

# The Gospel for Everyone

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[ 0 : 00 ] Romans 1-17 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him and for his name's sake we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith, and you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints, grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith has been reported all over the world.

God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times, and I pray that now at last, by God's will, the way may be opened for me to come to you.

I long to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong, that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you, but have been prevented from doing so until now, in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

[ 1 : 53 ] I am bound both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith.

Thanks very much, Thirsty, for that. So please keep your Bibles open. Thank you. At Romans chapter 1. I do have, which I will leave at the back afterwards, which is really just an outline of what we are going to be looking at over the next lot of months, next lot of weeks, not months, and we will be picking it up again in the new year, from chapter 5.

So there are those, and if you want your own copy, if there is not enough, I can email it to you. I will not give it to you now, because you will only read it, and you won't listen to me, so collect them afterwards. Please.

So we're starting into a new series, Romans chapter 1. I guess the big heading that we're giving of Romans 1 to 4 is the Gospel Explained, and we're going to get into the very heart of that in just a moment.

[ 3 : 20 ] But before we do, we're going to pray and ask for God's help for us all. So let's pray together. I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

Father, we thank you for your Gospel. We thank you for its great power. And we pray that by your Holy Spirit, that power would be evident amongst us today, in our own lives individually, and together as a church, changing us and transforming us to be the people you have called us to be. We pray for us, that we may better understand your word and the good news of your Gospel, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Well, we're going to start with a quiz this morning. And because we are on holidays in Germany, I thought I'd give a little bit of a German theme to it.

So you've kind of got to think German, things German in this. Okay, so the first one is sport. All right. What do Podolsky, Schweinsteiger, and Klose have in common?

[ 4 : 51 ] Who said that? Well done. Well done. Top of the class. Food, right? What do Bratwurst, Currywurst, and Frankfurter have in common?

Oh, well done. Here's a geography one. What do the Zugspitze, the Hotkelter, and the Großer Hundstöd have in common? Oh, you're very clever.

This is leisure. What do Weiss, Helles, and Dunkel have in common? Deer. Spot all the students in the Lagerl out there. Hmm?

Okay. This hasn't anything to do now with Germany. Just a general question. What do a committed Christian, a convicted criminal, and a convinced atheist have in common?

A committed Christian, a convicted criminal, or a convicted criminal, and a convinced atheist. What do they have in common? They need the gospel. Hmm? They need the gospel.

[ 5 : 53 ] Well done, Sarah. The gospel is for everyone, whether we are religious or irreligious. Everybody needs the gospel.

Look at verse 1 of Romans. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.

So he's been set apart, but who is this gospel for? Well, he tells us in verse 5. He says, Now, we can accept that, can't we?

We can kind of think, yep, the gospel is for those who are not believers. Those are the Gentiles.

The people who are out there. The people who don't go to church and who don't read their Bibles.

That's who the gospel is for, isn't it? But look at verse 15. He says, I am eager to preach the gospel also to you.

[ 7 : 07 ] They were the Christians who were at Rome. I want to preach the gospel to you as well. You see, the gospel is also for Christians, for believers. And that's the big surprise.

It's not just for bad people. It's also for those who think they are good. It's for those who go to church and who read their Bibles. They need the gospel just as much as everybody else.

As he makes it crystal clear in verse 16, he says, I'm not ashamed of this gospel. Because it's the power of God for the salvation of everyone. Whether you are a committed Christian or a convinced atheist, there is not one person in this room, speaker included, who does not need the gospel.

Whether you're Irish or German, a believer or a non-believer, moral or immoral, this is a universal need. And the big question we need to ask at the very beginning of our studies is, what is this gospel?

Why does everybody need it? It's such a common term that we come across in the Bible. What is the gospel? Well, simply, the gospel means good news. Think of it this way.

[ 8 : 25 ] In the past, when kings conquered lands and people, they, after their great victories, they would appoint an evangel. Literally somebody who would bring the good news from the king to the people.

And you could imagine his message would go something like this. He would go and stand up in the town square, up high with his scroll, and he would read his message, the king has won a great victory for you.

You have now been rescued and set free. You have been liberated from your oppressor. Roll his scroll up and off he'd go. So there was this great message from the king to the people.

Literally, it was the gospel. It was good news. And that's what gospel means. It's just good news about a great rescue. So in verse 9 we read that Paul, he says, God whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his son.

So Paul is also an evangel. He has been appointed by God to announce the good news, literally the gospel to all people.

