

A Gospel for All People

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[0 : 00] I really feel, Donald and I have said it, Sean has said it, I'll say it again, you all really feel like family to me. It's not always that way. You can go places sometimes and be treated shabbily. That has not been the case. I feel the love from you and I pray that you feel and sense the same amount of love from me because I truly love you.

Thank you, Father. Turn with me, please, to Romans chapter 1, verses 1 through 7. We'll be looking at verses 1 through 7.

Romans chapter 1. It's hard to tell now where the people have found the text or not because we have it on phones and on the screens behind us. So you used to be able to tell when the leaves stopped rustling, but that's not the case anymore.

So I assume you have it. If you have it, say amen. If you need a little more time, say wait. I guess we have it or we're too proud to say we don't have it.

Romans chapter 1, verses 1 through 7. I'll be reading from the New American Standard Bible. The text reads, Paul, a bondservant of Christ, Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his son who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of the faith among all the Gentiles for his name's sake, among whom you also are called of Jesus Christ, to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2 : 16] Let us pray. Heavenly Father, to you long be the glory. Lord, to you long be the glory.

Lord, to you long be the glory. Lord, to you long be the glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. The title of this message is A Gospel for All People.

A Gospel for All People. But I want you to be thinking as we go through this text, honestly thinking, do I really believe this?

Do I really believe this? Do I really believe this? The church in Rome is unique in its origin.

It was not planted by any of the apostles, nor had they seen any signs or miracles. They embraced faith in Christ according to the Jewish right.

[3 : 49] As believing Jews were being converted at their festivals and in their travels upon their return to Rome, the gospel tore down the dividing wall of hostility and grafted the Gentiles into Christ, the true vine.

Nevertheless, this grace was not without hardships. Times were changing. Hostility from the unbelieving Jews toward the new Jewish converts had reached such riotous proportions that the Emperor Claudius had to expel all the Jews from Rome.

It was becoming clear that this new spreading Christianity was a separate faith from Judaism that could no longer be considered a protected legal religion.

If the Jews were hostile toward the faith, the believers' reputation amongst the Roman populace was not better. Roman aristocracy unfairly labeled Christianity as a religion of the foolish, dishonorable, stupid, a lower-class movement of slaves, women, and children led by laundry workers, boot makers, and illiterate men.

Hardship was upon them. For like all believers in every society, they worshiped in no man's land, reviled by Caesar because they had no Lord but Christ and worshiping him in a temple not made with men's hands.

[5 : 22] They found no friend in Rome. They were despised by the Jews for having the audacity to claim that their Messiah, a crucified, bastard child of Nazareth, of all places, was God in the flesh and worthy of worship.

It is in this isolated and lonely state that rumors began to develop. Perhaps no apostle has brought the gospel to the imperial city because they know it won't hold up.

It does well enough on the outskirts of the Roman Empire, but at its epicenter, you would have to bow down under the pressure of Roman philosophies, religions, and might.

And perhaps we are not Jewish enough for the apostles to waste their time. For even Paul, the self-proclaimed apostle to the Gentiles, has not come to visit us in our flight.

Yes, by happenstance, we have received crumbs from the master's table, but more and more, it's seeming quite possible that Paul is ashamed to bring the gospel to Rome and perhaps even ashamed of us.

[6 : 40] At this point, we must acknowledge a hard and sinful truth. This accusation does not lay dormant at the doorstep of the first century church.

For many of our commercialized Western churches have a tendency to see certain groups as not worth the investment.

Isn't that right? It is the loudest and most damnable silence in the church. It is unthinkable that we as believers could be so unloving and such worshipers of the idols of comfort and acceptance that we could have a treasure in earth and vessels and withhold it from those whose souls we can plainly see are poverty-stricken.

It's unthinkable. Then instead of being silently embarrassed by our dereliction, we have the temerity to criticize those who are lost and acting worldly and say, they need Jesus.

Look at that. Look at the way they live. Look at the way they need Jesus. We have Jesus. We won't give it to them. Paul got wind of the rumors coming out of Rome and would have none of it.

[8 : 21] He writes them a letter. And Paul does not even finish his greeting without addressing the matter. For in the first seven verses, he reassures the Roman Christians and all inquirers that the gospel of God is for all people.

It's for all people. Verse one. Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

Paul's identity provides assurance. Assurance. The first expression of reassurance to these Gentiles is found in how he identifies himself.

You can find out a lot about a person by how they identify themselves. And he says, I am a bondservant or a slave of Jesus Christ.

