

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL (Romans 1:1-7)

INTRODUCTION:

Do you need some good news this morning? Then get into the book of Romans and you will hear some. With all the bad news we hear, we all need some good news. The word, "Gospel," means good news. So we all need to hear the gospel over and over. The theme of the book of Romans is the Gospel according to Paul.

I want to start a series of messages on the book of Romans. I preached a series on Romans back in 2001. How many of you were not attending Mt. Liberty in 2001? How many of you were too young to remember my sermons on Romans? How many of you just can't remember?

Romans is my favorite book in the Bible. Why? Because Romans, more than any other book, explains to the fullest explanation of the Gospel. We have the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Romans is the Gospel according to Paul. It gives us the final message of the Gospel, because it was written after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, which are the basic facts of the Gospel. But Romans tells us what these events mean.

Romans is my favorite book because it was the book I was studying in 1963 when God opened my eyes to his grace and changed my life and called me into the ministry.

In the book of Romans Paul tells us in four broad sections what the Gospel means: In chapters 1-4 it is the Good News for sinners; in chapters 5-8 it is the Good News for saints; in chapter 9-11 it is the Good News for the world; and in chapters 12-16 it is the Good News lived out in practical experience.

When Paul wrote this book he had not been able to visit Rome. He wants to come to see them and this he will eventually do. But until he can come he wanted to tell this group of Christians just what is the gospel is that was changing the world. These first seven verses is his personal introduction to them. He shares with them his credentials, the central content of the Gospel, and a blessing. Let's read these verses:

1) Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2) which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4) and declared to be the Son of God with

power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, 5) through whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, 6) among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; 7) To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints; Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First we will break down the long sentence into four parts and then conclude with some life applications.

PAUL THE MESSENGER OF THE GOSPEL

What are Paul's credentials for sharing this message? In verse 1 Paul mentions three things about himself:

He is a servant of Jesus Christ

He is called to be an apostle

He is separated to the gospel of God

Paul knew who knew whom he was serving. He lived his life to please his master, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a servant of Jesus Christ. Do you know whom you are serving? Jesus taught that we can not serve two masters. I need to remind myself, Whom am I serving. Is Jesus Christ my Lord? Is Jesus your Lord?

Paul also knew that he had been called to be an apostle. Apostle means "sent one." An apostle was anyone commissioned by some authority and sent on a mission. In the New Testament the original twelve disciples called by Jesus, are called the 12 apostles. One of them was a traitor, Judas. Paul calls himself as one being born out of due time.

Paul's call to be an apostle makes his teaching authoritative. His teaching is just not his ideas, but it is the message from his authority, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to accept this book in that light. Do you?

Next Paul mentions that he was "separated to the gospel of God." Paul's life was to be totally given over to the defense, proclamation, and application of the Gospel. Although Paul was a tent-maker by profession, and he practiced that trade sometimes while on his missionary journeys, he knew that God had set him apart for the Gospel ministry. He was "Gospel-driven."

Rick Warren has a best seller titled, "The Purpose Driven Life." He also has a book titled, "The Purpose Driven Church." If we are to be like Paul we need to be a "Gospel Driven Church." This is our purpose. This is our calling. This is what should drive us as a congregation.

In summary Paul knew his primary relationship to Christ: to be his servant; he knew his calling: to be an apostle; he knew the focus of his calling: separated unto the Gospel of God.

JESUS IS THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

In verses 2-4 Paul tells us that Jesus is the heart of the Gospel. He mentions some things about the Gospel:

It was promised in the OT

It focuses on Christ who became a human being

Christ's resurrection proves that He is the powerful
Son of God

The message that Christ came into the world to save sinners was not just something Christians made up. It was the plan of God before the creation of the world and God continually gave his people the promise of the coming of Christ through most of the prophets.

The second point about the gospel that Paul mentions is Christ's human lineage: "who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh" The incarnation is an important part of the Gospel. The incarnation is that the infinite Son of God became flesh and took upon Himself a human nature. A miracle. It is not that somehow the Christ came upon the man Jesus or that the man Jesus evolved into the Christ. No, the preexisting divine Son of God became flesh through in the line of David, in fulfillment of God's promises to David.

