

"The Gospel of Christ" Romans 1:1–15

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[0 : 0 0] The first reading is from Romans 1, 1-15. For the sake of his name among all 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. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

For God is my witness, whom I serve with his spirit, the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you, always in my prayers, asking that somehow, by God's will, I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you, but thus far have been prevented, in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.

I am under obligations both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish, for I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. In May 1738, a 30-year-old man walked into a Christian meeting at Aldersgate, London, and upon hearing the message, he put his faith in Christ.

[1 : 4 5] And what makes this story remarkable isn't that a young man came to faith, although that's remarkable, be remarkable these days, absolutely. But it's that this 30-year-old man was an Anglican minister for some 10 years before he walked into this meeting.

Not only that, he was Oxford-trained, and he even spent time in the New World being a chaplain for the British colony in Georgia.

This young man was a religious man, yet to his own testimony, his heart was cold towards the things of God. So on that night, in 1738, the Reverend John Wesley heard Martin Luther's preface to St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, this very thing, many of us are holding in our hands, and his heart was warmed.

And he wrote about this encounter in his journal, and this is what he said, quote, About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.

I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine. And save me from the law of sin and death, end quote.

[3 : 1 2] You know, all scripture we say in this church is God's word written, it is breathed out by God, yet Romans holds a very unique place in the canon and in many of our lives.

John Wesley, whom I just read this story, had his heart strangely warmed towards the Lord through the reading and explaining of Paul's letter to the epistle.

St. Augustine as well, if you're familiar with his confessions, he will talk about hearing this voice, say, pick up and read, and what he ends up reading is a portion from Romans.

I know somebody close to me that it was their experience as well, hearing the gospel explained by St. Paul in Romans that opened up their eyes to the fact that they were truly saved.

Maybe it's the case for some of you this morning. All of God's scriptures, all of scripture is God's word written, yet Romans is really a remarkable book.

[4 : 19] And as we turn to it over these next few weeks leading up to Easter, we'll take a break from it. We'll jump back into it in September.

Our goal is to hit the entire book probably in three to four sections over the next couple years. But as we get into this, we're going to see what the gospel is all about.

We're going to see how the gospel is the very means by which God draws people to himself, that it is the only way by which men and women can be saved.

And it isn't just a nice set of intellectual propositions that we ascend to, but it is the only good, true good news that can truly fulfill the human heart.

So we're going to turn our attention this morning to this opening greeting in Romans chapter 1, verses 1 to 15, and we'll see the centrality of the gospel. And we're going to keep things very simple, and we're going to look at the author, the message, and then the implications of the gospel.

[5 : 29] The author, the message, the implications. A bit of a background before we jump into it. So Romans was written around, the historians and theologians, figure about 57 AD, AD 57, by the Apostle Paul.

In terms of the biblical timeline, if you're familiar with the narrative in Acts, we were in Acts not too long ago, but this would be almost certainly during Paul's third missionary journey.

He's held up in Corinth for a number of months, and we believe that that's when he wrote this, this letter to this church in Rome. Regarding the geopolitical situation, interestingly, it was written not long after Claudius' expulsion of the Jews from Rome.

That happened around AD 41. It lasted to about AD 54. And this is significant for us. Not so much this morning, although we'll see it, its significance throughout the weeks to come.

But here's why it's significant. The church in Rome almost certainly was a mixed group of Jews and non-Jews. Jews and Greeks and barbarians, we'll see barbarians as a term simply to refer to Gentiles who aren't Greeks.

[6 : 47] So it's a mixed church, and it would seem that there was a number of Jewish people coming to faith in Jesus, and it caused frustration and alarm amongst the non-believing Jewish population.

So much so that Claudius expelled all of the Jews from Rome. So what ends up happening is the church continues to grow, but it has lost its understanding and its connection to its Jewish roots.

So, again, this is just for background. We're not going to get into it this morning, but we'll see that Paul's going to address a lot of these questions. The church in Rome would have had about 10 years, maybe longer, devoid of Jewish believers.

So how would this once mixed church respond when some Jewish believers return? Again, maybe two to three years after the expulsion edict is lifted.

How would this tension be navigated theologically? Is it enough to just have Jesus completely separated from the Hebrew scriptures and the Hebrew patriarchs and the Hebrew prophets and the Hebrew people?