The word bondservant is the Greek word *doulos*. Properly someone who belongs to another. A bondslave without any ownership rights of their own. Their entire livelihood and purpose was determined by their master.

[9 : 36] Paul says, I am no longer the Hebrews of Hebrews. The great Pharisee, the proud Benjamite. I have traded in my national pride for the glorious Savior of Christ.

My ambitions are not my own. I have crucified the cravings of the other me. My entire purpose in life is determined by what he has called me to do.

I am not ashamed to come to you because my success is not determined by others. Rome can call me a fool. The Jews can say I am mad.

My success is no longer based on the acceptance of others. My success is determined by my faithfulness to my master. I'm a slave.

I do not have the privilege to avoid Rome or any place because my master's message or the people he is sending me to might make me appear socially awkward.

[10 : 51] can't be concerned about what I might look like to others. Can't be afraid to share the gospel because I might appear socially awkward.

I'm a slave of my master and my goal is to be a faithful servant. Now my master could have charged me with any task.

The text says he chose him and made him an apostle. You know what it said? An apostle.

Apostolos is the Greek word. Properly someone sent commission. This calling focuses back on the authority of the sender. If I am not in Rome it is because I have not been sent to Rome.

It's not personal. There are many practical reasons as to why we may be or may not be in a location. But the ultimate reason we are where we are whether we know it or not is because Christ has sent us there in his sovereignty in his providence we are where Christ has sent us.

[12 : 14] Saints of God have been sent to do his work through many practical means. Shipwreck. Imprisonment. Slavery. Famine. Census.

Call of God. We go some places because of personal desire. Sometimes it's educational pursuits. Marriage carries us to one place. The pains of divorce takes us to another. We get hired and we go to another job.

We're fired and we go to another location. Sickness. Military. In the most precious and neglected way of all we are sent to a place. The birth canal.

All of these are tools for God's sovereign sending hand. Don't despise your location. Heed the call wherever you find yourself.

being an apostle. Live as if you've been sent. The last time I preached this message I preached it in Everglades Correctional Facility in Miami.

[13 : 22] And I was explaining to the men that although you may have done things to be here you're a Christian now and you need to realize that you have been sent here. And it's your job as a believer to turn this prison upside down for Christ because you have been sent and you are his slave not the states.

Called as an apostle and the nature of the call set apart for the gospel of God. A master can set his slave apart for many callings but I Paul have been set apart for the gospel of God.

listen. Set apart for the gospel of God. Not just to preach it. The text doesn't say set apart to preach the gospel of God but I have been set apart for the gospel of God.

Not just to preach it and teach it but my entire being now exists for the furtherance of the gospel. I have been set apart for it.

all of me. Not just my gifts. Not just my teaching. Not just my preaching. So no matter where you see me or what I may be doing at that time you can be sure that I am in arms length of the gospel.

[14 : 50] Huh? I hear folks say sometimes don't make me put down my religion. Get upset don't make me put down my religion. that's not biblical.

Not something you can pick up and put down. Huh? Because it's not something you it's not a task that you do for a moment.

You are set apart for it. Huh? Here's the spirit of what he means. if you see me at the top of a fruit tree.

Say sapodillitry that's what y'all have here. Top of a dilly tree. I am picking fruit to give to the poor whom I have shared the gospel or I am surveying the land for a good place to have prayer service.

or I may be up there for God ordained leisure but I am not up there as a deserter doing my own thing. Huh?

[16 : 06] So if your lives are in need of the gospel that I have been set apart for and if I am not there it is because my master has not sent me.

It is not personal. So you can be sure that I'm not avoiding you by the nature of my new identity. What am I?

A slave. What I've been called to? Apostleship. What have I been set apart for? The gospel. For me the preaching of the gospel is not merely about loving people although it is.

It is about my master receiving the people he has died for. I am a bond servant. Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. Now I don't want to scare you.

But I do want to scare you a little bit. I hope you see as we go through this text that this should not just be the attitude of Paul.

[17 : 11] Huh? This applies to all of us. verse 2. This gospel that he's talking about, the gospel of God.

It says of it, it is that which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scripture. Gentiles, you can be sure that the gospel applies to you because it is a preordained gospel.

Now Gentiles, even if I have gone and lost my mind and allowed my national pride, my ethnicity, and my class to be sinfully merged with the gospel, even if I have committed the grave sin of partiality by allowing my socioeconomic status or my desire to be culturally relevant to interfere with the gospel, follow things.

Please know that the deliverance of the good news of the gospel is bigger than me. I know that doesn't happen here. It happens in the states. Politics in the gospel get merged.

