



World Christian Fellowship

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A Faithful Saying: The Axis of History

1 Timothy 1:15-17, பாவிகளை இரட்சிக்க கிறிஸ்து இயேசு உலகத்தில் வந்தார் என்கிற வார்த்தை உண்மையும் எல்லா அங்கிகரிப்புக்கும் பாத்திரமுமானது; அவர்களில் பிரதான பாவி நான். 16. அப்படியிருந்தும், நித்திய ஜீவனை அடையும்படி இனிமேல் இயேசுகிறிஸ்துவினிடத்தில் விசுவாசமாயிருப்பவர்களுக்குத் திருஷ்டாந்தம் உண்டாகும் பொருட்டுப் பிரதான பாவியாகிய என்னிடத்தில் அவர் எல்லா நீடிய பொறுமையையும் காண்பிக்கும்படிக்கு இரக்கம் பெற்றேன். 17. நித்தியமும் அழிவில்லாமையும் அதரிசனமுமுள்ள ராஜனுமாய், தாம் ஒருவரே ஞானமுள்ள தேவனுமாயிருக்கிறவருக்கு, கனமும் மகிமையும் சதாகாலங்களிலும் உண்டாயிருப்பதாக. ஆமென்.

Introduction: The Sentence that contains the Universe

There are sentences in the history of human thought that changed the world.

Euclid's fifth postulate.
Newton's law of gravitation.
Einstein's $E=mc^2$.

But no sentence in the history of human language carries the weight, the scope, or the transforming power of these words.

பாவினை இரட்சிக்க கிறிஸ்து இயேசு உலகத்தில் வந்தார்.

In this single sentence, the Apostle Paul compresses the entire sweep of redemptive history,

- the entire logic of the Gospel,
- the entire purpose of the Incarnation, and
- the entire scope of divine love.

Paul frames it with a formula that signals its importance:

உண்மையும் எல்லா அங்கிகரிப்புக்கும் பாத்திரமுமானது;

This phrase occurs **5 times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8)**, and each time it introduces a statement of foundational theological importance.

Scholars believe these faithful sayings may have been early Christian confessions, perhaps used in worship, baptism, or catechesis. They were the settled, tested, received truths of the apostolic community.

But this first faithful saying stands above the rest.

1 Timothy 3:1 says this is a faithful saying;

2 Timothy 2:11 says this is a faithful saying.

But **1 Timothy 1:15** says this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

The additional phrase sets it apart. Every person, without exception, is invited and commanded to accept this saying.

- It is not a truth for the theologically sophisticated.
- It is not a comfort for the moderately sinful.
- It is worthy of all acceptance, for all persons, in all conditions, and in all generations.

I. A Faithful Saying

A. The weight of the Formula

உண்மையும் எல்லா அங்கிகரிப்புக்கும்
பாத்திரமுமானது;

A certification of reliability, equivalent to a notary seal or a gold hallmark. Paul is not merely expressing his personal conviction, but declaring the settled, tested verdict of the apostolic community.

This saying has been found reliable.

It has been preached in **Jerusalem** and **Rome**, in **Antioch** and **Ephesus**, in the faces of opposition and under the threat of martyrdom, and it has proven true in every case.

The word **Pistos** (faithful) is one of Paul's favourite words for describing both God (**1 Corinthians 1:9; & 10:13** தேவன் உண்மையுள்ளவராயிருக்கிறார்; உங்கள் திராணிக்கு மேலாக நீங்கள் சோதிக்கப்படுகிறதற்கு அவர் இடங்கொடாமல்) and the characteristics He requires of His servants to be faithful.

1 Corinthians 4:2, மேலும், உக்கிராணக்காரன் உண்மை யுள்ளவனென்று காணப்படுவது அவனுக்கு அவசியமாம்.

A faithful saying is one that bears the same quality as the faithful God who is its ultimate source.

B. Worthy of all acceptance — The Universal Invitation

எல்லா அங்கிகரிப்புக்கும் பாத்திரமுமானது

The phrase worthy of all acceptance is unique to this first faithful saying.

The word ***apodexis*** means to receive, to welcome, to embrace.

It is not passive reception but active, deliberate welcoming.

Paul is saying that this truth demands a response. It is not enough to intellectually acknowledge it, but it must be embraced, welcomed into the inner life, staked upon.

It is worthy of this response from all, the educated and the simple, the moral and the immoral, the

religious and the irreligious, the Jew and the Greek, the slave and the free.

The Gospel is not calibrated for a particular cultural or intellectual demographic. It is not optimized for people who have already made some progress toward God.

Its design specification is all people, without exception, specifically including those who are worst, most resistant, and most undeserving.

II. Christ Jesus came into the World — The Incarnation

A. The Pre-Existence of Christ

கிறிஸ்து இயேசு உலகத்தில் வந்தார்

The phrase came into the world is loaded with Christological implication. It assumes that before coming into the world, Christ existed.

