

Romans 1:1-7

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 May 2010

Preacher: Arthur Jackson

[0 : 00] To you, I'm going to ask you to remain seated as our children are dismissed for Team Tots and Team Kids, along with our teachers.

The rest of us, those who remain, if you could turn to Romans chapter 1. I'm going to read in your hearing verses 1 through 7.

You will find that on page 939 of the Bibles that have been provided for you. As you've noticed, we have done a few things differently today.

We're trying to not hold any sacred cows, so to speak. We do certain things a certain way, and just because we don't do them this way today doesn't mean that next week we'll include things like the Apostles' Creed and standing for Scripture.

We want to keep core things, core things, and other things we want to hold rather loosely. And we want to advance the kingdom of God in the process. We appreciate your being here this afternoon.

[1 : 14] As a matter of fact, let me pray first, and then let me read the word of God. Lord, we give thanks on this afternoon to you. Our souls bless you.

Great is your faithfulness, and that our souls know right well. Morning by morning, Lord, we have seen your hand, your faithfulness in our lives.

And we celebrate you for that, Lord, and we give you praise on this afternoon. Bless your word to our hearts, even as it's read, as it's proclaimed, and even as it is, Lord, lived out in our lives.

These are our prayers in Christ's name. Amen. Follow along with me in Romans chapter 1, verses 1 through 7. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set aside for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his son, who was descended from David according to the flesh, 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, 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, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

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.

[3 : 21] This is the word of the Lord. Amen. God bless you. Over the weeks that are before us this summer, Pastor Dave and I want to uphold the gospel much like one would hold up a gem in their hand.

And I wish that I had a big gem to illustrate it. But I believe you get the point. Through the exposition of various passages of Scripture, our goal on this summer is to once again help you to see God's truth as revealed through both the message and the ministry of the gospel.

And what a glorious gospel it is that has been entrusted to you and me as members of the church. And just like a jewel that reflects light anywhere you turn it, the gospel in a similar way is stunningly brilliant.

Have you found that to be so? Think about that jewel. The mercy of God shines through the jewel of the gospel.

And then equally well shines the justice of God. It shines just as clear. And then like the many colors of a rainbow, the grace of God streams through in such a lively fashion through the glorious gospel of Christ.

[5 : 15] And then there is the many colored kindness and compassion of God that has a way of breaking through. Through what? Through the gospel.

It comes through the same means justice and mercy and kindness and grace. Everywhere this jewel of the gospel is turned the glories of God have a way of streaming streaming through this glorious gospel.

Now our series while expositional it will not just deal with one particular Bible book or Bible passage yet several of our texts will come from the book of Romans.

What a book it is. when one thinks of the systematic treatment of the gospel if you've been a Bible student any length of time one of the first books or probably the most prominent book that comes to mind is in fact the book of Romans.

Listen to what's included in Martin Luther's preface to his commentary on Romans. Romans is worthy not only that every Christian should know it and check this out word for word by heart but occupy himself with it every day as daily bread of the soul.

[6 : 49] It can never be read or pondered too much and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes and the better it takes.

Some of you might want to check out Romans for your devotional study even during the summer. But here's the deal brothers and sisters. The gospel that we have embraced with our hearts and our lives it announces the very victory of God.

We see Old Testament passages that speak of the good tidings. Isaiah 52 that speaks about how beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings. Isaiah 61 also speaks about the glad tidings of the gospel and who it comes to.

He has anointed me to proclaim good news the gospel to the poor. The gospel is the good news the glad tidings and listen to this that God has provided a way through his son son.

And here's the real deal. To deal justly with sin while at the same time dealing mercifully with the sinner.

[8 : 10] Isn't that wonderful? That's sort of like the dual dilemma. How can God be both true to these various aspects of his nature?

how can he be just and merciful at the same time? It is through his provision through his son.

Through his son to deal justly with sin. Yet mercifully to the sinner. And here's the deal.

The death of Christ accomplishes both. While it's meaning, the meaning of the gospel is simple. The results of the gospel are profound.

And you were here on this afternoon as a witness to the profound results of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I mean, if we were to just look at our congregation and see from whence we have come.