Race in the gospel get merged. Class and ethnicity in the gospel get merged. and we begin to segregate our love for people based on finite and fading lines, conditions, dress, education, interfering with the gospel.

[18 : 50] It is blasphemous. The gospel the good news was promised beforehand.

It is not my invention or my creation. I hated it. I kicked the gangsta's pricks. Then one noonday on the Damascus road, its Lord spoke to me, its love knocked me down, and its light blinded me that I may see.

I have learned the hard way. It is an unstoppable gospel. It had already been said and spoken and proclaimed. In the holy scriptures. And the comforting words of Isaiah and the Gentiles shall come to thy light.

And the king to the brightness of thy light. And the hopeful words of Malachi. God for from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles.

Even Gentiles, if I am derelict, God has promised you a gospel that is before me and will be after me when I'm gone. Anchor your assurance in his word.

[20 : 10] All people. He promised it for all people. You can be sure that the gospel is for you because it involves God's son.

It's prophets in the holy scriptures. Verse three says concerning his son who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh. Jesus Christ is where the good news begins.

Bad news is that you're lost in sin. Bad news is that we're on our way to hell. The bad news is that we're slaves to sin. The good news is that when we were helpless in due time, God sent his son into the world.

He calls him, he calls him a descendant of David. Again, this is found in scripture. Samuel says to David, when your days are complete, you lie down and you lie down with your fathers.

I will raise up your descendant after you who will come forth from you and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

[21 : 27] Now, why would he describe Christ, the Messiah, in this particularly Jewish way to a predominantly Gentile church?

Perhaps there were rumors that the Messiah was a purely Jewish king, that he would have no grace and mercy toward outcasts and Gentiles.

Perhaps his love, they were thinking, is too narrow and exclusive for people like us. Mark chapter 10, Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, said, no, that's not true.

I was blind, helplessly begging on the side of the cruel roads of Jericho. I heard the Nazarene was coming. I took a chance and cried out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

And he gave me my sight back. Gave me my life back. The love of the gospel reached me.

[22 : 44] The son of David had room for me. A Canaanite woman, a Gentile walking the streets of Tyre, holding the hand of her beautiful daughter.

She said, no, it's not true. He'll take all people. She said, some time ago, my baby girl was being severely tormented by a demon.

I cried out, saying, have mercy on me, Lord, son of David. He took the bread of compassion from the table of the sons of Israel, and gave it to this Syrophenician daughter.

And my little girl was made whole. The son of David has room in his kingdom for the Gentiles. His love crosses over the borders.

His gospel climbs over the imaginary walls of class that we have placed in our conscience and subconscious. Reaches through the poverty stricken line.

[24 : 05] Touches all men. Do you believe this? Perhaps this was some of you. Perhaps you have a relative.

Do you believe this? The son. He goes on about this. Who was declared the son of God with power by resurrection from the dead according to the spirit of holiness Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now the reign of this king was promised in scripture. But it was just a promise. The Lord had to declare it.

Declare horizo. The original language. Our word horizon comes from this word. It means to separate, to mark off by boundaries, to determine, to appoint, to designate.

It is a speech that is more than just explanatory. It is accompanied by evidence. So there is an evidentiary confidence in this word declaration.

[25 : 14] Adrian Peterson, Adrian Peterson, one of the greatest American football players of my generation. And there was another young man who was also having a pretty good season.

And a reporter asked that young man, do you believe that you're the best running back in the league? The man sort of stammered and paused and he hesitantly said, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I think I am, I think I am, I think I am, yes, I think I am.

Later that week, the reporter came to Adrian Peterson and asked him, what do you think about that young man's answer? He said he was the best running back in the league.

Adrian Peterson said, oh, he doesn't believe it. So why did he say that? He said he, he didn't put his chest down.

He said, I always tell the young man if you believe something, say it with your chest. Two thousand years ago, on the first day of the week, God said it with his chest.

[26 : 32] no silent inquiries by prophets wondering what personal time the spirit of Christ in them was indicating. If you don't ever see me again, if you can't access the law and the prophets, if you want assurance, go to the tomb.

one. You will hear a voice of one that says, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet he shall live.

Resurrection saint. That's when the Lord put his chest in it. Power behind the confession. who is this person, the son of God, the son of David, the resurrected one?

Jesus Christ, he says, Jesus Christ, our Lord, not just my Lord, but ours, mine and yours, the Lord of this Jewish disciple, Paul, and you Gentile Romans, he is Lord of all.