- ✓ He did not originate at Bethlehem.
- ✓ He entered history from eternity.

John's prologue makes this explicit.

John 1:1, ஆதியிலே வார்த்தை இருந்தது, அந்த வார்த்தை தேவனிடத்திலிருந்தது, அந்த வார்த்தை தேவனாயிருந்தது.

The Word was not created. The word existed eternally in intimate fellowship with the Father.

John 1:14, அந்த வார்த்தை மாம்சமாகி, கிருபையினாலும் சத்தியத்தினாலும் நிறைந்தவராய், நமக்குள்ளே வாசம்பண்ணினார்; அவருடைய மகிமையைக் கண்டோம்; அது பிதாவுக்கு ஒரே பேறானவருடைய மகிமைக்கு ஏற்ற மகிமையாகவே இருந்தது.

Paul's own theology of the pre-existent Christ is fully developed in **Colossians 1:15-17**, அவர் அதரிசனமான தேவனுடைய தற்குருபமும், சர்வ சிருஷ்டிக்கும் முந்தின பேறுமானவர். 16. ஏனென்றால் அவருக்குள் சகலமும் சிருஷ்டிக்கப் பட்டது; பரலோகத் திலுள்ளவைகளும் பூலோகத் திலுள்ளவைகளுமாகிய காணப்படுகிறவைகளும் காணப்படாதவை களுமான சகல வஸ்துக்களும், சிங்காசனங்களானாலும், கர்த்தத்துவங்களானாலும், துரைத்தனங்களானாலும், அதிகாரங்களானாலும், சகலமும் அவரைக்கொண்டும் அவருக்கென்றும் சிருஷ்டிக்கப்பட்டது. 17. அவர் எல்லாவற்றிற்கும் முந்தினவர், எல்லாம் அவருக்குள் நிலைநிற்கிறது.

The One who created all things entered His own creation to save sinners. The magnitude of this is beyond human comprehension.

B. The Voluntary Nature of the Incarnation

Christ did not come into the world involuntarily or accidentally.

He came. This active verb carries the weight of divine intention.

Philippians 2:6-8, அவர் தேவனுடைய ரூபமாயிருந்தும், தேவனுக்குச் சமமாயிருப்பதைக் கொள்ளையாடின பொருளாக எண்ணாமல், 7. தம்மைத்தாமே வெறுமையாக்கி, அடிமையின் ரூபமெடுத்து, மனுஷர் சாயலானார். 8. அவர் மனுஷரூபமாய்க் காணப்பட்டு, மரணபரியந்தம், அதாவது சிலுவையின் மரணபரியந்தமும் கீழ்ப்படிந்தவராகி, தம்மைத்தாமே தாழ்த்தினார்.

The Incarnation involved a series of divine condescension.

- ✓ The eternal Son took on human flesh.
- ✓ The immortal became mortal.

- ✓ The omnipresent became located.
- ✓ The omnipotent became vulnerable.
- ✓ The one who sustained the universe with His word became dependent on a young mother for food and warmth.
- ✓ He who was rich became poor so that through His poverty we might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

This voluntariness is theologically essential. A God who was forced or trapped into redemption would not be the God of the Bible.

The Incarnation was the deliberate choice of the eternal Son, in co-eternal agreement with the Father.

Ephesians 1:4, தமக்குமுன்பாக நாம் அன்பில் பரிசுத்தமுள்ளவர்களும் குற்றமில்லாதவர்களுமாயி ருப் பதற்கு, அவர் உலகத்தோற்றத்துக்கு முன்னே கிறிஸ்துவுக்குள் நம்மைத் தெரிந்துகொண்டபடியே,

Every dimension of salvation is an expression of the free, gracious, sovereign love of the Triune God.

C. The Scandal of the Incarnation in the Ephesian Context

In the first-century world, the idea of a god taking on human flesh was simultaneously familiar and scandalous.

The Greek myths were full of gods in human form. But they came to exercise power, to take pleasure, and to dominate.

The Christian proclamation was radically different: God's Son became a human not to exercise power over sinners but to save them, not to be served but to serve, not to impose suffering but to endure it.

Jesus became not an impressive human but a carpenter's son in an occupied province, born in a stable, who ended His earthly life on a cross reserved for slaves and criminals.

This was offensive to the Greek philosophical world, which could not conceive of the divine becoming material (the physical was inferior to the spiritual in Platonic thought).

It was offensive to the Jewish world, which could not conceive of God's Messiah dying as a cursed criminal.

Paul names this theological scandal directly.

