

Romans
Message Five
The Gospel Which Had Been Promised, pt.2
Rom 1:1-7

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)
3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made 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 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all
nations, for his name:
6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:
7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from
God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. KJV

Introduction:

We continue our study today of the Promised Gospel that we began last week.

One of the obvious things about this letter is that Paul wasted no time in niceties before introducing his topic - The Gospel of God. There is a message, sent by God Himself, a message that He Himself has communicated using human agents whom He used to proclaim this information in the form of a promise concerning an event future to themselves but realized during the lifetimes of Paul and the people to whom he spoke and wrote.

Make not mistake, what Paul has written down in this letter is the Gospel of God.

As we go along I hope you will pay attention to how he built the case because you need to build the same case, in the same way, to yourself and to everyone with whom you discuss it. This is the best formulation of ideas to express it, if not explain it, that has ever existed.

It is not some free-form art project in which everyone paints his own picture in whatever way he pleases. This is a logical construction moving very precisely from one established point to the next until we get to a series of conclusions in chapter 8. I am going to fudge ahead to them for the purpose of the message this morning, knowing that you will not mind rehashing them when we get there.

Romans 8

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,

The Gospel is a message of the complete and total removal of all condemnation eternally for those who are made a part of the Work of it.

who walk not (do not live) after (according to) the flesh (their natural and sinful tendencies), but (they live) after (according to) the Spirit (of God Who leads them to behave righteously).

The eradication of guilt and the living in righteousness are twin issues, one never existing without the other.

- 2 They have been set free from the Law of Sin and Death (described in chapter 7 - “I find then a law that when I would do good evil is present with me” v.21)
- 3 This was done by and through Jesus Christ dealing once and forever with sin.
- 4 The righteousness of God’s Law is fulfilled in them (those who live according to the Spirit and not the Flesh)
- 9 The Spirit of God dwells in them.
- 10 Christ is in them.
- 11 The Spirit of God works life, spiritual life, in their physical bodies.
- 12-14 They are not bound as debtors and slaves to sin but are effectively led by the Spirit of God, they are Sons of God.
- 26-27 The Indwelling Spirit helps them to pray.
- 28-39 God has orchestrated and supervised the entire process so that they can never be lost nor fall into condemnation ever again.

This is the picture he will ultimately paint, the argument he will make, how God has arranged to have to Himself a holy people and has made all of the plans effective so that his purpose will be carried out. He has secured it by an elaborate series of events in which His Son, Jesus Christ, has played an necessary, vital and pivotal role.

Paul sets about to paint this picture very deliberately.

----- Parenthesis -----

Imagine, if you will, a painter working on a project. He searches until he finds the whitest canvass he can and then takes the brightest white paint he can to paint a background. Next, he very carefully and deliberately paints a picture of a beautiful white cat using the same paint. As you stand in front of it, after he is finished, someone asks you, “now isn’t that a beautiful cat?” You reply, “I don’t know, I can see that the cat’s eyes are blue but I cannot make out the rest of

it.”

This is the problem when there is not contrast between the background and the object being painted. It is the same problem trying to paint the gospel against a background where sin is not portrayed in its awful colors.

Artists know that one cannot do what I described. Paul knew the same thing about painting the picture of the gospel. A message of good news stands out most clearly against a backdrop of horrible realities. Most of us here were not alive when the news broke that WWII was over but those who were there know how profoundly grateful they were to hear the report. The War had been awful and peace was a bright reality almost too beautiful to believe.

The whole story must be told in order for the final picture to make sense.

----- End Parenthesis -----

The story will begin in 1:18

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”

Which contrasts perfectly with 8:1

“...There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...”

This God Who is full with wrath against ungodliness is the very same God Who is the source of the Gospel and the One Who sent the promises by His servants the prophets.

Paul described this God in our opening text.

I am reminded here of two things I think of whenever someone tells me about a promise. “What is promised.... and who made the promise? Both of those things are really important because they make all the difference when a promise is concerned.

It seems that every week I get a message containing some version of a promise. There is a person somewhere (widow of a wealthy man, a bank trustee, or a government official) and they have been left in charge of a huge sum of money and they want to gift it to me. They are usually very specific about the amount of money... several million dollars. But I know from the outset that the person making the promise is a thief and a liar.... therefore the promise means nothing at all.

The promise that Paul is talking about is the Gospel and it has been affirmed and confirmed by not one other than God Himself.

Concerning God, Paul makes some very specific statements about Him in this passage and now that we have looked at the thing that has been promised, let us look at the One Who has Promised.

First, Paul referenced ‘God’ in the phrase, “the gospel of God,” but it quickly became obvious that by this he meant ‘the Father’ because Jesus, in v.3, is called “His Son.”

This is the same vein in which Jesus used it in John 3:16, “God Who Loved the world” is the same person who “sent His Only Begotten Son.”

This is the standard usage of the name “God” in the New Testament. It almost always means “the Father.” Notice these examples.

John 1:1-2

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 The same was in the beginning with God. KJV

Heb 1:1-2

- 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
- 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; KJV

We must notice that there is no tension between the Persons of the Trinity concerning the gospel.

The gospel of God, v.1

The gospel of His Son, v.9

The gospel of Christ, 1:16

The gospel of peace, 10:15

All are one and the same thing. The Deity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are and always have been in perfect harmony and agreement on this matter.

There is an ancient error which has affected Christianity since almost the very beginning of the publication of the gospel message. It pictures the Father as being remote, stern, harsh, judgmental and unapproachable. He must be pleaded with by the Son and others, begged to be merciful to mankind, even those who believe on Him.