[9 : 15] Oh, you look good. You got on your Sunday afternoon smiles with your Sunday afternoon clothes. But if you only knew some of our stories and where it is when the long arm of the grace of God has reached deep down into the valley and has raised you and me up, has fitted us anew with the gift of righteousness, forgiveness, have taken away a heart of stone and has given us a heart of flesh, profound results in the gospel.

Not only does he do that, but he sort of gives you reorientation for life. Some of you, because of your commitment to the gospel, you're pursuing the professions that you are today, the course of life, because of the profound results of the gospel.

So look with me on this afternoon. This text before us on today includes what I would call five points of gospel brilliance.

Five points of gospel brilliance, and I really want you to see them in the text. It's in there in verses 2 through 6. You'll see them. And so again, there's a song that we sing tell it over and over again.

I'm blessed in fact we sang it this morning downtown, speaking about the wonderful words of the gospel and the wonderful words of life. Five points of gospel brilliance.

[10 : 57] Another way of seeing these is seeing these as fundamentals of the gospel in our text on this afternoon. So I want to hold it up for you.

I want you to see this brilliant gem of the gospel. I want your eyes to see it with fresh eyes and fresh hearts. And then I want to help us to know how we need to respond having seen it perhaps some for the first time, but some again.

Look at the first verse. First one, you see what I would call the messenger of the gospel. In verses two through six, what could be called the fundamentals of the gospel.

Verse seven, you have what could be called the fruit of the gospel. And then I want you to, I want us to see some of the implications of those things.

But look at Paul. In essence, in verse one, Paul says this, this is who I am. And this is what I preach. This is what God has called me to do.

[12 : 11] Look at the messenger of the gospel in verse one. The greeting is a standard one. It speaks about who it's from.

Paul speaks about who it is to. That hasn't changed much, has it? I mean, the next time we send emails from and to.

And sometimes when you see some of those strange froms, if you do, if you're like me, you delete those strange from. You don't know who is this? You know, I don't know who that is.

But Paul identifies himself to those who had not seen him face to face. Makes it very clear who he is. Notice what he says. He said, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle.

Set apart for the gospel of God. God had selected him for his gospel purposes. He identifies himself as a servant of God, one who is under the authority of another.

[13 : 18] Set aside for the gospel, God's gospel purposes. Huh? Well, some would consider the, and certainly the word is doulos, and some would consider this a position of servitude.

In essence, it was sort of a position of honor. In the tradition of the Old Testament men and women of God. Huh? You remember what God's designation for Moses was?

What did he call him? My what? My servant. Moses and Abraham had a similar designation. My servant Abraham. 85-year-old Caleb, the guy that didn't give up.

Huh? Huh? My servant Caleb. Just on a footnote, we were on pastor's retreat a few weeks ago, and we played some games.

The older guys played against the younger guys. And of course, guess which group I was in? You're right, the older guys. And guess who else was in the older guys?

[14 : 23] Dave Helm. And guess who else was in the older guys? John Dennis. So we got some younger guys, but guess who won? No, no, no, no, no.

I wouldn't be telling you this if it were the younger guys. Not quite 85 years yet, like Caleb. Oh, but it's an honor.

I would trust that all of our pastors would want the designation as servant of God. But guess what? It's not just a designation for those who have been called to gospel ministry as far as their proclamation.

Guess what? There's John Mulholland, servant of God, and Brendan Mulholland, servant of God. It's good, not just for adults or professionals, but if you are under God's authority and serving God's purposes, you too, should wear the label with honor, the mantle as it were, is being God's servant.

Behind the circumstances of Paul's life was the call of God to serve the very purposes of God.

[15 : 46] Just like Abraham, I mean, Jeremiah, you remember Jeremiah chapter 1 verse 5, God had set apart Jeremiah from where? His mother's womb in order to be a prophet to the nations.

Serving God's purposes, huh? He was under God's authority. Paul was, in fact, God's property. And as an apostle, he was on special assignment for God.

But notice, as we move from that, well, let me show you something else here. As you go from, look at verse 1, there is the from, who it's from, but notice you go all the way down to verse 7 to the addressees, who it's to, to those who it roam, but you got all of this other information in between the from and the to.

this is the longest of Paul's greetings in his letters. And of course, he's got what, 13 letters? This is the longest of them, but right at the core, right smack dab, in the middle of this greeting, you not only have who Paul was, but as I mentioned earlier, this is what I preach.

