

“What is the Gospel?”  
Romans 1:1-4  
(Preached at Trinity, October 15, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We’ve been looking at Paul’s salutation to the Book of Romans. In these opening verses Paul gives us a lengthy description of himself and his calling.
  - A. First he identifies himself by name. This letter is from Paul.
  - B. Then he gives what he considered his chief characteristic.  
“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ” - The word for servant is **δοῦλος** – a slave or bond servant.
    1. This was Paul’s badge of honor. Paul saw himself as one who had been purchased by Christ. He had been conquered and captivated by Christ.
    2. In essence, Paul is describing himself as a Christian. Every Christian is a servant of Christ. Every Christian has been captivated by Christ. We throw ourselves at the feet of our Master. Paul saw this as his identity.
  - C. Paul’s next words describe his office and calling -  
**Romans 1:1** – “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle.
    1. Paul wanted his readers to be absolutely clear as to his apostolic calling. Many questioned the validity of Paul’s calling because he was not one of the twelve. He had not accompanied Christ during His earthly ministry.
    2. It was important that Paul affirm and validate His apostolic office because of the nature of the office. As I stated last week, the apostles were used of Christ as His mouthpiece. They spoke with authority. They had the authority to set forth doctrine.
    3. Writing as a apostle meant Paul was writing with the authority of Christ. This is not a mere human book. We know at the very beginning that this is the Word of God. It is a message from God to our hearts. We have to understand this from the very beginning. This Book carries, “Thus saith the Lord” from start to finish.
  - D. Paul then states the origin of his ministry.  
**Romans 1:1** – “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
    1. In his letter to the Galatians he further clarifies his meaning here.  
**Galatians 1:15** – “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,”
    2. God not only separated Paul unto salvation but He also separated Paul unto service. Long before he was called to be an Apostle God separated him for this work – he was foreordained to this office.
    3. God works in the lives of His people shaping them and preparing them for His use.
2. Paul adds another dimension to his opening statement.  
**Romans 1:1** – “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

- A. The Gospel is a key concept for Paul. Paul spends the next several verses describing this Gospel. The Book of Romans is a book that defines and outlines the Gospel.
  - B. What exactly is the Gospel of God? This is where many people go wrong.
3. We can find much meaning in the name itself  
**εὐαγγέλιον** – “good tidings” or “good news”
- A. It speaks to the kingdom of God being established
  - B. It is tied very closely to preaching – preaching is the proclamation of the Gospel  
**εὐαγγελίζω** – “to bring good news, to announce glad tidings  
**Romans 1:15** So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.
  - C. What then is this good news? What is the Gospel?
- I. It is a message foretold of old – **Verse 2**
- A. Paul refers to it as the “Gospel of God”
    - 1. The Gospel finds its source in God – it is rooted in God’s eternal purpose
    - 2. God is the Author of all things. All things exist by God. All things move by God. Paul preached in Athens:  
**Acts 17:28** – “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”
    - 3. The Gospel is God’s plan of reconciling sinners  
**2 Corinthians 5:18-19** – “And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”
    - 4. We should think of salvation in terms of the Father and His glory. He does all things for Himself.
  - B. The Gospel was promised by God from the beginning  
**Romans 1:2** – “Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures”
    - 1. God revealed the Gospel through the prophets – it would be best to interpret “prophets” here as all of the writers of the OT
    - 2. This, by the way, is why we call the Bible the “Holy Bible.” Paul uses the expression here and in his first epistle to Timothy
    - 3. This Gospel spoken of by the prophets has now been fulfilled
    - 4. We need to be clear that the Gospel is the fulfillment of the OT. The OT preaches the Gospel. There is harmony in God’s purpose from the beginning to the end. All things have been decreed by God from beginning to end.
  - C. The idea of the Gospel is seen two ways in Scripture
    - 1. Before the death of Christ it was understood as the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. It was a message of hope, a message promised by the prophets of old.