There's room for it. It's for all people. what does he say about this Lord, this son of David, the son of God, the resurrected Christ?

[27 : 51] He says, through him, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for his name is.

The certainty of the salvation of the Gentiles. he says, we have received grace and apostleship for the first time we as you.

The salvation of the Gentiles is the goal of all the apostles, not just him. You know, I was talking to someone one day and they said to me, they said, I don't, I don't, I think I should call the police on these people down there.

I said, what? This was in seminary, Louisville, one of my brothers there. He said, because I think they're down there selling drugs. It was in his neighborhood. And so I gathered from his language, he was a white guy and people selling drugs to black guys.

and he had a certain perception, great guy, godly guy, but he had a certain perception, as do we. And I said, I said, why don't you go and share the gospel to them?

[29 : 10] And he said, you go and share the gospel to them. And I said, well, we have the same gospel.

Why do I have to go? You live there in the neighborhood. You're watching them. You're about to call the police on them. Why don't you at least go share the gospel?

And he said, I'll think about it. And he came back and told me, I guess he went down and talked to me, he said, they weren't selling drugs, they were just hanging out down there. I said, well, see? I said, did you share the gospel?

He said, no, I don't think you shared the gospel. Listen, it is idiotic to think that black people have to share the gospel to black people and white people have to share the gospel to white people and poor people have to share the gospel to poor people and rich people.

The gospel is more powerful than the vessel that contains it. We have a treasure in earthen vessels. You don't have to be formally gay to share the gospel to gay people or have been a thief to share the gospel to thieves.

[30 : 20] All you need is love in your heart and a mind to obey Christ and the gospel will do its work.

Now, they have been given two things, grace and apostleship. Grace would be the means of the power by what they are doing, what they're doing, and apostleship would be the call or the authority.

And he says, this grace, this power, and this call, this authority, we have received it from the resurrected Christ, the highest authority in the universe and outside of it.

For that matter, the one who said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We and all people have the real authority and command to preach the gospel. You don't have to ask your pastor.

[31 : 33] You don't have to get permission from the church. If the government says no, no preaching of the gospel. Try your best to work within the government, but if they say absolutely no, you say it's better for us to obey God rather than man, and you preach the gospel if it costs you a life.

Because the authority and the authorization that you have seen and received has come from an authority that is higher than earthly authority.

Paul said, you can be confident. We're not afraid of Rome. Rome is not our final authority. He said, we have this authority to bring about as Paul said before.

It was already ordained in the scripture. We have the privilege to bring it about. That's all. We are a part of the movement of God.

We are swept up in it. And its purposes will come to pass whether we participate or not. But he has ordained us and ordained this word and it is brought about.

[32 : 42] What is it he's bringing about? The obedience of faith for the Gentiles. Not the keeping of the law. Not Gentile moralism.

That's not what the Lord is trying to bring about to save men. I volunteer in the community. I go to church every Sunday. I'm taking care of my mama.

Is that good enough? No. Faith in Christ is what saves. By grace. Faith in Christ is what saves. It's what we preach.

And it's what all men must believe. Faith. John 6, 28, 29.

Therefore they said to him, what shall we do so that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered them tongue in cheek. He said to them, this is the work of God that you believe in him whom he has sent.

[33 : 44] Can't do any work is what he's saying. It's my name. Grace and faith. Now, this is important as you go out to share the gospel from hearing this message.

This is important. A lack of faith in the gospel properly taught is always a matter of disobedience.

Huh? It is not merely a matter of being intellectually unconvinced. so we need to start with excuses.

The Bible has errors. Hey, people say that and they've never read it. How do you know which religion is true? And they don't even want an answer.

There's too many hypocrites in the church. I said, well, come show us how to do it the right way. They never come. Actually, one time I said, how do you know the Bible is full of errors?

[34 : 48] She said, I know the Bible is just full of errors. I said, have you read it? No. I said, well, why are you saying it's full of errors? I said, you should say you don't know. I said, the reason you're saying that is because you know if God has written a book what must be in it and you don't like it.

Isn't that true? She said, yeah. I said, and the reason you're doing that is because you have a conscience that God has placed the law in your conscience. And so you're guilty. So you don't like the Bible because you believe it comes from God and you know what God must be saying and you don't want to hear it.

So you need to repent and believe the gospel. If you do not believe the gospel, properly preached, the breakdown has not taken place in your mind but in your heart.

Huh? Your feigned ignorance is a futile and childish stall tactic and God is not amused.

You think you are buying time to live a life of sin and then go to heaven on the grounds of a lack of clarity. But when the Lord is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels and blazing fire, he will not be coming back to humor your foolish questions.