[ 9 : 39 ] The good news that the Lord Jesus Christ, the ultimate king, the true king, has won a great victory for us. Not by weapons and brute force, but through his death on the cross.

Through the planned death of Jesus, the punishment that we deserve for rebelling against our king has all been taken by Jesus so that we can be set free to live under his loving and caring rule.

This is what Paul had been appointed to do, to announce, to preach this gospel. But what makes this gospel particularly good news is that it is news that has been done for you.

This is a victory that has been achieved for you by someone else, but is ours to enjoy and celebrate. And that's what makes it good news.

It's not about what you can do to get it, but it's what has been done for you by Jesus on the cross, on our behalf. So this gospel is good news.

[10:51] And it's not just good news, it's powerful good news. Look at verse 16. He says, For I am not ashamed of this gospel, because it is the power of God.

Now let's ask this question, what does God's power look like? If God's power were to show up right now in this room, what would you expect to see?

Maybe the room would start shaking. That would be pretty powerful, wouldn't it? It would be scary too as things started falling off the wall. Maybe you would expect if God's power came, there would be something miraculous.

Maybe there would be some healings going on. That would be powerful. Or maybe it might be something very personal to you, and there would be a change in your circumstances.

You'd be given a brand new job, or things that were really difficult have all gone away. That would be powerful. But look what the verse says.

[11:59] It says, The gospel is the power of God. God's power is contained contained in the gospel.

The gospel isn't just a demonstration of God's power. If the room started shaking, that would be a demonstration of his power. But it's saying that the gospel is God's power.

So when this good news is being announced and being preached that Jesus Christ has come to rescue us and set us free, that's where God's power is seen to be active.

That means right now, as we talk about this gospel, as we begin to open it up, God's power is actually present and is at work right now in my life and in your life.

It's dynamite. That's what that word means, power. That's where we get the word dynamite from. It's explosive. It has an effect. It can't not have an effect in people.

[13:07] It changes us and it transforms us and it brings us the salvation that we all desperately need. So it's good news, but it is powerful good news.

So what does this message contain? What's in it? Well, it's all about Jesus Christ. Look back at verse 2.

He says, the gospel that he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his son.

The gospel is primarily all about Jesus Christ, God's son. it's not about me and it's not about you and it's not about denominations and it's not about traditions.

It's not about a list of things we can't do or what we can do. It's all about a person. It's all about Jesus Christ. But who is he?

[14:14] Well, look at verse 3. It says there, who as to his human nature. nature. It's reminding us that he does have another nature as well.

There was never a time when Jesus was not. Jesus is eternal. He's divine. He was from the beginning. But as to his human nature, he was a descendant of David.

David. He became like one of us. The great God who created the universe, who's in control of all things, became like one of us.

A human being with legs and arms, just like you and I, and entered into this world. A descendant of David. He could trace his family line all the way right back to that great king, David.

Jesus was in the line of royalty. Verse 4, and who through the spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the son of God by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

[15:32] Now we could read that and get a little confused and think that suddenly somehow Jesus became the son of God, but Jesus always has been the son of God. But his coming to earth, and I think what this verse is saying to us is that when he came to earth, he took on a new role.

And his resurrection from the dead proves that he has the power to fulfil this role. And his role is summed up in that very last phrase of verse 4, Jesus Christ our Lord.

These are both titles telling us about Jesus. Christ and Lord tell us who he is and what he will do. Christ is the Messiah, this long awaited saving king.

Lord is the eternal ruling and sovereign king. So this Jesus has come both to save and to judge and he has the power to do it because it has been proved by his resurrection from the dead.

So Jesus is our saving king and he's our sovereign king, not just of us or just the religious people. He's king of everyone.

[16:53] And that's why it is essential that we deal with this Jesus because he has the power both to save us and to judge us. we've got to make up our minds and think, is what's written here absolute hogwash and a nonsense and just silly talk?

Or is it actually true? And if it is true and he is king, what are we going to do with him? Because he demands that he rules over our lives.

He demands that he is the one who can save us and to ignore him as we'll discover in the coming weeks is really disastrous. So it's all about the person of Jesus Christ.

But the second thing I think at the heart of the gospel is that it's all about Jesus who saves. As verse 16 tells us, have a look at verse 16 again. He says, I'm not ashamed of this gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone.

The gospel is not just advice to people. It's not a good living guide. Sometimes people treat it and they think of it, well it's advice about how to live, what to do in this situation.