This is what I preach. Huh? He was the messenger of the gospel, but we see what could be called the fundamentals of the gospel, these five points of gospel brilliance, and I want to help you to see them.

[17 : 26] Without these things that are here, the gospel is not the gospel that we know. And yes, there are gospels that are masquerading as the gospel.

Did so in Paul's day, he addressed it specifically with his Galatian letter. he said, though we are an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel that doesn't measure up than what has been delivered to you, he said, let him be accursed.

Write him off. Even if it's coming from me, if it doesn't measure up to the gospel of the grace of God, it's not a biblical gospel.

gospel. So, what we see in these verses before us, and in the letter as a whole, provide a good measure, an excellent measure, for any so-called gospel.

And anything that doesn't fit these criteria needs to be rejected. What's the first brilliant point of the gospel that we see? Notice, the source of the gospel is God himself.

[18 : 37] You see that in the text, set apart for the gospel. Whose gospel is? It's the gospel of God. The gospel is God's gospel. This speaks of its divine source.

It is not the concoction of man. It wasn't man's clever advice, man's bright idea. Absolutely, the best that the earth has to offer couldn't come up with anything that compares with what we have in the gospel.

It's God's gospel. From God, by God, it's about God. It has its roots in the heart and the mind and in the very wisdom of God.

The sovereign God of the universe is good tidings from God about God. It's God centered, it's God rooted. no wonder Paul could say in Romans chapter 11, verses 33 and following, listen to this doxological word.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways.

[19 : 55] Listen to this. for from him and through him and to him are all things and to him be glory forever.

The gospel, the source of the gospel is God. But notice the second point of brilliance. The promise of the gospel is rooted in the scriptures which he promised beforehand through his prophets where?

In the holy scripture. The gospel is not an afterthought something that just came on the scene in first century AD. Far from it.

Again, in the heart and mind of God from eternity. Historically speaking, however, the roots of the gospel are deep in the soil of the Old Testament.

It was foretold by the prophets of old Jesus and others attested to this. Let me just give you a few scriptures and perhaps you know of these but you remember Jesus in Luke chapter 24 verse 27 and beginning with Moses and all the prophets again he's speaking about the whole sometimes there was a twofold division sometimes there was a threefold division of Old Testament scripture here he speaks of this twofold division but in essence it's speaking of the whole of the Old Testament he interpreted them all the scriptures the things concerning himself it's rooted in scripture and then John 5:39 you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and listen to what else he said and it is they that bear witness about me Jesus words Paul when he went into the churches there in Asia in Asia minor in Galatia in those churches and Paul went in Acts chapter 17 verse 2 as

[21 : 46] Paul went in as was his custom and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the scripture the gospel concerning his son is rooted in the Old Testament of course who would not include in this first Corinthians chapter 15:3 and 4 for I deliver to you as a first and part what I also receive that Christ Jesus died for our sins what in accordance with the scriptures and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures Old Testament scriptures the promise of the gospel is rooted in the scripture third brilliant point point of brilliance the subject of the gospel is God's son very clear isn't it look at verse three concerning his son who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead just in case there's any question about who he is

Jesus Christ our Lord as a matter of fact here's another thing there was a separation here really the last few words Jesus Christ our Lord could go with concerning his son but again you've got some more information about him and that it was you see that division that's there but the subject is the son of God he is the main character in the drama of redemption and what about the son of course the word son speaks about being in the same nature as a one who possesses the same nature and thus as the son of God Jesus possessed the nature of his father God divine nature he is God same father's God the son of God and as God he has all of the essential characteristics of the father but notice also the son is human according to the flesh he is the son of man but not just any human being he is a descendant of king

David as promised 2 Samuel chapter 7 verses 12 and following and others he was going to be an anointed king! he was going to be a forever king one is going to proceed from your loins he is going to sit on the throne and he is going to reign forever so on the one hand he was a descendant of David a human king but on the other hand he was a forever king Jesus Christ it's Trinitarian passage that we're looking at here we see God the father we see the son and then we see according to the spirit of holiness that's there by which he was raised from the dead this was the evidence of the!