[7 : 58] Do they still have a place? Paul will answer this throughout the letter, but again, we won't touch on it today. So, Paul has yet to meet this Roman church.

He's long desired to see them as we'll read in verse 13. So he introduces himself to them, not unlike other letters, but in a more expansive way and in doing so, he reveals not only his identity and bona fides, so to speak, but also provides a very succinct yet incredibly dense explainer of the gospel.

Okay? So that's a bit of the background going into the letter. We're just gonna look at our first point, who this author is, who St. Paul is, verse one. Paul, a servant of Jesus, of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

This will be a short point, I think it's, though it's very helpful to draw your attention to a couple of things. Notice how Paul leads with his bona fides. I guess first consider what he does not include in there.

Now later on, he'll talk about how he's a Hebrew of Hebrews, that he's from the tribe of Benjamin, he's a Pharisee, he's knowledgeable, doesn't mention any of that. What does he mention first off? That he is a servant of Christ.

[9 : 15] He also mentions that he is an apostle. And on the surface, these titles seem somewhat conflicting. Why? Because of the the disproportionate separation of status between a servant and an apostle.

A servant, it would be best to describe it or translate it as a bond servant or a slave. Now, just right off the bat, this isn't the same as Roman slavery existed.

In fact, slavery has existed in almost every culture throughout time. Roman slavery is not the same as chattel slavery with the transatlantic slave trade. nevertheless, even though these Roman slaves would have had status and affluence, they were lesser on the hierarchy.

So much so that a Roman citizen, it was against the law for a Roman citizen to become a slave. So even though a slave in Paul's day, in the first century, would have had somewhat high status, they were still pretty much close to the bottom rung of the social hierarchy.

So Paul is a slave of Christ. Yet on the other hand, he is an apostle. Now the apostles, at least within the Christian community, were held with the highest esteem.

[10 : 35] The apostles were the ones who walked with Jesus, who interacted with Jesus intimately, who knew the sound of his voice and sat under his teaching.

Now the apostle Paul becomes an apostle not with the 12 and then later the 11, but rather when he is on his way to persecute the church on the Damascus road and the risen Lord Jesus Christ reveals himself to Paul and commissions him to be an apostle.

Nevertheless, the apostle whom Paul says he is, I mean, right up there with the prophets of old, maybe even higher in terms of religious status. So we have a slave on one hand and an apostle on the other.

And yet Paul is identifying himself as both. Both as a servant and an apostle entrusted with the gospel. I think the big takeaway from all this is that the apostle Paul is recognizing and stating right off the get-go that his life is not his own.

He has agency, he is not some kind of automaton. Nevertheless, he is in the service of a higher power of a higher king.

[11 : 56] The apostle's life is no longer his own. He has been commissioned by God to proclaim the gospel specifically to the Greeks and to the barbarians.

So, what is this gospel of God that he is set apart for, that he is commissioned to proclaim? This gets into our second point. This will be the longest section that we look into.

It's verses 2 to 7. But before we get into the text, a bit of the term gospel. Now, gospel's a very churchy word.

We've heard it if you've come to church, if you've come to this church for some time. It's a very churchy word and I've probably not done the greatest job explaining it, rather assuming that people know what it is.

Okay? That's on me if you're like, I've been coming to this church for a while and I don't know what the gospel is. You know, come to me, let me know so I can apologize to you about that. Nevertheless, it's a word that a lot of us take for granted that we know.

[12 : 58] We have it defined in our minds or at least we think we do. And really, this is what the gospel is. The gospel literally means a good message. It's a message of victory that in the ancient world, it's not exclusive to Christianity, would be heralded by a messenger.

So, if you think about in the first century or the centuries leading up to the writing of the epistle, you think of a big battle, the victory is won, peace is achieved, and then a herald will go before the king city and proclaim that the king is coming back, the victorious king would be coming back.

This is what a gospel is. This is what the good news would entail. Now, this makes sense in connection to what we're going to look at, although, it is not exactly an apples to apples comparison.

Jesus truly is, and what we'll see, is that he truly is the victorious king, but he is not the victorious king that unsheathes the sword and puts to death enemies, but rather a king that himself dies so that he can conquer sin and death.

So, this is what the good news is that we will encounter throughout this letter. Now, there's many facets to it, and this is going to be the whole job and journey of us to figure out as we go through Romans over the next few weeks.