[18:13] Kind of flick open your Bible and, well, I don't know what to do about my exams. Flick it open and see what it has to do. It's got some kind of advice to help you. Or if you're in a difficult situation.

Or maybe people see it as a helpful system for those who are weak and vulnerable, but if you're strong you don't need it. It's not just advice.

And it's not just for the enthusiastic religious people who like reading their Bibles. No, it tells us that it is God's power to save everyone.

And how does it save? Well, look at verse 17. It tells us that in the gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed.

That's what's in the gospel. You open it up and it's got a righteousness from God. What's all that about? Well, let me try and explain.

[19:17] I don't think there's any of us here who have ever treated Jesus the way he ought to be treated. We don't treat him as if he is the true king.

Rather than serve him, we serve ourselves. We're always on the lookout for ourselves and what's good for me. And instead of seeking his fame, we promote ourselves.

We live as if we are God and king, and that this is my world to do whatever I want to do with my money and my time and my possessions. it never occurs to us that we're not at the centre of the universe.

Now the Bible's word for this kind of living is unrighteousness. It's saying that we're in opposition to God, that we don't have right standing with God.

And to face God as we are, like that, would be horrific. We would be left open to his judgment and that would be terrible. We wouldn't be able to stand.

[20:22] But look what it says in verse 17. It says, but in the gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed. It's telling us that Jesus can deal with the problem of rebellion.

He can deal with our deserved judgment. He gives us, literally, he gives us his own righteousness. There's a great exchange that takes place.

He takes our unrighteousness on himself and he places his righteousness on us. So he gives us right standing and favour with God.

It brings us salvation. It radically changes us from the inside out. It makes us brand new people to live a completely different way. And all of this will happen as we will see through the death of Jesus on the cross.

So it's all about a person, Jesus Christ, it's all about his salvation. But how do we actually get it? How do people actually take this in for themselves?

[21:28] Well, look back at verse 16 again. He says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

God for God for mankind. He says, it's true. Plenty of people can believe something it's true.

But the word believe here means to trust or to have faith in something. It's to entrust your whole life to it. If you were sick and I gave you a little bottle of medicine and I said, if you take this it's going to help you it's going to cure you you could look at it and say yes i believe it i believe that it says it's going to do what it says it's going to heal me it's going to make me better but lots of people can believe it but never take it if you were to take the medicine you were to entrust yourself to it and this is the kind of idea that we have here in belief belief means to have trust or faith to give your life to it as verse 17 says the second part a righteousness that is by faith from first to last from the very

beginning to the very end it's all about faith just as it's written the righteous will live by faith now there's something profoundly simple about that but yet it's so difficult to grasp and here's why it's so simple there's nothing we can do to get this salvation because it's already been done for us by jesus on the cross it's all been done for you that's the message of the gospel it's a gift that you receive by faith that you take in for yourself complete trust not in your own performance but the perfect performance of jesus it's so easy it's so simple you've just got to take it but here's why it's so difficult to grasp every system every religious belief every culture that we come from teaches that if you want something you've got to do something to earn it and that's what makes christianity and the gospel so unique there's absolutely nothing we can do it shatters the whole notion that if we want something we must earn it but with the gospel this righteousness from god it comes by faith and that troubles people because they all want to do something they all want to say well look at me and look at what i've done but no it's all by faith now if we begin to take this gospel on board into our lives it's going to have a radical impact it's going to turn us upside down no longer is it just words on a page and no longer is it just kind of talk but it's actually going to begin to change us and transform us and i think there's two things here that are brought out that it's going to do to us first of all the impact of the gospel in our lives is it's going to lead to a global mission we've already said that the gospel is universal it's for everyone there is no one on this planet to whom this does not apply and it's god's desire to see that this gospel the good news about jesus is passed on that it's spread and that's what we have in verse one paul who's been set apart for the gospel of god he's been called he was converted he was changed he was given the gospel and verse nine says he that he wants to be the servant of the gospel he wants to preach it in verse 15 he's so eager to preach it but it seems now that he wants to go to other people who have not heard this good news have a flick over keep your finger in chapter one and go to romans chapter 15 and verse 20 this really these couple of verses here really help us to understand why he actually wrote the book of romans wrote the letter so in chapter 15 verse 20 this is paul he says it has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where christ was not known now down to verse 23 but now that there is no more place for me to work guess that work is the same thing as preaching the gospel there's no more places for me to do that in these regions they've all been done and since i have been longing for many years to see you i plan to do so when i go to spain because the people there haven't heard the gospel at that stage they hadn't and so i hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there after i've enjoyed your company for a while so he's wanting to take this gospel to new places to new lands and once the gospel begins to impact us it changes our lives so that we are incorporated into this global mission of god if you have the gospel you've got to have a global vision once we've experienced this salvation we will want to pass it on and what's so amazing is that when we begin to pass on this good news remember we said it's god's power at work when we begin to announce this gospel when we begin to speak it begin to live it out and begin to explain it to other people then god's power begins to be demonstrated god's power is at work and people's lives begin to be changed not because of who we are not because we're perfect we're messed up we're sinful not because of clever arguments because half the time we never know what to say but because of god's power the power is contained in the message and as the message go out people are changed and so we have a responsibility just as paul did to make sure that this gospel goes global it's our job to go and make jesus famous so that people start talking about him and for us that may mean there'll be some people here going to different countries and different places it may mean that we're having to look at our bank accounts and our finances and thinking well i could actually cut back here and give a little bit more to support this other person who's doing that it's going to mean praying it's going to mean starting where we are right now with the people that god has given us with our neighbours or where we work and beginning to place the power of god the gospel in people's lives and if we place the gospel in people's lives it's dynamic it'll begin to have an effect but whatever we're going to do we've got a responsibility to make this a global mission and the other impact that i think the gospel has is that it will lead to a united community paul knows that if this gospel is going to go global he's not going to be able to do it on his own he needs the support of other people he needs a community he needs the church behind him and the church that paul was writing to as we'll see over the weeks was very culturally and religiously diverse you had the jews on the one side they were the religious elite and they were very proud of their religious background and they saw themselves as far superior to those pagan gentiles they hadn't a religious bone in their body we're much better than them and then the two of them are together in the church and not only that you had these