completion of his work and the acceptability of the work of the son validated by the resurrection the price of forgiveness was Jesus blood the proof of forgiveness was the resurrection from the dead validation of that so as to make sure that there's no question as to who is being referred to Paul speaks of the son using notice his earthly name Jesus his official title or name Christ and his God title Lord see that at the end of verse four Jesus Christ our Lord the subject of the gospel is God's son fifth or fourth point of brilliance the goal of the gospel is obedient faith look there in verse five through whom we have received grace and apostleship or could be translated the gift of apostleship for what purpose to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations the gospel of

God is to be embraced by obedient faith responded to in belief in the whole of one's life it is not simply a verbal assent of sorts obedience of faith is a total life response it's just not it's not simply just checking a box it's not just repeating the sinner's prayer it is the whole life obedience the trajectory of one's entire life one of obedience look at the scope of the fifth brilliant point the scope of the reach of the gospel is universal you see that there for the sake of his name among all the nations the gospel of God is for all people the scope is universal the reach of the gospel is worldwide in view of the worship of Jesus going global that's what missions is going global with the gospel and the goal is that

[27 : 00] Jesus would be worshipped worldwide that's what Christian mission is about we must see ourselves living for the worship of Jesus in both the neighborhoods and the nations of the world you and I must be jealous for the honor of his name his reputation in all of the world so and that's what for the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations and so here we have it right at the beginning of this letter is Paul raises the gospel banner that includes the fundamental realities of the gospel that goes to the nation this banner these five points of brilliance that are there the gospel the gospel is from God promised in the scripture concerning his sons for the nation to be responded to in faith through our obedience let me ask you a question do you remember when the brilliance of the gospel shone through to you some of you were younger some of you were older

I would think that many in this particular crowd came earlier in life and we find that boy that is a those young years are very very critical years I remember my dad and you all have heard a story when the light of the gospel shone through to him at 53 years old that's rather late in life but do you remember when it came through and here's the deal you might not understand fully all of these particulars when you come to Christ but there's enough light that shines through that you hear and you understand something of the gospel that you were drawn to it and there's the very quickening being born from above being regenerated in order that faith may come into play that regeneration of God in the heart and mind of man enables faith by grace are you saved through faith and that not even of yourselves it's a very gift of

God that we have do you remember when the light shone through and then sometimes there is a huge burst of light that comes in one's life and sometimes it just sort of simply with streams but nevertheless it comes in the light of the glory of God you see that brilliant jewel of the gospel and it's reached you and spoken to you and rescued you look at the fruit of the gospel in verse 7 the believers in Rome were the fruit of the gospel now Paul himself had not preached unto them the origin of the church is somewhat uncertain could have gone back as far as through the post Pentecost years because after all Acts chapter 2 verse 10 says that there were visitors from Rome and perhaps some of those visitors from Rome having heard what was going on on the day of

Pentecost and light shone through to them there and boy I tell you it really preached a great Pentecost message that was there we see it and it had its roots in the Old Testament it spoke about the love and the grace and the mercy of God gospel message it shone through it broke through to them and then they took it back to Rome perhaps that were expelled around about 49 50 AD and by the time of this writing of the letter close to about 57 58 AD the church at Rome was predominantly Gentile but you had this mixture of Jew and Gentile in Rome but notice it's to all those in Rome and I think that Paul as you go on in the letter you deal somewhat with this theologically and culturally with this potential and probably actual division that existed in that church but this gospel was a common gospel and it was to all those who were in

Rome whether they are Jew or Gentile we go on down we look on down and see he's not ashamed he's a debtor to the Jew and the Greek the barbarian the educated and uneducated so he says at the time again it was made up of a mixed multitude a mixed church but all of whom had been saved you remember Romans chapter 14 and 15 where he deals with holy days and dietary kinds of things that are there but then he again he's trying to to say this is how you need to treat one another who are these other people who are in the body don't judge a person about the to his own master he stands or he falls but to Rome this gospel had come he speaks to matters of sovereign election what about the Jew verses Romans chapter 9 through 11 another distinction was class distinction so some of these said but the gospel was to you who are at