[14 : 38] But Paul goes on to explain in a very succinct way in the next few verses, outlining five aspects of this good news. This is what it says, I'll read verses one to six, and then we're going to jump right into it and look at these five aspects of the gospel.

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be 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 descended from David according to the flesh, and was declared to be the son of God and 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 Christ Jesus.

That is a long sentence. Let's break it down. First, you'll notice that the gospel originates with God the Father. We see that at the end of verse 1. It is not a human invention by Paul or another earthly church leader.

Because it originates with God, it cannot therefore be a contingency plan. What do I mean by this? It is not as though God created this beautiful, perfect world and then Adam and Eve fell, what we call original sin, the fall, capital F, and God was scrambling to figure out how to fix it.

As if it just, you know, this catastrophe presented itself and caught God unawares. Rather, this has been the plan of God from before all time.

[16 : 23] Among God's many attributes, and this is where understanding some bits of doctrine help us to read scripture better, among God's many attributes that are exclusive to him, which means that we don't share them with God in any way, God is omniscient.

What does that mean? God's omniscience means that he knows all and is surprised by nothing. All of his plans and all of his actions are not in response to surprises or advances that come upon him.

It means that what God has willed has been willed from before time. Now, again, we take this mystery by faith because it's hard for finite minds to grasp an infinite God.

Nevertheless, it's an important point. God is sovereign in his will. We do not have time this morning to take this theological detour into the sovereignty of God in relation to human agency.

prophecy. We're going to touch on that in later weeks in Romans, especially when we get to Romans chapter 9. That's when things get really wonderfully complicated. However, I want to make the point that God originates, the gospel originates with God and is his planned good news of victory over sin and death forever.

[17 : 45] Okay, the second thing that we see in this short little opening from the apostle Paul, that it is promised good news. You'll notice that in verse 2, that God promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

He's talking about the Old Testament here. It is promised good news. So this is a new revelation from God, something he wanted to introduce through Paul or even Jesus himself.

And yes, the gospel for sure is fully revealed in Christ as we will see here this morning and in the weeks to come. However, the promise that God would remedy and redeem the corruption and decay of sin and death, it goes all the way back to the opening chapters of the Bible, which is to say that it is the promised good news of God's victory.

We see allusions, we see symbols, we hear prophecies. There are numerous instances in the Old Testament that will say pretty explicitly, oftentimes implicitly, that God is not okay with what he sees with sin and death and he is looking to remedy it.

What will it look like? He gives little clues, leaves a breadcrumb trail, so to speak. But it's not absent from the Old Testament. Now, this is very important for us because there are other religions that have come since Christianity that have claimed the same thing, that claim a Genesis back to, say, Genesis.

[19 : 22] But a simple examination of Scripture shows that Muhammad would not be the last and final prophet. That Joseph Smith, for instance, he did not stumble upon a hidden truth.

In fact, so much of the false religions that have taken place since Christianity came about, they will always tinker and tamper in some kind of way with God's Scripture so that they either deny it completely or they find in it falsely proof that justifies their religion and beliefs.

The Gospel is promised good news, finding its Genesis in Genesis and throughout the rest of the Old Testament. Thirdly, and most importantly for us to truly understand, is that the Gospel concerns God the Son.

God the Son. Here is our first example of Paul getting incredibly specific in Romans, wasting zero ink about who Jesus is, what he came to do.

The Gospel concerning the Son is tied to the incarnation, right off the bat, Paul says. God the Son descended, taking on human flesh, descended from the line of David, yet he remained fully God.

[20 : 50] Not only that, but his earthly ministry was both humble and powerful, as evidenced by his conquering the greatest foe, death, and through which he would die himself and rise again from the dead.

He defeats death by death. And here is where we begin to see that this good news is completely connected to God the Son being fully man and fully God.

Not only has Paul cited the incarnation, he has also referenced the resurrection, which is to say that he has in mind the entirety of Jesus' life culminating in the victory over the grave and his ascension to heaven.

This eternal plan of God, promised in the scriptures, carried out by the Son, was for all humanity. And this is then the fourth point that Paul will make. The scope of this gospel is for all nations.

Later on in the letter, Paul will talk about the primacy of the people of Israel throughout the Old Testament as God's chosen people, and how although they will continue to have a special place in the biblical narrative, not least because the Savior was born a Jew, but that this gospel then is expanded and it becomes good news for all people.

