



**The Only Gospel**

February 10, 2019

Romans 1:2-4

Clint Pressley

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup> 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.

(Pastor prays)

One of the hallmarks of what it means to be American—and what I think what it means to be Christian— is to believe in the freedom of religion; to be able to worship God as each man or woman sees fit without being harassed or persecuted or penalized. And although Freedom of Religion is a primary thread in the fabric of what it means to be an American, there are signs that the fabric of that freedom is wearing thin. Especially for those of us who believe the Bible and, more pointedly, for those of us who believe the book of Romans.

Here, in the introduction, Paul writes to a small church planted in a pagan empire, a city where spirituality was smiled upon but Christianity was hated... A city where babies were sacrificed and sexuality was fluid... A society that sounds oddly similar to our own. And into the confusing morass of sensuality and sin, Paul writes about the Gospel of God that is so counter-cultural and so revolutionary, that it would be another 300 years before it was even legal.

It's why I think now is the right time to dive into this book so that we might be strengthened and encouraged and equipped for what we are certain to face in the days ahead, trusting that Jesus Christ our God will carry us through. We don't cling to a social gospel, a prosperity gospel,

or a white or black gospel; we cling to what Paul calls the Gospel of God. And in this section of Romans one, Paul explains to us what the Gospel of God is and why we must cling to it. My hope is that the Holy Spirit will bring you to faith in Jesus today so that you might stand on the solid rock of the Gospel of God.

## The Gospel of God is the Only Gospel that Saves

The Gospel of God in Always from the Bible

It's why I do the kind of preaching that I do, expository. I read the Bible and teach it. It's why it can sometimes feel like a Bible study because that is the surest way to know that you are hearing from God and not some preacher's opinion or politics. Notice with me what Paul says in verse 2 about the Gospel of God. We will read the verse, and then we can interact with it.

<sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,

God keeps his promises. We see it in verse 2 where He, that's God, He promised that the Gospel would come. And He did so in the Bible. In fact, it's safe to say that the whole Bible is a prophecy promise and precept pointing to the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. From Genesis 3:15, we see the seed of the woman is against the serpent. There has been a promise that a hero Savior was coming. It's not only promised but pictured in the Old Testament sacrificial system that reminds God's people that the wages of sin is death but that God would accept a blood sacrifice as an acceptable substitution. The Bible is centered on the cross and points us to the cross of Christ.

In Genesis 22, the story of Abraham and Isaac, as Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, God provided the ram caught in a thicket to be sacrificed in Isaac's place. This is pointing us to Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God who was willingly sacrificed for the undeserving. This Gospel, according to verse 2, was promised beforehand in the prophets. In verse 2, the prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Daniel, and Moses, they are called “his prophets”, men who belong to God. The Bible points us to Christ as God's fulfilment of His unchanging purpose and plan, His gift to save sinners. It is promised in the prophets, pictured in the sacrificial system, and pointed to by Isaiah in Isaiah 53 when he speaks of the suffering servant who was wounded for our transgressions.

In verse 2, Paul is telling us that the new work of the Gospel is the old plan of God. In Luke 24, when Jesus was raised from the dead, the resurrected Lord met two disciples on the road to

Emmaus as they were struggling with the crucifixion of Jesus. Remember the scene in Luke 24:25 - 27. <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. This book is God's promise to His people. In fact, you see it there at the end of verse 2. He promised through His prophets in the holy scriptures. That phrase - holy scriptures - is used only here in Paul's writing. It is his view of the Bible. God saw fit to have prophets write down what He has revealed. They are the holy writings for a holy God pointing us to holy Savior so we can live holy lives.

You will also notice the timing of the Gospel of God. He promised it beforehand. John MacArthur says there are more than 300 prophecies about the coming of Jesus written several 100 years beforehand. And some Christians trust the weatherman Brad Panovich more than they do the Bible. If Brad says "snow", you people lose your minds! All of this to say that God keeps His promises. God's timing is perfect. God's word points us to His Gospel.

