

## What Is The Gospel?

The Gospel (good news) is defined for us very specifically in 1 Cor. 15:1-5, which states, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you - unless you believed in vain. For I deliver to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve” (NKJV).

The heart of the Gospel then is the death of Christ as a substitute for sinners and His resurrection on the third day, publicly displayed and revealing to the world that God has accepted His sacrifice on behalf of those who believe. We see also in these verses that this gospel is to be “preached,” “received,” and “held fast” by those who “believe.” By this Gospel those who do so “are saved.”

## Who Then Is A Christian?

The Christian is also defined by these verses as a person who “believes” the Gospel and “holds fast” to it’s truth. Failure to do so, means that the person has believed “in vain,” that is with “emptiness” or without a purpose or result.

The sad truth is that some make a profession of faith but still do not truly know the Lord in their hearts. Their faith is dead and they deny Him not with their mouths but by their works (Titus 1:16). They have a form of godliness but do not have the power of a new life beating in their hearts (2 Tim. 3:5). They may cry “Lord, Lord,” but the fruit of their lives reveals their true allegiance and the painful fact that Christ does not “know them” (see Matt. 7:17-23). On the other hand, true Christians “hold fast” the word of life. They “receive” it and “stand” in it according to this scripture. Their faith is not empty but full. These words are very powerful “receive” means literally “to join oneself to,” “stand” refers to “making a stand.” It speaks of a steady, ongoing, persevering conviction of the heart and mind. “Hold fast” is an incredible word in the original language with both warfare and sailing connotations in the ancient world. Essentially it means to grasp and cling to in the midst of all trials even to the point of giving your life.

In short, these verse teach that a true Christian is a person who not only makes a profession of faith, but also joins himself to and perseveres in this faith, denying self, following and clinging to Christ and His word even to the point of death if necessary. A true Christian is not saved by works. We see here that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone in both verses 1 and 2 (see also, Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9), but we also see that faith, if it is real and not “vain” and will reveal itself by **a devoted** and fruitful life. The Holy Spirit will hammer this truth home even more forcefully in the very next chapter of 1 Corinthians as He concludes the book (see 1 Cor. 16:22).