[22 : 10] All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Paul will say in Romans chapter 3. So if a human being exists that has fallen into sin or has missed the mark or who has corrupted relationships or a distorted way of thinking, whose desires are all askew, Paul says the gospel is for you.

It is for you. The scope of the gospel is for all people. All have been corrupted by sin, which means all have the inability to fix and redeem and to become enlightened and save themselves.

Therefore, all need a Savior and all are therefore in need of the gospel. And then finally, the fifth point that he makes is the purpose of the gospel. The purpose of the gospel to bring praise and glory to the one and only true king of all.

And this is expressed in two ways. The first is found in verse 6. It means it's for all who belong to Christ. It means that we belong to him.

And again, Paul here is like he is packing this one sentence with numerous hyperlinks that we could click on and explore and we will explore in the weeks to come.

[23 : 31] But it is to say that through the Holy Spirit, God is calling people to himself to a life under good and godly rule of the one true God who is king and lord over all.

It means like the apostle Paul says in that opening verse that if you are in Christ, you are no longer your own. You have become a new creation and also a bondservant or a slave of Christ.

He is your master. I'll just pause really quickly here because I don't want to be mastered by anybody. Whether you're a Christian or somebody who is struggling with the faith or maybe completely outside of the faith, who wants to be called a slave?

Who wants to be called somebody who has a master? We have moved on from such uncomfortable statements. But I think, and the more I thought about this, the more it made sense for me, okay, for me.

Maybe for you as well. But I fashion myself as somebody who is in charge of my own life. But I am mastered by many things, okay? I am a slave to other things.

[24 : 45] The stark reality is that I am a slave, and maybe you are as well, to your appetites, to the pressures of performance and achievement, to your desires that aren't evil but terribly disordered and thus becoming evil.

You are a slave to the thought of kicking back, putting up your feet, and just resting as if that is the pinnacle of your week.

You are mastered by things. You are a slave to things. It's an uncomfortable truth, but be honest with yourself. Ask yourself, if you truly are in the driver's seat of your life, in all respects, put another way, we think we are lords of our lives, but we certainly are not.

We think we sit on the throne of our hearts, but we certainly are not. But with Christ, this master of all, this lord of all, this king of all, he's perfectly just.

And he is such a just master that he begins to shape us and form us so that the disordered parts of our lives become more ordered.

[26 : 10] We begin to rightly enjoy the things that are good that we have previously enjoyed a bit too much or put too much emphasis upon.

We begin to, in a very real way, begin to look like Christ. He shapes us to conform to him. That's the first way, in verse 6, we become Christ's.

The second way that we give glory to him is by growing in our fidelity and obedience to that king. So it's not just that he makes us his own, but he, again, like I've briefly mentioned, he begins to fashion us and conform us to look like him.

He, the apostle Paul says this in verse 5, through whom we have received grace, that is the power and strength, to bring about the obedience of faith, that is the conformity to that king.

And he gives us the Holy Spirit, the very power that raised Jesus from the dead, to help us obey him and live under his good and beautiful rule. Five points that mark the gospel, what the gospel is all about.

[27 : 25] Not an exhaustive list, but certainly a comprehensive one for us this morning. And in them we begin to see that this gospel message is not simply this proclamation that there was a king that defeated death long ago and we, it's great, it's wonderful, but that this good news is actually about a human being that lived and died and rose again.

So less about a news brief and more about a person. And all of which is summed up in verse 7. Read with me, verse 7. To all those in Rome who are loved by God, called to be saints, and then he says, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The love of God, it fuels all of this, for God loves us first, before we knew him, before we could recognize our need for him, before the gospel was ever a concept that entered into our minds.

his completely undeserved love for us, marks us above all, for he calls us, beckons us to joyfully live out this life. And that doesn't mean a life devoid of difficulty or sadness, but a life of joy and fulfillment in him.

What he does is that he makes a sinner into a saint. He transforms the lowly and broken into redeemed children of God. God. And this is what grace does to the human heart.

[28 : 55] It gives us a peace that we so desperately desire, yet our corrupted hearts are incapable of enjoying. Peace with God and peace with one another is available to us through Christ.

This is what the gospel is according to Saint Paul. That gospel that gives us grace and peace making us saints because of God's love. And now we will see the implications of that gospel in our third point.

Look with me at verses 8 to 11. Actually, before we get into this, I'll just say this. As is the case with this opening bit, there's a lot that we could draw from this next section looking at the implications of the gospel.

