the defeat of God’s plan. In accordance with God’s eternal purpose, Jesus willingly laid down His life.

What happened at the cross?

Substitution: Christ died in the place of sinners. “The righteous for the unrighteous” captures the great exchange: the guiltless One bore the judgment deserved by the guilty.

Atonement: By His sacrifice, Christ dealt fully with our guilt and reconciles believers to God. God’s holy justice was not dismissed; it was satisfied in the willing sacrifice of His Son.

Redemption: Jesus gave His life as a ransom. He frees His people from slavery to sin and claims them as His own.

Victory: At the cross, Christ disarmed the powers of evil and broke the claim of sin and death over His people. The apparent triumph of darkness became the means of its defeat. The cross displays God’s holiness and love together. Sin is so serious that forgiveness required the death of the Son of God. God’s love is so great that the Son willingly endured that death to save His enemies. We do not earn this rescue; we receive it through repentance and faith.

5. The Burial: Jesus Truly Died. John 19:31-34

Jesus’ burial may receive less attention than the cross or resurrection, but Scripture includes it in the gospel summary. Joseph of Arimathea placed Jesus’ body in a known tomb. The burial confirms that His death was real. Jesus did not faint, escape, or merely appear to die.

The sealed tomb also prepares the evidence for what happened next. The disciples did not proclaim a spiritual survival or a comforting memory. They proclaimed that the One who had died and been buried was raised from the dead.

6. The Resurrection: The Crucified Savior Is Alive. 1 Corinthians 15:6

On the third day, God raised Jesus bodily from the dead. The tomb was empty, and the risen Christ appeared to many witnesses. He could be seen and touched; He spoke and ate. His resurrection body was transformed and no longer subject to death, but it was the same Jesus who had been crucified.

What does the resurrection accomplish and declare?

The Father vindicated the Son. The world condemned Jesus as a blasphemer and criminal, but God publicly declared Him to be the righteous Messiah and Lord.

Christ's saving work was accepted. The resurrection does not add a correction to a failed cross. It announces that the sacrifice was complete, death's penalty was paid, and Jesus is victorious.

Believers are given new life. Those united to Christ share in the power of His resurrection. Christians are no longer slaves to sin; the Holy Spirit enables a new life of obedience.

Our future resurrection is guaranteed. Christ is the "firstfruits." His bodily resurrection is the beginning and promise of the bodily resurrection of His people. Christian hope is not escape from creation but everlasting life with Christ in a renewed creation.

The gospel is proven true. If Christ has not been raised, Christian faith is empty and believers remain in their sins. Because He has been raised, the gospel rests on God's decisive action in history.

FAMILY DISCUSSION • What accomplishment connected to the resurrection gives you the most hope, and why?

The Saving Work as One Gospel

These truths must remain connected. The virgin-born Son truly became man. The sinless One obeyed where we have failed. The righteous Substitute died for our sins. His burial confirmed His death. His bodily resurrection declared His victory and guarantees life for His people.

7. Gospel Application

Turn from self-salvation to Christ. Our efforts cannot erase guilt or produce perfect righteousness. The gospel calls sinners to repent and trust the crucified and risen Lord. Faith rests in what Jesus finished, not in our ability to make ourselves acceptable.

Fight sin from a place of grace. Christians do not obey to purchase God's acceptance. In Christ, we are accepted and empowered to obey. His sinless life covers our failure and reshapes our desires.

Face suffering and death with hope. The resurrection does not make grief unreal, but it makes despair unnecessary. Death's defeat has begun, and those who belong to Christ will be raised.

Speak the whole gospel. We offer more than advice to become kinder or more religious. We announce that Jesus died for sins, was buried, rose again, reigns as Lord, and calls everyone to repent and believe.

Worship Jesus with confidence. Jesus is not a dead teacher whose ideas survived Him. He is the living Lord who saves completely and deserves our trust, obedience, and praise.

FAMILY CONVERSATION Which part of Christ's work is easiest for us to overlook and why is it important?

9. Review and Conclusion (Home Work)

Why does the virgin birth matter? God the Son truly came to us as the promised Savior, fully divine and fully human.

Why does Jesus' sinless life matter? He obeyed perfectly and was qualified to stand in the place of sinners.

Why does His death matter? He willingly bore the judgment of sinners, satisfying justice and reconciling believers to God.

Why does His burial matter? It confirms that He truly died and anchors the gospel in history.

Why does His resurrection matter? Jesus conquered death, validated His saving work, gives believers new life, and guarantees their future resurrection.