1 Corinthians 1:23-25, நாங்களோ சிலுவையில் அறையப்பட்ட கிறிஸ்துவைப் பிரசங்கிக்கிறோம்; அவர் யூதருக்கு இடறலாயும் கிரேக்கருக்குப் பைத்தியமாயும் இருக்கிறார். 24. ஆகிலும் யூதரானாலும் கிரேக்கரானாலும் எவர்கள் அழைக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறார்களோ அவர்களுக்குக் கிறிஸ்து தேவபெலனும் தேவஞானமுமாயிருக்கிறார். 25. இந்தப்பட்டி, தேவனுடைய பைத்தியம் என்னப்படுவது மனுஷருடைய ஞானத்திலும் அதிக ஞானமாயிருக்கிறது; தேவனுடைய பலவீனம் என்னப்படுவது மனுஷருடைய பலத்திலும் அதிக பலமாயிருக்கிறது.

Yet this is the Gospel. The scandalous Incarnation is the only hope of the world.

III. To Save — The Purpose and the Method

A. The Word Sozo

பாவினை இரட்சிக்க கிறிஸ்து இயேசு உலகத்தில்
வந்தார்

The Greek word **Sozo** (to save) is one of the richest words in the New Testament vocabulary.

It is used for physical healing (**Matthew 9:21-22**), for rescue from physical danger (**Matthew 8:25**), and for spiritual salvation from sin and its consequences (**Matthew 1:21**)

In each case, the core meaning is the same: to rescue from a danger that the person cannot escape alone.

Paul uses **Sozo** and related words.

Soteria- salvation.

Soter- Saviour.

Soterion- salvation.

Paul used extensively throughout his letters to describe the comprehensive rescue that God has accomplished in Christ.

It includes

- **Justification** (being declared righteous: **Romans 5:1**),
- **Redemption** (being purchased from bondage: **Ephesians 1:7**),
- **Reconciliation** (having the enmity with God removed: **Romans 5:10-11**),
- **Sanctification** (being progressively transformed: **2 Corinthians 3:18**), and
- **Glorification** (being finally and fully conformed to Christ's likeness: **Romans 8:30**).

B. Save Sinners — The Scope and the Specificity

Christ came to save sinners, not helpers, not seekers, not the morally promising. The word sinners in the New Testament carries its full Old Testament weight:

One who has missed the mark, who has departed from God's ways, who stands under divine condemnation.

In the Jewish world of Paul's day, sinners was a term that carried both religious and social connotations.

The tax collectors and sinners of the Gospel accounts were those publicly identified as living outside the covenant.

Jesus deliberately associated with this group, eating with them, speaking with them, calling them to follow Him. When the Pharisees objected, He replied to them.

Mark 2:17, இயேசு அதைக் கேட்டு: பிணியாளிகளுக்கு வைத்தியன் வேண்டியதே யல்லாமல் சுகமுள்ளவர்களுக்கு வேண்டியதில்லை; நீதிமான்களையல்ல, பாவிக்களையே மனந்திரும்புகிறதற்கு அழைக்கவந்தேன் என்றார்.

His medical metaphor is illuminating. The physician does not go to the healthy but goes to the sick.

- ✓ Christ did not come for those who have their spiritual lives in order.
- ✓ Christ came for those who do not!

He came for every human being who has ever lived.

C. The Substitutionary Heart of Salvation

How did Christ save sinners?

Paul does not elaborate the mechanics here, but the rest of his theology fills in the picture.

Salvation required that the legal problem of human sin be addressed: every sin against a holy God carries the penalty of death (**Romans 6:23**).

For sinners to be saved, that penalty had to be paid by someone who could pay it without owing it themselves.

This is the substitutionary atonement. Christ, the sinless Son of God, died in the place of sinners, bearing their guilt and exhausting their penalty.

2 Corinthians 5:21, நாம் அவருக்குள் தேவனுடைய நீதியாகும்படிக்கு, பாவம் அறியாத அவரை நமக்காகப் பாவமாக்கினார்.

Galatians 3:13, மரத்திலே தூக்கப்பட்ட எவனும் சபிக்கப்பட்டவன் என்று எழுதியிருக்கிறபடி, கிறிஸ்து நமக்காகச் சாபமாகி, நியாயப்பிரமாணத்தின் சாபத்திற்கு நம்மை நீங்கலாக்கி மீட்டுக்கொண்டார்.

The exchange is total.

- Our sin to Him,
- His righteousness to us.

This is the glorious transaction that makes the faithful saying true.

Isaiah 53 — the Suffering Servant passage is the Old Testament anticipation of this exchange.

Isaiah 53:5-6, நம்முடைய மீறுதல்களினிமித்தம் அவர் காயப்பட்டு, நம்முடைய அக்கிரமங்களினிமித்தம் அவர் நொறுக்கப்பட்டார்; நமக்குச் சமாதானத்தை உண்டு பண்ணும் ஆக்கினை அவர்மேல் வந்தது; அவருடைய தழும்புகளால் குணமாகிறோம். 6. நாமெல்லாரும் ஆடுகளைப்போல வழிதப்பித் திரிந்து, அவனவன் தன்தன் வழியிலே போனோம்; கர்த்தரோ நம்மெல்லாருடைய அக்கிரமத்தையும் அவர்மேல் விழப்பண்ணினார்.