Some propose that Mary has a special inside relationship with Him so that praying to her and her petitioning Him for us gets better results than us praying on our own. The basis of this is the idea of this remote Deity Who must have intermediate figures interact with Him on our behalf.

Originally, this was introduced into Christian thought by Greek Gnosticism. In it, the Deity is not approachable by creatures such as ourselves. He created, they say, an ‘in between’ being, mostly Deity but more like us and in some ways a creature like us. Their idea was that God is too Holy, too Perfect, too much Different than man to interact directly with him, so this intermediate being was created. In Christian Gnosticism he was called ‘The Logos.’

But God is not remote as Paul shows us. He has interacted with mankind from the beginning. It was God Who walked with Adam in the cool of the day, Who made clothes for the two after their sin, Who received Abel’s sacrifice, Who rebuked Cain and Who interacted with Noah, calling him into the ministry and preserving him and his family through the flood.

He is the **One** Who called Abraham, called Moses and then did all those wonderful works through him.

He made the Promise of the Gospel through the prophets and then kept it in sending Jesus, His Son, to be our Savior. The Father is the Loving God Who spoke from heaven at Jesus' baptism, "This is My Beloved Son, hear ye Him."

Remember that Jesus taught us to pray saying, "Our Father, Who is in heaven..." and then assured us that He *would* hear our prayers.

Matt 7:7-11

- 7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
- 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
- 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?
- 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?
- 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, **how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?** KJV

So, God, the Father, is not a remote and distant Being Who only hears us through agents holier than ourselves and closer to Him. It is true that the other Two Persons of the Trinity are involved in our prayers but the Father is as near us as either of them for they operate as One.

Then, Paul mentioned Jesus Christ, if you will notice, by name and title three times in the first four verses and five times in the first seven.

There is no question but that Jesus was the center of his message. It is interesting to notice that in spite of all the mentions here Paul referenced His incarnation and His resurrection but not the Cross directly. He mentioned His death only in terms of His resurrection.

Jesus Christ is spoken of:

- As Paul's master, v.1, Paul is bonds slave to Christ.
- As the Fulfillment of God's Promises, v.2.
- As The Descendant and Heir of David, v.3.
- As the Declares Son of God, risen from the dead, v.4.
- As the Savior and Sender of Paul, v.5.
- As the One Who calls saints to Himself, v.6.
- As the Co-Equal of the Father, the author of Grace and Peace, the Love of the saints, v.7.

The Person of Christ has been under assault since He came on the stage of human history. No one was wanted to believe that a single individual can be both a real human born into David's bloodline and the Son of God with all of the power that name suggests, at the same time.

But that is exactly what is affirmed in scripture from the announcement to Mary and Joseph to the final words of the book of Revelation. He is revealed as fully man and fully God.

Men have rejected such a thought as preposterous. To the Greeks it was particularly offensive for they believed the only purity to be spiritual, that physical things, including the human body, were tainted with corruption beyond remedy. Their entire philosophy was built on this notion so believing in Jesus as Deity in human flesh was almost impossible for them.

----- Parenthesis -----

You will notice that God did not ‘tailor’ the sending of Jesus to be compatible with the cultures to whom He sent Him.

1 Cor 1:21-24

- 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.
- 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:
- 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
- 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. KJV

We would do well to pay attention and not try to do what God refused to do.

----- End Parenthesis -----

So, we have so far the Father, designated as ‘God,’ and Jesus, the Son of God, man and heir of David but also risen from the dead and affirmed as the Son of God by the Spirit of Holiness - the Holy Spirit.

Let me say before we leave this topic that there are those who say that this probes Jesus did not start out as the Son of God but became the Son in the Resurrection by the declaration of the Spirit. But this only states that the Spirit acknowledge Him as the Son of God in that event. He had already been revealed as such.

Matt 16:13-17

- 13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?
- 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.
- 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?
- 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.
- 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. KJV

The Father reveals things to men by His Holy Spirit so the Spirit had already revealed to Peter and to others than Jesus was and had always been the Son of God. The declaration at the Resurrection was simply one more of those revelations. It did not change His essence.

Then Paul mentioned the Holy Spirit, Who is one of the most misunderstood Persons of the Deity.

First of all, He is a Person. We could take hours and study how He is described as having all of the attributes of (1) personhood and (2) Deity but we do not have the time.

He has elected, with the agreement of the Father and the Son, that He would not speak of Himself except for what is absolutely necessary for full revelation.

John 15:26-27

- 26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:
27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

John 16:13-14

- 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. KJV

The Spirit testifies of Christ, not Himself, and motivates Christ's servants to serve Him.

The Spirit has taken to Himself the secret things of God... conviction of sin... repentance... regeneration.... perseverance.... Faithfulness... and all of those millions of invisible things He does to care for the people of God. He is the unnoticeable Carrier of our prayers to God. But how big is that?

So, this is Who has Promised - God Who will fulfill His promises in the most exact way imaginable.

We have seen What He Has Promised - Real and Eternal Salvation.

So, what are the terms of the Promise?

Luke 6:47-48

- 47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:
48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. KJV

John 6:35-37

- 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.
37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will

in no wise cast out. KJV

It is to Come to Christ, to Hear and Believe Him, and Obey His teachings.

And, what are His teachings, His sayings?

Repent

Believe

Take up His Cross

Follow Him

What an amazing thing this is. We all stand, every moment, on the brink of eternity. Our sinful condition is revealed by God and our consciences agree.

God has made a promise and He will keep it, all who come to Christ in the way He has described will be saved, they will not perish.... Yet men will not come to Him.

John 5:39-40

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. KJV

Will you Come to Him?