The third point about the gospel here is that by the resurrection from the dead Jesus Christ was declared publicly and for all the world to know that He alone is the Son of God with power. This is the ultimate proof of the truthfulness of the Gospel.

Today Christ is living and He is ruling over God's kingdom and has all power and authority over all the universe. We serve a living Savior and One who has absolute power and authority over all of God's universe. God the Father has now exalted the God-man Christ Jesus above all principalities, powers and at the name of Jesus every tongue shall confess and every knee shall bow to Him to the glory of God.

The main point Paul is making here about the Gospel is that Christ is the heart of the Gospel. There is no good news if Christ is not who He says He is and if Christ did not come into the world to do what He said He would do, and if Christ was not raised from the dead. Christ is the gospel.

What are some life applications from this summary of the Gospel?

Christians have a definite view of history. What controls history is God's plan of redemption which He promised from the beginning, which He fulfilled in His Son on earth, and by the application of redemption through the Holy Spirit. The history of the world for Christians has a beginning and an end. The beginning of history is the creation of the world. The end of history is when every tongue shall confess and every knee bow to Christ as Lord to the glory of God. As believers we see history as His Story with the central events as the Gospel events.

We should be optimistic about God's kingdom. Since Christ has all authority, as Christians we should have hope that God's kingdom will triumph over evil. We live in a world where on the surface evil seems to be ascending, but all power and authority is given to Christ, let's keep the faith and work towards extending the kingdom through the ministry of redemption. God has promised us victory over sin, Satan and evil. Let's believe it and live it.

THE GOSPEL IS INTENDED FOR THE WORLD (5-6)

This leads us to the third section of this passage – Paul's vision for the world. Verses 5 & 6: **“through whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;”**

“For obedience to the faith among all nations” This sounds like the Great Commission. This is Paul's version of the Great Commission, which is, **“Go make disciples of all the nations.”** Paul knew that the extent of God's redemptive plan was to bring redemption to all nations and that he had been called to have a part in this. Although Paul knew that he could only reach a relatively few number of people and touch a few nations by his own personal ministry, he nevertheless always kept the universal extent of God's plan in mind. This idea drove him to go to the farthest reaches of the known world with the Gospel. This is why he wanted to come to Rome, for he knew that God had called some in Rome to the obedience to the faith. And he knew that through the outreach of the Roman church many from other nations would come to believe.

If the church is to be a Gospel-driven church the church is always see its ministry as part of the world evangelization cause. “All nations” should be in our vision, not just those which are like us. This universal scope of God's kingdom should be a driving force in our plans and desires. As individuals we also should have a world vision. How, you may ask? Pray for the world. Take a continent a day and pray for some country and/or Christian ministry in that part of the world. Keep up with the work of God's kingdom in different parts of the world. There are many sources for this.

The Internet is a quick and easy way to get information. Develop a world vision.

THE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL

Finally, Paul gives his normal Christian blessing in verse 7: **“Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”**

Notice that Paul puts God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ both as the source of grace and peace. It is only through Jesus Christ as our Lord that we will know true peace and receive the full grace which God the Father has for us.

It is the Gospel that will bless the world. Let’s live it. Let’s proclaim it. Let’s understand it!

CONCLUSION

As we come to the close of the introduction to the letter of Romans, what is here for us? We have heard

Paul’s sense of call

Paul’s understanding of the gospel

Paul’s vision of obedience of all nations

Paul’s granting a blessing of God’s grace and peace

What message do you hear God speaking to you most clearly about this morning? Which area of your life do you need to give attention to?

Knowing whom you are serving – Christ or someone else.

Being a Gospel-driven person and a Gospel-driven Church

Knowing the heart of the Gospel is the living Christ.

Seeing history from God’s plan of redemption point of view

Being optimistic about the success of God’s kingdom

Having a vision for all nations in God’s plan of redemption

This is the Word of God to the Mt. Liberty congregation this morning. Let him who has ears hear and go forth in obedience.

Amen? Amen!