Paul, the trained rabbinical scholar, would have known this passage intimately. When he saw the risen Christ on the Damascus Road, the **Isaiah 53** theology would have crystallised. This is the Servant who was wounded for my transgressions.

IV. Of whom I am Chief — The Present Tense Confession

A. The Grammar of Humility

அவர்களில் பிரதான பாவி நான்.

The most startling word in **V 15** is the present tense: *I am chief*.

- Not I was.
- Not before my conversion I was the chief.
- Present tense.

This is not historical self-flagellation, but the continuous posture of a genuinely sanctified person before a holy God.

The closer Paul walked with Christ, the more clearly, he saw himself in contrast to Christ's holiness, and the more deeply he felt the weight of his own sinfulness.

This is the consistent testimony of the greatest saints in Christian history.

Isaiah, in the presence of the LORD's holiness cried to God.

Isaiah 6:5, அப்பொழுது நான்: ஐயோ! அதமானேன், நான் அசுத்த உதடுகளுள்ள மனுஷன், அசுத்த உதடுகளுள்ள ஜனங்களின் நடுவில் வாசமாயிருக்கிறவன்; சேனைகளின் கர்த்தராகிய ராஜாவை என் கண்கள் கண்டதே என்றேன்.

Job, after God's speeches from the whirlwind, said: ஆகையால் நான் என்னை அருவருத்து, தூளிலும் சாம்பலிலும் இருந்து மனஸ்தாபப்படுகிறேன் என்றான். (**Job 42:6**).

Peter, when he first witnessed Christ's miraculous power, fell down and said: சீமோன் பேதுரு அதைக் கண்டு, இயேசுவின் பாதத்தில் விழுந்து: ஆண்டவரே, நான் பாவியான மனுஷன், நீர் என்னைவிட்டுப் போகவேண்டும் என்றான். (**Luke 5:8**).

The pattern is consistent: genuine proximity to God produces genuine humility about self.

This is also the mark of authentic conversion.

The person who claims to have been saved but shows no growing awareness of their own sinfulness has either not yet understood the Gospel or is not genuinely examining themselves.

The Gospel of justification does not produce smugness but produces wonder.

The more clearly, we see what we have been forgiven, the more deeply we are humbled.

B. Chief — Protos- பிரதான

The word chief (**protos**) means first in sequence, first in importance.

Paul does not merely include himself in the category of sinners. He places himself at the front of the line. The superlative is deliberate.

He has catalogued his sins:

- Blasphemer,
- Persecutor,
- Insolent man.

He has acknowledged that he did more damage to the church than any other individual. The evidence supports his self-assessment.

But the theological point is not autobiographical, but it is instructional.

Paul places himself at the front of the sinners' queue so that everyone behind him knows that if grace reached the first in line, it would reach all the others.

The worst case has been handled. The line is clear.

Come forward. This is the evangelistic logic of the faithful saying that come to Christ not in spite of being a sinner but precisely because you are one.

V. The Pattern for Those Who Believe

A. Paul as hupotyposis

V 16, அப்படியிருந்தும், நித்திய ஜீவனை அடையும்படி இனிமேல் இயேசுகிறிஸ்து வினிடத்தில் விசுவாசமாயிருப் பவர்களுக்குத் திருஷ்டாந்தம் உண்டாகும்பொருட்டுப் பிரதான பாவியாகிய என்னிடத்தில் அவர் எல்லா நீடிய பொறுமையையும் காண்பிக்கும்படிக்கு இரக்கம் பெற்றேன்.

Explains the purpose of Paul's dramatic conversion.

Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern for those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

The word pattern is a word from art and architecture. It means a sketch, a preliminary outline, a prototype from which copies are made. Paul's conversion is God's showroom model to show this is what My grace can do.

The longsuffering of Christ in Paul's case is remarkable. Christ was patient with Paul through years of violent persecution. He did not strike him down in **Acts 8:3** when Paul was making havoc of the church.

Jesus was patient through the stoning of Stephen. He was patient through the imprisonments and the torture of believers.

He waited for precisely the right moment and then appeared to Paul in a display of grace rather than judgment.

This patience is the same patience that is bearing with every sinner who has not yet believed.

2 Peter 3:9, தாமதிக்கிறார் என்று சிலர் எண்ணுகிறபடி, கர்த்தர் தமது வாக்குத்தத்தத்தைக் குறித்துத் தாமதமாயிராமல்; ஒருவரும் கெட்டுப்போகாமல் எல்லாரும் மனந்திரும்ப வேண்டுமென்று விரும்பி, நம்மேல் நீடிய பொறுமையுள்ளவராயிருக்கிறார்.