uneducated Greeks who didn't do very well in their leaving church and they didn't manage to get to university and they saw themselves as very inferior to those other Greeks who were very well educated and very well spoken and did terribly well in life and so you have this right mishmash of people and this diversity has potential for division in fact it was causing problems and how does he tackle it all?

[ 30 : 53 ] well as we see in verse 14 he says I am bound both to Greeks and to the non-Greeks both to the wise and the foolish I don't care who you are that is why I'm so eager to preach the gospel to you he deals with this division by preaching the gospel because the gospel is a great leveller it brings us all back onto the same playing field because we all need the gospel because Jesus has done it all because it can only be received by faith it makes us all equal no one can think of themselves as superior and nobody needs to feel inferior as he reminds them in chapter 15 verse 7 after a long long section about unity and trying to bring them together he says this in verse 7 he says accept one another then just as Christ accepted you in order to bring praise to God don't be falling out with each other accept each other be joined together in partnership in the gospel come on board with me

I'm coming to visit you and then you can help me as I go off to Spain be united in one purpose or as he reminds them in chapter 1 verse 7 to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints he doesn't refer to them as to the Jews loved by God or to the Gentiles they're all saints educated or uneducated whether they passed their exams or whether they didn't pass their exams they're all saints now look at us we're a pretty mixed bunch of people aren't we there's different nationalities represented here we've got different cultures we've all got different family experiences some of us have more money than others some of us have jobs some of us don't some of us do well in university some of us struggle and there's great potential for division great potential for superiority and inferiority but when we begin to apply the gospel we're suddenly all reminded that we're all equal we all need the gospel nobody is above anybody else we're united as one we have one common goal and purpose and what unites us together is to see this gospel this good news spread to our friends and our family and all the different contacts that we have you see once the gospel begins to impact our lives it doesn't just leave us as isolated people enjoying my nice little relationship with God over in the corner we're incorporated into the community of God into the family of God where all other differences are all taken away and we are united together as one people with one purpose and one goal the gospel is powerful it can't not impact our lives the gospel is good news it is powerful good news and it's a gospel for everyone let's pray together our father God we thank you that there have been people who have bothered to pass on the gospel the good news to us we thank you for the power of God at work in our lives to save us and to change us we thank you that it is not about what I or we can do but all about what Jesus has done thank you for the wonderful fact that we can be united together as one people with one purpose to reach the world our local community our friends with the gospel help us help us to have courage not in ourselves but confidence in the power of your message that when it is spoken it begins to change father keep changing us to be the people you want us to be we ask this in Jesus name amen amen you