

The Gospel of God

Text: Romans 1:1-4

Introduction:

1. Place & Date of writing: From Corinth on Paul's 3rd missionary journey around 56 A.D.
2. Purpose of writing:
 - a. Romans is distinct from many of the other Epistles as there doesn't appear to be any pressing circumstances at the church in Rome that occasioned Paul's writing this Epistle to them. Rather than tackling a particular problem, Romans is more of a systematic thesis on the great doctrine of salvation.
 - b. "Theologians have always maintained that when it comes to studying systematic theology, the Book of Romans is, without question, THE most important book of the Bible." (Hester)
 - c. Paul is also clearly motivated by his personal interest in the church at Rome as mentioned in 1:13-15, 15:22-23
3. Theme & key verses
 - a. Central Theme: The Gospel (righteousness). The terms 'righteous', "righteousness" and "justify" are used at least 49 times
 - b. Key verses: 1:16-17
4. God has used this Epistle to ignite some of the greatest reformations and revivals in history. E.g. Luther & Wesley

I. The Calling of Paul for the Gospel (Vs. 1)

A. A Servant of Christ (1a)

1. 'Paul' = born around the same time as Christ; educated at the feet of Gamaliel the leading Jewish scholar of the time; a Pharisee of the Pharisees; a persecutor of believers; converted on the road to Damascus
2. 'servant' = bond slave. "The phrase connotes total devotion, suggesting that the servant is completely at the disposal of his or her Lord." (Moo)
3. Word also a title of honor. "Paul expresses both modesty and majesty." (Luther). E.g. to be a servant to a great King. O.T. usage of the word.

B. A Called Apostle (1b)

1. 'called' = Divine appointment
2. 'apostle'
 - a. General sense = one sent on a mission to represent another (Wuest). I.e. a missionary or ambassador. Is used in this general way at times in the N.T.

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- b. Specific sense = refers to the office of an apostle which was confined only to the 12 and to Paul. Predominant usage of the word in N.T.
- c. Paul establishes his credentials

C. A Set apart Vessel (1c)

- 1. 'separated' = means to mark off from other by boundaries, to appoint
- 2. Gal. 1:15-16 *"But when it pleased God, who **separated me from my mother's womb**, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen..."*
- 3. Acts 26:16-17 *"...the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and **to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God**, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*
- 4. 'gospel' = good news (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The object for which he was separated, to preach the Gospel (Hodge)
- 5. 'God' = the Divine origin.

II. The Certainty of the Gospel (Vs. 2)

A. Promised by God (2a)

- 1. "promised afore" = Paul clearly refutes the idea that the Gospel message he preached was something new (novel). "Paul draws a line of continuity." (Moo)
- 2. Titus 1:2 *"...God, that cannot lie..."*
- 3. Examples of O.T. prophecies:
 - a. Gen. 3:15 = the seed of the woman
 - b. Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 = sufferings of Messiah
 - c. Jeremiah 31:31-34 = the new covenant

B. Communicated through the Prophets (2b)

- 1. 'prophets' = the channel God used. Word includes all O.T. writers
- 2. "holy scriptures" = Paul's view of the O.T. It is inspired, sacred Scripture! authentication

III. The Theme of the Gospel (Vs. 3)

A. The Deity of the Son (3a)

- 1. "his Son" = the Son of God.
 - a. Vs. 4 "Son of God"
 - b. Christ is of the same nature as the Father. He is co-equal with the Father (Phil. 2:6)
 - c. Christ is the eternal Son. Since Christ is the Son of God, he cannot have a beginning like a human son. Since God is eternal, the Son must also be eternal.

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2. “Jesus Christ our Lord” = His personal title.
 - a. ‘Jesus’ = Saviour
 - b. ‘Christ’ = anointed one, Messiah
 - c. ‘Lord’ = sovereign Ruler

B. The Humanity of the Son (3b)

1. “made...according to the flesh” = reference to the incarnation when Christ took on human flesh. Word means ‘became’ (Refer Jn. 1:14)
2. “seed of David” = Davidic ancestry as prophesied. “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (Matt. 1:1)

IV. The Authentication of the Gospel (Vs. 4)

A. The witness of the resurrection (4a)

1. ‘declared’ = marked out (e.g. like a border, boundary), defined, proved, demonstrated to be. It means to point out or to limit. English word ‘horizon’ comes from this word
2. “Son of God” = He always was the Son of God but the resurrection was the crowning event of His earthly ministry which perfectly validated all His claims and mightily demonstrated His power.

B. The power of the resurrection (4b)

1. “in power” = His power was mightily manifested in the resurrection
2. Eph. 1:19-23

C. The seal of the resurrection (4c)

1. “according to the spirit of holiness”
2. Could refer to one of two things:
 - a. The sinless nature of Christ
 - b. The Holy Spirit – The resurrection is the Holy Spirit’s seal upon Christ. “*But if **the Spirit** of him that raised up Jesus from the dead...*” Rom. 8:11

D. The fact of the Resurrection (4d)

1. The resurrection is essential to the Christian faith - 1. Cor. 15:12-20
2. Luke 24:1-7 – Why seek ye the living among the dead?
3. “On this great fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul rests the truth of the Christian religion, without which the testimony of the Apostles would be false, and the faith of God’s people vain.” (Haldane)

Conclusion:

1. Have you experience the life changing power of the Gospel?
2. Are we ashamed of the Gospel?
3. Are we servants and messengers of the Gospel?