B. Believing for Everlasting Life

The phrase those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life introduces the eschatological dimension of salvation.

Salvation is not merely about the present the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Spirit, the peace with God. It is about everlasting life, the eternal dimension of knowing God that begins now and continues forever.

John 17:3, ஒன்றான மெய்த்தேவனாகிய உம்மையும் நீர் அனுப்பினவராகிய இயேசு கிறிஸ்துவையும் அறிவதே நித்தியஜீவன்.

Everlasting life is not merely endless existence. It is a qualitative category as much as a quantitative one.

Life of God's kind, life in the presence of God, life marked by the fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16:11, ஜீவமார்க்கத்தை எனக்குத் தெரியப்படுத்துவீர்; உம்முடைய சமுகத்தில் பரிபூரண ஆனந்தமும், உம்முடைய வலதுபாரிசத்தில் நித்திய பேரின்பமும் உண்டு.

This is what the Gospel offers. Not merely a better version of the life we have now, but an entirely different category of existence that death cannot end and sin cannot corrupt.

VI. The Doxology — Sound Doctrine always produces Worship

A. Now to the King Eternal

Paul cannot contemplate the faithful saying Christ came to save sinners, I was the worst, and I was saved without erupting into praise.

V 17, நித்தியமும் அழிவில்லாமையும் அதரிசனமுமுள்ள ராஜனுமாய், தாம் ஒருவரே

ஞானமுள்ள தேவனுமாயிருக்கிறவருக்கு, கனமும்
மகிமையும் சதாகாலங்களிலும் உண்டாயிருப்பதாக.
ஆமென்.

V 16-17 burst into one of the most magnificent doxologies in the New Testament. The very structure of the letter shifts from theological instruction gives way to uncontrollable worship. This is the test of genuine theology.

Does it produce doxology?

He addresses God as the King eternal.

This is the same God who is described in **Revelation 15:3** as the King of the saints, and in **Revelation 19:16** as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He reigns over an eternal kingdom that was before all time and will endure after time has been taken up into eternity.

His sovereignty is not subject to the political upheavals of Roman emperors or the philosophical fashions of Greek academies. He reigns, and His reign is eternal.

B. Immortal, Invisible, God Alone Wise

Paul piles up the divine attributes in a pattern of theological poetry.

Immortal (aphthartos): God does not decay, diminish, or die. He is incorruptible, exempt from the mortality that characterises everything else in the created order.

1 Timothy 6:16, ஒருவராய், சாவாமையுள்ளவரும், சேரக்கூடாத ஒளியில் வாசம்பண்ணுகிறவரும், மனுஷரில் ஒருவரும் கண்டிராதவரும், காணக்கூடாதவருமாயிருக்கிறவர்; அவருக்கே கனமும் நித்திய வல்லமையும் உண்டாயிருப்பதாக ஆமென்.

Invisible (aoratos): God is not visible to physical eyes. This does not mean He is absent. It means His essence transcends the category of physical visibility.

John 1:18, தேவனை ஒருவனும் ஒருக்காலுங் கண்டதில்லை, பிதாவின் மடியிலிருக்கிற

The Incarnation is God's great act of self-disclosure making the invisible visible, the eternal tangible, the holy approachable.

God alone wise (mono sopho theo): Only God is truly and completely wise. In contrast to the false teachers whose wisdom is foolishness (**1 Corinthians 1:20**), to the Greek philosophical schools whose wisdom is ultimately ignorance, to the Roman imperial wisdom that relies on power and violence, Paul declares that true wisdom resides in God alone.

This wisdom has been displayed in the cross.

1 Corinthians 1:25, இந்தப்படி, தேவனுடைய
பைத்தியம் என்னப்படுவது மனுஷருடைய
ஞானத்திலும் அதிக ஞானமாயிருக்கிறது;
தேவனுடைய பலவீனம் என்னப்படுவது
மனுஷருடைய பலத்திலும் அதிக பலமாயிருக்கிறது.

C. Honor and Glory Forever and Ever — The Eternal Response

The proper response to the character of the King eternal, immortal, invisible, wise God is honour and glory, forever and ever.

Honour (time) is the recognition of supreme worth, and it is what the creature owes the Creator.

Glory (doxa) is the outward expression of the inner reality of God's magnificence.

Together they describe the eternal, unending worship that is both the church's vocation and heaven's perpetual activity.

The Amen at the end is the corporate response of the congregation that so be it, let it be so.

Amen is not merely punctuation but a participation. When the congregation says Amen to a doxology, they are agreeing with Paul.

Yes, to this God, this King, this immortal, invisible, wise Saviour of sinners be honour and glory forever and ever. This is what sound doctrine produces.

