

THE GOSPEL CHANGES EVERYTHING

“What is the Gospel?”

Romans Series
PBC 2025

Text: Romans 1:1-7; Psalm 103:10-12

When we started our journey through Romans a few weeks ago, we observed that Paul was motivated by three significant purposes that shape the contours of this remarkable letter.

- 1. Theological Purpose:** Paul wanted them to understand the magnitude of the Gospel he was called to preach so that it would bear rich spiritual fruit in them (1:13; 15:15-21).
- 2. Missiological Purpose** – Paul wanted them to partner with him in spreading the gospel to the nations (1:14-15; 15:22-24).
- 3. Pastoral Purpose:** Paul wanted them to showcase the gospel's powerful transforming effect as a church (corporately – 15:5-7) and in their individual lives (individually – 12:1-2).

Ray Ortlund wrote a brief book about the gospel, *The Gospel: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ*, in which he powerfully observed: ***“Gospel doctrine creates a gospel culture.”*** In other words, when a church rightly understands and celebrates the truth of the gospel, it will experience and display a culture of grace that flows from the gospel and draws people to experience the beauty of Christ in the gospel.

If we want to be a church characterized by a culture of gospel grace and filled with individuals who, like Paul, are committed to proclaiming that gospel, ***we must truly understand the gospel Paul unpacks in Romans.***

I. The Gospel's Source and Character – God's Good News (1:1)

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

A. The Source of the Gospel

B. The Character of the Gospel (10:15)

*And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach **the good news!**"*

- The term Paul used in this remarkable text is "euangelizomenon" – translated in our text as "the good news."
- When the OT writers used this term, they did so to proclaim the joyous tidings and glorious news that **God was coming to act or intervene in some way to rescue or benefit His people.** Here are three key examples from Isaiah's prophecy about Christ:

Isaiah 40:9–11 *Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"* ¹⁰ *Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.* ¹¹ *He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.*

Isaiah 52:7–10 *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."* ⁸ *The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion.* ⁹ *Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people and redeemed Jerusalem.* ¹⁰ *The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

*Isaiah 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because **the LORD has anointed me to bring good news** to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.*

- The gospel is the good news that God is sending a champion to save the world for His glory! God sent this champion/messiah to reverse an ancient curse, redeem an ancient race, remove an ancient enemy, and restore all that sin ruined.

II. The Gospel's Witnesses – Promised in the Old Testament (1:2)

which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,

- Paul reminds his readers that God made promises about this gospel through His prophets, which are found in Israel's holy writings (OT).
- In other words, this good news is not new! The gospel Paul wants to bring to Rome fulfills the major promises God made to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15), Noah (Gen 9), Abraham (Gen 15, 22), and David (2 Samuel 7).
- The gospel of God is the joyful announcement that the arrival of Jesus Christ changes everything!!

III. The Gospel's Content – Centered on Jesus (1:3-4)

concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

A. He was made of the Seed of David at His incarnation.

B. He was appointed/designated the Son of God in Power at His resurrection as the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth.

- After the resurrection, Jesus was exalted to the former glory that was His as the second member of the Trinity – but with three significant differences:
1. He would forever be embodied as Jesus of Nazareth, the God-Man in a glorified body.
 2. When the Holy Spirit raised Him at His resurrection, He was formally appointed to the Messianic Kingship promised by His Father in Psalm 2!
 3. As the appointed Son of God in power, He inaugurated a new and better age—the age of grace and the Spirit of holiness—that will culminate in His establishment of a glorious, eternal kingdom on earth, marked by righteousness, flavored with peace, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and made accessible by grace!

C. He was made the Head of a Community –Jesus Christ Our Lord

IV. The Gospel's Demand – to bring about the obedience of faith (1:5a)

through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith

- Theologians and commentators are divided as to what exactly Paul means when he describes the demand the gospel places on people as “the obedience of faith.”
- Some theologians believe that Paul means the gospel calls for a faith that produces an obedient life.
- Others claim the gospel calls for a specific type of obedience—wholehearted, single-minded, and fully trusting faith.

- What proof is there that this kind of faith exists in a person? It produces a life of obedience!
- Are there any people on this planet who have achieved this?
- Answer – You are the undeniable proof!

Which brings us to the question, “Why would Paul spend his entire life proclaiming the gospel to people he formerly despised? Why would he labor and suffer as he did to bring gentile pagans to the knowledge of God? Why did Paul do what he did?

V. The Gospel’s Goal and Effect (1:5-7)

A. A Glorious Goal: for the honor of God’s name (1:5-6)

for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

B. A Life-changing Effect – Grace and Peace (1:7)

To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Grace** – enablement, strength, and sustaining favor from God through the Holy Spirit.
- **Peace** – more than outer calm, lack of conflict or anxiety. Peace is a full-orbed, robust, joy-filled, unshakeable contentment and harmony with God and others regardless of circumstances.

Conclusion: Responding to the Gospel

At the beginning of the message, we noted that understanding the truth of the gospel is essential to forming a culture of gospel grace in our lives and in our congregations, but it is not enough to sustain it over time.

Maintaining a culture of gospel grace requires that we experience the grace of the gospel personally and renew ourselves in that grace regularly.

If the gospel of God changes everything—if it is how God saves the world—has the Gospel saved you? And, equally importantly, is it transforming you into a person who thinks as Jesus thinks, values what He values, and responds to life, circumstances, and people as He did?

1. Do you understand the Gospel clearly?
2. Do you believe the Gospel truly?
3. Have you obeyed the Gospel personally?
4. Are you enjoying the Gospel daily?
5. Are you displaying the Gospel attractively?
6. Are you sharing the Gospel regularly?

Jonathan Edward contemplated the greatness of Christ and the true satisfaction that comes from being united to him this way:

What is there that you could desire in a Savior that is not in Christ? What is there that is not great or good, what is there that is venerable or winning, what is there that is adorable or endearing, or what can you think of that would be encouraging which is not to be found in the person of Christ? Would you have your Savior to be great and honorable, because you are unwilling to beholden to a low person? And is not Christ honorable enough to be worthy that you should depend on him? Is he not high enough to be appointed to so honorable a work as your salvation? Would you not only have a Savior of high degree, but would you have him to be made of low degree that he might experience afflictions and trials that he might, by the things he has suffered, pity those who suffer and are tempted? Has Christ not been made low enough for you? Has he not suffered enough? What is there lacking, or what would you add if you could, to make Christ more fit to be your Savior?