[36 : 02] He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 2 Thessalonians 1. not be because of confusion.

It will be because of disobedience. You think God is on the clock but you've been on the clock since the day you knew right from home. obedience he is bringing about from the Gentiles is for his name's sake.

He said for his name's sake. The church at Rome heard these words they would have known what it meant. Isaiah 48 9 it's an endearing term used normally of Israel concerning Israel for the sake of my name I delay my wrath and for my praise I restrain it for you in order not to cut you off.

Gentiles would have said I thought his name's sake only applied to Israel. We are his people too. Salvation is for us as well. He gets glory out of everyone who has faith even us Gentiles.

We are also saved for his name's sake. His name is also on us. To all who are beloved of God in Rome call this grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[37 : 29] I'm writing to all who are beloved of God. God loves you Gentiles. You are not a neglected afterthought regardless of what it may seem like you are not abandoned.

Life can feel that way sometimes in this Christian walk and nothing can separate you from the love of God. Called by called by Christ but called as saints.

The word saints here. Haggios. The core meaning of the word is different. Thus a temple in the first century was Haggios. It was holy.

It was holy because it was different from the buildings. In the New Testament holy was the technical meaning of different from the world. And so when we're called as holy this is a he's called us not to make us holy although he's done that as well in his sanctification but he's called us as holy.

His calling itself has made us holy. This is a positional holiness. It's not earned. not worked for.

[38 : 38] It's a positional holiness. It comes with a call. Just like Israel was made holy was made a holy people.

A holy nation. You also are a royal priesthood and a holy nation. You have been holy. You have been made holy by God's grace. He finishes with these last two words.

Typical greeting and salutation of an epistle. Grace and peace to you. Standard greeting in an apostolic order. Nevertheless it is what they need.

There's so much pressure on us as children of God. the world is not our friend. Loves its own. But Jesus said.

John 14 27. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled nor let it be filled.

[39 : 47] Are there not there's one thing I know that describes a lost person. I don't care what they act like on the outside. They have no peace.

They have no peace. Deion Sanders a famous athlete. One of the most famous athletes again in American football. Was rich.

Wealthy. He had women fame and fortune. He was on the brink of suicide. Driving his car to a cliff. And he said as he came to faith. The only man I've ever been jealous of in my life was a Christian man.

Only man I've been jealous of in my life. Because the believer could be in the bottom of a prison in stocks. In midnight. And sing the praises of God and have peace.

Red Boca Haram went into the Sudan and wiped out an entire village. Raped women. Murdered the men.

[40 : 53] Carried all their possessions. Burned the buildings. They said when they went into the building they saw those who were wounded and some of the ladies who were left climbing, taking two sticks, forming them in the shape of a cross and pressing them in the ground.

Not as a memorial. memorial. Not as a memorial for the fallen but as a reminder that our peace and our keeping and our sustenance is found in Christ.

Grace and peace from God our Father. God our Father. You see Gentiles? God is your Father and my Father. Even though I'm a full-blooded Jew you're still my brothers.

I have put it in writing for all to see. I'm not ashamed of you. Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, Kurios. Properly a person exercising absolute ownership rights and authority over the slave, the master.

He starts off by saying in verse one, I'm a bond servant, a slave, and then ends by saying, Jesus is Lord. This is why I do everything in the middle.

[42 : 05] I'm a slave and he's my master. not the high priest with the obsolete covenant that will soon disappear, not Rome with its ever-changing philosophies and unstable emperors, but Jesus is Lord.

You belong to him as do all things. Conclusion. Are you a slave of Christ? It's an honest question.

Do you view yourself that way? If you're not saved, the answer, of course, is no. If you are saved, this may be an area of your salvation that you need to pour into a little bit more.

God, is he your Lord? Or, as is tradition in our churches in the south and in the islands, is he a means to an end?

Because following Christ means experiencing discomfort for the sake of the gospel and out of love for the lost. if you are a Christian only because you don't want your skin to get singed, that's a problem.

[43 : 30] If, if practically living, you will never say it out of your mouth, but if practically living, you could care less that you are the only one going to heaven, then you're probably not going. Let's endeavor.

Let's search your hearts. Let's pray for courage to joyfully declare. Put your chest in it. Don't be ashamed of it.

Put your chest in it. He died for you. He died for you. He died for your loved ones. He died for the lost. Declare the gospel to all people for the glory of the Lord, of our Lord and Savior.

Jesus Christ. Let us pray. Let us Thank you.