The Gospel is not only believing in Jesus and being saved and now you're done with the Gospel. The Gospel comes into every part of your life. You speak the Gospel to every aspect, every trouble, every bout of depression; you bring the Gospel into your life and the Gospel of God is always from the Bible.

The Gospel of God is Always About Jesus

You see that in verses 3 - 4, which many believe was an early Christian creed describing the full humanity and full deity of Christ. Donald Grey Barnhouse said if you master verses 3 - 4 then you will understand the Christ of the Bible and that if you don't, you are in danger of another gospel.

Let's take it apart. Let's look at the part concerning His son. Christ is the center and means of salvation and of Christianity. Without Christ there is no Gospel. He is descended from David. Twelve times in the gospels Jesus is called the "son of David." In fact the New Testament begins in Matthew calling Jesus the son of David and ends in Revelation 22 calling Him the son of David. He is the son of David in weakness and the son of God in power. Through Mary he is the son of David by birth; through Joseph he is the son of David by adoption. When blind Bartimaeus wanted sight, he yelled out, "son of David have mercy on me." And mercy is what

He can give us as the son of David according to the flesh. Jesus in His fleshly life shared His life with all humanity so that He might identify with fallen man yet without sin. Hebrews 4: 15 says, <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. He became a man who could die for all men. That's His humanity.

Now in verse 4 let's take it all together. He was declared to be the son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead. Start with the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead changed everything about life and faith and religion. Let's get technical a moment. You see the word "declared" or "appointed." It's the word *horion*. It's where we get our English word horizon. It's a boundary. The horizon sets apart the earth and sky. So what Paul is saying here is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ clearly marked Him out as the eternal son of God. Furthermore, the Gospel cannot be understood or believed without the person of Christ whose resurrection ushers in a new age of redemption. By His resurrection from the dead, Jesus shows His victory over the penalty of sin and the pain of dying. In verse 4 He is the son of God in power. He has the power to change, heal, convict, and to save. His love has no limit. His forgiveness has no end and His power has no equal. He has the power to change sinners into saints and He does that through His dying on the cross and His resurrection.

Verse 4 ends with an exclamation point about Jesus. Jesus Christ our Lord. Let's close by looking at that title of Jesus. "Jesus" is actually an Old Testament name that comes from the name "Joshua" which means "saves." Joshua would lead God's people into the promised land. Jesus would be the perfect and better Joshua leading us into the promised land. Joseph would be approached by the Angel and the Angel told Joseph "you name that boy 'Jesus' because He will save His people from their sins." Jesus came to save you from your sins.

The next word of the title is the word "Christ." Jesus Christ. Christ is nothing more than the Greek word for the Hebrew idea of Messiah, "the anointed one," the one descended from David. Why David? Because David was the ideal king pointing us to the real King, King Jesus.

Paul's favorite word for Jesus is "Christ" because Jesus Christ is uniquely God's promised savior and He reigns eternally on the throne. Jesus Christ.

You'll see that third word in the title in verse 4 is the word "Lord." Lord. This is something that we as a revivalistic people sometimes struggle with because we want to see people receive Jesus as savior. And often, we press them to receive Jesus as savior before they come to grips with what it means to have Him as Lord. And sometimes it can come off as trying to get people to get the fire insurance of having Jesus as savior, but that fire insurance policy is no good if He's not Lord. Jesus is Lord.

That word Lord is reminding us that it is utter nonsense to think that you can claim Jesus as savior and not love Him as Lord. In fact, I'll just call your attention one more time to that last title. You see in the statement that Paul makes there is a little plural possessive word. Verse 4 says, Jesus Christ our Lord. My Lord, personally. You see when we declare Jesus Christ is Lord, He is Lord reigning eternally. But the question is, "Is He your Lord saving you personally?" He is reigning eternally but has He saved you personally?

You see the Gospel of God is the only Gospel that saves and it is always from the Bible. It's always centered on Jesus and it is always declaring Jesus Christ is Lord. Turn from your sin today and by faith come receive Him as savior and Lord.

(Pastor prays)