- a. This was the Gospel message preached by John the Baptist  
**Matthew 3:1-2** - “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, <sup>2</sup> And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
  - b. It was the focus of our Lord’s ministry. The first time the word is found in the Bible we find it with reference to our Lord.  
**Matthew 4:23** – “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”
2. After the death of Christ the word Gospel comprises the preaching of Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God.  
**Romans 1:4** – “And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:”
  3. The Gospel is the eternal plan of God for the salvation of His elect people  
**2 Timothy 1:8-10** – “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; <sup>9</sup> Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, <sup>10</sup> But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:”

## II. The Gospel concerns God’s Son – the Gospel *is* Christ

### **Romans 1:3** – “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord”

- A. The Gospel is a message that finds its embodiment in Christ
  1. Jesus is the focus of Paul’s message  
**1 Corinthians 2:2** – “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”
  2. Nothing else captivated Paul’s attention like Jesus Christ  
**2 Corinthians 5:14** – “For the love of Christ constraineth us
    - a. Paul uses the name Jesus 219 times in his epistles - 38 times in Romans
    - b. Paul uses the name Christ 391 times – 67 in Romans alone  
For many the name Christ is a title – it means the Anointed One or Messiah – Paul most often used it as a proper name which is why we so often refer to our Lord by using the name Christ.
  3. The Gospel states several realities about Christ

- B. Christ was born – He came  
**Romans 1:3** “made of the seed of David according to the flesh”
1. Paul stresses here the humanity of Christ  
 Jesus became man  
**Philippians 2:5-7** – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:”
  2. His humanity was essential for Him to be our Savior. He had to become like us in order to become our sin-bearer.
  3. Jesus was placed under the Law like every human being  
**Galatians 4:4** – “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,”
    - a. Every one of us have broken the law and are condemned  
**Romans 3:23** – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”
    - b. The second half of this first chapter declares just how wicked human beings are
    - c. Jesus Christ kept the law perfectly.  
**Hebrews 7:26** – “For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;”
  4. The righteous life of Christ is an essential element of the Gospel  
 He fulfilled the law thus qualifying Himself as our Savior
- C. The second element of the Gospel is that Jesus died  
 This is implied here by Paul’s reference to the Resurrection
1. All of humanity is condemned before God
    - a. This is Paul’s continued teaching in this letter  
**Romans 1:18** – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”
    - b. We have all been corrupted by the sin of our first father  
**Romans 5:12** – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”
  2. Jesus went to the cross in the place of sinners – He became our substitute
    - a. We are justified by His death – His righteousness is imputed to us  
 This will be one of the overarching themes of this book
    - b. Jesus is the head of His people just as Adam was our head  
**Romans 5:14-15** – “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. <sup>15</sup> But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

- D. The third element of the Gospel is the Resurrection
- Romans 1:4** – “And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:”
1. The Resurrection is one of the great pillars of the Gospel – Turn to 1 Cor. 15 - Listen carefully to Paul’s words
 

**1 Corinthians 15:1-4** – “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; <sup>2</sup> By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; <sup>4</sup> And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”

    - a. The Gospel is the source of life to sinners – it must be preached “wherein ye stand; <sup>2</sup> By which also ye are saved”
    - b. The Gospel is the message of Christ’s death and His resurrection. These are the two great pillars of the Gospel
  2. The Gospel does not end with our Lord’s humiliation – He has been raised in glory – He has ascended to the right hand of majesty.
    - a. Just as He descended in lowliness and humility He has now ascended in omnipotence and glory.
    - b. He was “declared *to be* the Son of God with power”

#### Conclusion:

1. The Gospel is Good News!  
Do you see it as the best news that has ever come into the world? If not you probably do not have an adequate understanding of sin. You do not have an adequate understanding of your guilt and condemnation.
2. The good news is that God has dealt with our sins. He has been merciful.  
The good news is you do not have to perish in your sins
3. Do you see your need of this good news? Do you see yourself as a guilty sinner?  
Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
4. If you repent of your sin and trust Christ He will save you!  
**Romans 1:16** – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”  
It is a tragedy to reject so great a salvation.