[32 : 42] Rome but what was true for them is true for believers everywhere if you're Christian look verse 5 they had responded by faith they were called in verse 6 to belong to Jesus it's true for them it's true for us they were loved by God in verse 7 they were candidates for God's grace and peace there was a church there a bona fide body of believers a body of people who responded to the message of the gospel and so in our city as we think about that who is the gospel for to those in the great cities of the world the world class cities of the world loved by God called to be saints think about our vision to see the city of Chicago transformed by the power of the gospel 77 neighborhoods with different racial strands and class and socioeconomic!

distinctions but the fundamentals of the gospel message are good and they produce fruit in all kinds of men and women and classes it transcends the things that divide us down here the gospel is not bound by those particular barriers!

brilliance and other things how should we respond we should embrace of course the gospel by faith the gospel deserves our obedient faith brothers and sisters how should we respond it's a faith journey from the beginning to the end we never get over the gospel it's not just something to as an entry way but look at verse 17 as it is for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith or faith to faith as it is written the just shall live by faith it is a faith journey from the beginning to the end look at verse 15 how should we respond we should be eager to share for I am eager to preach the gospel to those of you who are in Rome when was the on the way home I stopped by to purchase some tickets and

I was face to face with the clerk there and I thought boy she's in the neighborhood I think I'll give her one of my business cards I began to go in my wallet I'm saying wallet because when I said bill fold you know there's some of you all who don't know what a bill fold is but so I said that's alright save your time I'm agnostic how do you respond to somebody who in a sort of an in your face way you know that that sort of that sort of comes up again when you want to give a card or a track or something the next time doesn't it we shouldn't let that faze us because many will respond to the gospel or just a gospel gesture just like that we should be eager to share even when rebuffed we should be courageous look at verse 16 I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes no shame are you ashamed of the gospel are you ashamed of that marvelous brilliant jewel with its various points and just five here in the text but there's so many more by which you are saved and we're ashamed of it

I mean it's sort of like you're ashamed of this rescue instrument that has brought you in and you're ashamed of it I'm ashamed of it but then these things are worthy of our celebration aren't they Shirley and I are looking forward to going to the Dallas Fort Worth area on next weekend for the high school graduation of one of our grandsons spoke with him on the phone on the other day and asked him well what's the day looking like so he asked his mother basically said there's going to be a party huh there are certain things that are worthy of celebration yesterday I was thumbing through the time magazine and I came across an article that spotlighted North Korea's nuclear test along with the article on the page there was a picture of a gathering that included soldiers seated in assembly and this is what the caption read calls for celebration

[38 : 18] North Korean soldiers officials and citizens in the Pyongyang gym cheer the country's second nuclear test I was really struck by the words calls for celebration the celebration there was because of a national defense achievement an achievement that could eventually lead to the destruction of life celebration in that article is quite opposite from what we should be and what we will be celebrating in our current sermon series the gospel according to Romans chapter 1 verse 16 is the power of God not for destruction salvation it's the power of God for deliverance for salvation to everyone who believes it so as we over the next week share regarding the gospel let's allow ourselves to worship let's allow ourselves to lift our voice and praise let's allow ourselves to make adjustments in our lives gospel deeds of the living God deserve the dedication of his people

Luther in his famous 95 theses he had a couple comments about the gospel and I'm about ready to close thesis number 62 and this is what he says the true treasure of the church is that the most holy gospel of glory is the most holy gospel of the glory and the grace of God that's the true treasure of the church I think it was thesis 55 it must be the intention of the pope that if pardons which are a very small thing are celebrated with one bell with single possessions and ceremonies then the gospel which is the very greatest thing should be preached with a hundred bells and a hundred possessions and a hundred ceremonies the gospel is worthy of celebration and I might even add with a thousand tongues so as the praise team comes forward to help us with our closing one song all for a thousand tongues to sing our great redeemers praise while

Christians are those who have embraced the gospel we never get beyond or over the gospel because it's a glorious God a sovereign God is revealed in and through it like a many sided jewel the gospel continues to shine it is a treasure indeed and it demands that you and I consider it and live accordingly let's pray Lord we love you we thank you for the treasure that is the gospel the gem that is the gospel and it's varied beauty and brilliance may we see it may we savor it and may we celebrate it in this season we pray these things in Christ's name won't you stand please yes