- Not proud academics but joyful worshippers.
- Not clever arguers but transformed adorers.

Revelation 4:11, கர்த்தாவே, தேவரீர், மகிமையையும் கனத்தையும் வல்லமையையும் பெற்றுக்கொள்ளுகிறதற்குப் பாத்திரராயிருக்கிறீர், நீரே சகலத்தையும் சிருஷ்டித்தீர், உம்முடைய சித்தத்தினாலே அவைகள் உண்டாயிருக்கிறவைகளும் சிருஷ்டிக்கப்பட்டவைகளுமாயிருக்கிறது என்றார்கள்.

VI. The Resurrection as the Ground of the Faithful Saying

A. The Empty Tomb and the credibility of the Gospel.

The faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is not a philosophical proposition but a historical claim.

It depends on real events.

The real Incarnation of the eternal Son, the real crucifixion of the sinless Saviour, and the real bodily resurrection from the dead. Remove any of these historical foundations and the saying is no longer a faithful saying that it becomes a religious sentiment of uncertain value.

Paul addresses the centrality of the resurrection most extensively in **1 Corinthians 15**.

He lists the eyewitness testimonies.

1 Corinthians 15:3-6, நான் அடைந்ததும் உங்களுக்குப் பிரதானமாக ஒப்புவித்ததும் என்னவென்றால், கிறிஸ்துவானவர் வேதவாக்கியங்களின்படி நமது பாவங்களுக்காக மரித்து, 4. அடக்கம்பண்ணப்பட்டு, வேதவாக்கியங்களின்படி மூன்றாம்நாளில் உயிர்த்தெழுந்து, 5. கேபாவுக்கும், பின்பு பன்னிருவருக்கும் தரிசனமானார். 6. அதன்பின்பு அவர் ஐந்நூறுபேருக்கு அதிகமான சகோதரருக்கும் ஒரேவேளையில் தரிசனமானார்; அவர்களில் அநேகர் இந்நாள்வரைக்கும் இருக்கிறார்கள், சிலர் மாத்திரம் நித்திரையடைந்தார்கள்.

This is not mythmaking. It is the language of legal testimony.

Paul is saying that you can verify this. The witnesses are still alive. Go and ask them.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most attested event in ancient history, not because the evidence is overwhelming by modern evidentiary standards, but because the nature of the evidence:

- The empty tomb,
- The post-resurrection appearances,
- The transformation of the disciples,
- The conversion of Paul,
- The conversion of James

All there are most coherently explained by the historical reality of the resurrection.

The faithful saying is faithful because the God who gave it is the God who raised His Son.

B. Resurrection and the New Creation

The resurrection of Christ is not merely proof of His personal victory over death, but it is the first instalment of the new creation that God has promised.

Paul calls the risen Christ the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (**1 Corinthians 15:20**).

In the Jewish agricultural calendar, the firstfruits were the initial portion of the harvest offered to God as a guarantee that the full harvest would follow.

Christ's resurrection is God's guarantee that the resurrection of all who are in Christ will follow.

Romans 8:18-25, ஆதலால் இக்காலத்துப் பாடுகள் இனி நம்மிடத்தில் வெளிப்படும் மகிமைக்கு ஒப்பிடத்தக்கவைகள் அல்லவென்று எண்ணுகிறேன். 19. மேலும் தேவனுடைய புத்திரர் வெளிப்படுவதற்குச் சிருஷ்டியானது மிகுந்த ஆவலோடே காத்துக்கொண்டிருக்கிறது. 20. அதேனென்றால் சிருஷ்டியானது அழிவுக்குரிய அடிமைத் தனத்தினின்று விடுதலையாக்கப்பட்டு, தேவனுடைய பிள்ளைகளுக்குரிய மகிமையான சுயாதீனத்தைப் பெற்றுக்கொள்ளும் என்கிற நம்பிக்கையோடே, 21. அந்தச் சிருஷ்டியானது சுய இஷ்டத்தினாலே அல்ல, கீழ்ப்படுத்தினவராலேயே மாயைக்குக் கீழ்ப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. 22. ஆகையால் நமக்குத் தெரிந்திருக்கிறபடி, இதுவரைக்கும் சர்வ சிருஷ்டியும் ஏகமாய்த் தவித்துப் பிரசவவேதனைப் படுகிறது. 23. அதுவுமல்லாமல், ஆவியின் முதற்பலன்களைப் பெற்ற நாமுங்கூட நம்முடைய சரீர மீட்பாகிய புத்திரசு விகாரம் வருகிறதற்குக் காத்திருந்து, நமக்குள்ளே தவிக்கிறோம். 24. அந்த நம்பிக்கையினாலே நாம் இரட்சிக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறோம். காணப்படுகிறதை நம்புகிறது நம்பிக்கையல்ல; ஒருவன் தான் காண்கிறதை நம்பவேண்டுவதென்ன? 25. நாம் காணாததை நம்பினோமாகில், அது வருகிறதற்குப் பொறுமையோடே காத்திருப்போம்.

