

## Groundhog Day In August

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 (NIV)

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

We need to hear the same thing over and over and over and over again

If you have been saying the same thing over and over for 75 years, you are probably Smokey the Bear.

A recent survey of American Christians found that 52% said that they believe that if a person is generally good or does enough good things in their lifetime they will “earn” a place in heaven.

Galatians 1:6-7 (ESV)

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

We must be constantly hearing the true Gospel so that we do not fall for the distortions of the Gospel.

Tradition

Worship

Zeal

Philippians 3:1-12 (MSG)

And that’s about it, friends. Be glad in God! I don’t mind repeating what I have written in earlier letters, and I hope you don’t mind hearing it again. Better safe than sorry – so here goes. Steer clear of the barking dogs, those religious busybodies, all bark and no bite. All they’re interested in is appearances – knife-happy circumcisers, I call them. The real believers are the ones the Spirit of God leads to work away at this ministry, filling the air with Christ’s praise as we do it. We couldn’t carry this off by our own efforts, and we know it – even though we

can list what many might think are impressive credentials. You know my pedigree: a legitimate birth, circumcised on the eighth day; and Israelite from the elite tribe of Benjamin; a strict and devout adherent to God's law; a fiery defender of the purity of my religion, even to the point of persecuting the church; a meticulous observer of everything set down in God's law Book. The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash – along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant – dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ – God's righteousness. I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it. I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me.

The Gospel enables us to learn from traditions without having to trust in them for salvation.

1 Corinthians 11:1-2 (ESV)

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.

The Gospel invites us into true worship

John 4:23-24 (NIV)

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.

The Gospel empowers us to zealously pursue the purpose of God

Romans 12:9-12 (NIV)

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.