The faithful saying is not merely about individual souls being saved but it points toward the cosmic renewal of all things that the resurrection inaugurates.

Christ came to save sinners, and in saving sinners He is also beginning the restoration of the entire created order that sin had corrupted.

VII. The Atonement — Theological Depth.

A. The Four Dimensions of Salvation

The word **Sozo** (save) in the faithful saying encompasses at least four distinct but inseparable dimensions of the rescue that Christ accomplished. Each dimension addresses a different aspect of the human predicament before God.

Justification: addresses the legal problem of guilt. Every human being stands before a holy God as a convicted lawbreaker, deserving the penalty of death.

Justification is the legal declaration, made possible by the substitutionary death of Christ, that the guilty sinner is reckoned righteous.

Not made righteous the actual transformation is sanctification but declared righteous on the basis of Christ's righteousness credited to the believer's account (**Romans 4:5-6**).

Redemption: addresses the power problem of bondage. Sin does not merely make us guilty; it enslaves us. **John 8:34**, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Redemption is the purchase of freedom, the payment of the ransom (**Mark 10:45**, *the Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many*) that sets the captive free.

The image is of the slave market: Christ enters the market, pays the price, and the slave is freed.

Reconciliation: addresses the relational problem of enmity. Sin creates a rupture in the relationship between the creature and the Creator. **Romans 5:10** describes us as enemies.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 describes the Gospel as the ministry of reconciliation. The enmity has been removed, the relationship restored, through the peace-making work of the cross (**Colossians 1:20**, having made peace through the blood of His cross).

Propitiation: addresses the wrath problem. God's holiness requires that every sin be judged.

His wrath — the settled, righteous opposition of His holy character to all that is evil — must be satisfied before His mercy can be extended.

1 John 2:2, Christ is the propitiation for our sins, meaning He absorbed the divine wrath that our sins deserved, so that God could be both just (in punishing sin) and the justifier of those who believe.

Romans 3:24-26, இலவசமாய் அவருடைய கிருபையினாலே கிறிஸ்து இயேசுவினுள்ள மீட்பைக் கொண்டு நீதிமான்களாக்கப்படுகிறார்கள்; 25. தேவன் பொறுமையாயிருந்த முற்காலத்தில் நடந்த பாவங்களைத் தாம் பொறுத்துக்கொண்டதைக் குறித்துத் தம்முடைய நீதியைக் காண்பிக்கும் பொருட்டாகவும், தாம் நீதியுள்ளவரும், இயேசுவினிடத்தில் விசுவாசமாயிருக்கிற வனை நீதிமானாக்குகிறவருமாய் விளங்கும்படி, இக்காலத் திலே தமது நீதியைக் காண்பிக்கும் பொருட்டாகவும்,

26. கிறிஸ்து இயேசுவினுடைய இரத்தத்தைப் பற்றும் விசுவாசத்தினாலே பலிக்கும் கிருபாதார பலியாக அவரையே ஏற்படுத்தினார்.

B. The Cross in the Old Testament

The cross of Christ did not appear in history without preparation. The entire sacrificial system of the Mosaic law was a divinely designed illustration of the atonement that Christ would accomplish.

The **Passover lamb**, whose blood protected the Israelites from the angel of death, prefigured Christ, our Passover, who was sacrificed for us (**1 Corinthians 5:7**).

The scapegoat of **Leviticus 16**, upon whose head the high priest confessed the sins of Israel before it was driven into the wilderness, prefigured Christ who bore our sins in His own body on the tree (**1 Peter 2:24**).

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is the most direct Old Testament anticipation of the cross. **Hebrews 9:11-14** traces the connection explicitly.

Christ entered not a man-made sanctuary but heaven itself, not with the blood of goats and calves but with His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. The old covenant sacrifices were repeated annually because they could not finally remove sin; the new covenant sacrifice was offered once for all (**Hebrews 9:26; 10:10**), because its power is unlimited and eternal.

Paul, the trained rabbi, would have felt the weight of these connections with an intensity we can barely imagine. When he writes Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, he is not writing a new sentence. He is writing the final sentence of a story that began in **Genesis 3:15**, with God's promise of a seed who would crush the serpent's head, and has been building, chapter by chapter, through every sacrifice, every prophecy, every type and shadow of the Old Testament.

VIII. The Doxology as the Goal of Theology

A. Why must Doxology follow Doctrine?

The movement from **V 15-17** from the faithful saying to the doxology is not accidental. It reflects the fundamental relationship between doctrine and worship that characterises all of Paul's mature theology.

Romans follows the same arc: eleven chapters of rigorous doctrinal exposition followed by the doxology of **Romans 11:33-36**, and then the practical ethical instruction of **Romans 12-16**.

Ephesians follows the same pattern: three chapters of doctrinal foundation followed by three chapters of practical application and the armour of God.

Doctrine that does not produce worship has been misunderstood.

The person who can explain justification without feeling the weight of its gift, who can discuss the Incarnation without being moved by its cost, who can analyse the atonement without being undone by its love — this person has studied about God without encountering God.

The study of theology is designed to produce not a better-informed atheist but a more deeply adoring worshipper.

Jonathan Edwards made this the central thesis of his **Religious Affections**: *true religion consists largely in holy affections. Not mere intellectual assent to correct doctrine, and not mere emotional experience without doctrinal grounding — but the proper response of a rightly ordered heart to the God who has revealed Himself. The doxology of 1 Timothy 1:17 is the sound of a properly ordered heart responding to the faithful saying with the only appropriate answer: to the King eternal be honour and glory forever.*

"The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Doctrine without doxology has missed the chief end. Doxology without doctrine has nothing to glorify God about. The two must never be separated." — **Westminster Shorter Catechism.**

B. Eternal Life as the Consummation of the Faithful Saying

V 16 closes the arc of the faithful saying with a reference to everlasting life.

Christ came to save sinners. The salvation He accomplished leads to everlasting life. This everlasting life, the life of the age to come, the resurrection life that begins at conversion and is consummated at the resurrection of the body is the ultimate destination of the Gospel.

John 17:3 defines eternal life with remarkable precision.

Eternal life is not primarily endless duration, but it is a quality of relationship — knowing God, which in biblical language is not merely intellectual acquaintance but the deepest possible relational intimacy.

The God who is King eternal, immortal, invisible, and alone wise invites the redeemed sinner into a relationship of knowing that will deepen and grow throughout all of eternity.

Conclusion.

*In 1948, a young **English literature student named C.S. Lewis** was sitting in a train carriage outside Oxford when a fellow passenger recognised him and struck up a conversation. The man had read **Mere Christianity** and had one question: **Do you really believe that line, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?***

*Lewis, who had been an atheist until his conversion in **1931**, and who had come to faith not through emotional experience but through the relentless logic of reason confronting reality, paused. Then he said: **I believe it the way I believe in the sun. Not because I can see the sun, but because of it I can see everything else.***

*The man pressed him: **but do you believe it applies to you personally?***

*Lewis replied: **I believe it applies to me particularly. I was not a nice agnostic. I was a hostile agnostic. I did not want God to exist. I resisted the evidence for years. When I finally submitted to Christ in 1931, I described myself in **Surprised by Joy as the most reluctant convert in England. I came in kicking and screaming. And precisely because I*****

was not a natural seeker, precisely because I fought the truth as long as I could, I know that my conversion was not the product of my seeking. **I was found.** And being found by the God I had been running from has been the central fact of my life ever since.

The man sat quietly for a moment. Then he asked: **And do you think God is still finding people like that?**

Lewis smiled. **Every day, he said. Every day.** The faithful saying is still faithful. Christ is still coming into the world to save sinners. And He is still not limited to the spiritually receptive, the religiously inclined, or the morally promising. He saves the hostile. He saves the reluctant. He saves the chief. That is what makes the saying worthy of all acceptance.

The train pulled into the station. The man got off. Lewis never knew who he was or whether that conversation bore fruit. But he wrote about it in a letter:

I do not know what became of that man. But I know that the faithful saying I quoted to him is true. And wherever he is today, it is still true for him. It will be true when he dies. It will be true

at the resurrection. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That sentence will outlast everything else ever written. And if it outlasts everything else, it is worth staking your life on.

APPLICATION FOR DAILY LIFE

- 1. Memorise 1 Timothy 1:15 in full:** *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* Use it as your morning declaration this week.
- 2.** The phrase worthy of all acceptance means this truth is for everyone. Identify one person in your life who has been told they are too broken or too sinful for God. Share 1 Timothy 1:15 with them this week.
- 3.** Paul maintained a present-tense awareness of his sinfulness. **Practise honest self-examination this week by reading Psalm 139:23-24** each morning and asking God to search your heart.
- 4. The Incarnation was voluntary.** Read Philippians 2:5-11 and meditate on what Christ gave up to come into the world for you. Let this motivate your worship and your service.

- 5. Doctrine should always produce doxology.** Write your own doxology this week, based on who God is to you personally. Model it on verses 17: To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever.
- 6.** Christ came with longsuffering for Paul. Who in your circle of relationships is testing your patience today? Pray for them using Christ's patience with Paul as your model and motivation.
- 7. Isaiah 53:5-6 and 2 Corinthians 5:21** describe the substitutionary exchange of the cross: my sin for His righteousness. Spend fifteen minutes this week in quiet gratitude for this specific exchange, praying through what it means for your daily life.