We'll look at three implications of the gospel. Now look with me at verses 8 to 11. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. Because your faith is proclaimed in all the world, for God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

For I long to see you. And now we start to see that the apostle, he's not met these people, but he loves these people. For I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.

[30 : 21] And we'll pause here. Again, much to draw from these verses, but three brief implications of the gospel. First is that the gospel will result in you praying more.

The gospel will make you prayerful. And we see this in verses 8 to 11. As the gospel begins to shape you, you will realize your ongoing need for God's grace and power in your life.

You'll become humble. humble. And when people become humble, what ends up happening is that the delusional thoughts and tendencies begin to disappear.

What do I mean by that? We can be awfully delusional about our ability to fix ourselves or the situations around us. Such things are beyond our ability to fix, and yet somehow we think that if we only have this conversation with this person, or we're able to tweak this relationship or incorporate this aspect of a healthy lifestyle, then we will remedy the problems that we face.

So, example for me. I had a difficult situation a couple weeks ago with somebody close to me, and in my mind, for hours, on and off, throughout the days, and I'm not exaggerating, I promise you, okay?

[31 : 45] I'm thinking about, I'm conspiring about how to fix this, okay? How to say it in such a way that it's going to be heard, how to tweak the situation with this one person because it's eating me up, until I realized, okay, that I was delusional.

And then realizing that this situation is far bigger than I can handle, and then I realized, oh wait, I have a God that conquered death. Maybe if I pray to him, he can help me.

And maybe he will, maybe he won't in his timing, in his way, that will be satisfactory to me, but clearly whatever he decides to do will be better than what I can do in my own strength. And this is what happens with the gospel.

We become humble, okay? I'm not saying I'm like a super humble person. I'm using it as an example, okay? But nevertheless, we become humble people and we realize that we can be awfully delusional.

So, with the gospel, we see our great need for God's grace and power in our daily lives and we desire the same for others. So what do we do? We call upon the name of God to help.

[32 : 55] Second implication, the need for godly Christian community. Read verse 11 and 12 with me. We've read verse 11, but we'll read it again. For I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.

That is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. The Christian faith is a communal faith.

Often, the Lord ministers to us through the godly encouragement and exhortation of others. And it's even true for the apostles themselves. So listen, the apostle Paul comes to this church in Rome.

They are doing a lot of good things well. He's talked about how their faith is known across the Christian world. But nevertheless, there are people that need a very long letter to help them navigate some difficult situations.

And yet, he says, listen, I want to come here, I want to strengthen you, but I need you to strengthen me. What does the apostle Paul need strengthening for from them? And yet, that's what he says. I think as we pray and ask the Lord's intervention into our lives, we will find that it will come by the people sitting around you in this room.

[34 : 13] In fact, I would be so bold to say that you can't be a Christian if you are not connected to a local church. Like, you can't be. If there's a season, for whatever reason, you're not in church, you don't necessarily cease to be a Christian, get back to church.

I mean, you guys are all here, so I'm not really speaking to anybody who needs to hear it. Nevertheless, to be a Christian and completely severed from the church is not to be a Christian.

Christian. The third century church father, Cyprian of Carthage, says, and there's a lot to this statement, but I think it helps us to understand this implication of the gospel that no one can have God for his father who does not have the church for his mother.

Which is to say, this is God's plan for your growth and for your spiritual welfare. The third implication of the gospel, you will share the faith, evangelism, evangelism will become a part of your life.

Read with me verses 13 to the end of our section to verse 15. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you, but thus far have been prevented.

[35 : 24] In order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles, I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, that is, non-Greeks, both to the wise and to the foolish, so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in.

Rome. Yes, the apostle Paul had a very unique calling as an apostle to proclaim the gospel to a portion of a world that had never heard of Jesus Christ before, a very unique calling.

However, what is not unique about the apostle is his obligation to evangelize. What do I mean by this? Verse 14, it says this, I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, obligation to preach the gospel.

I don't like that, I don't like being obliged to do anything, so maybe a better reading and some of the commentaries I looked at, they would say actually there is a better reading and that is to be a debtor, well that doesn't help much either because I don't want to be in debt to anybody.

So what is the apostle Paul trying to communicate to us? So I think it's helpful to consider this debtor language and we can understand debt as two different things.

[36 : 45] The first, you take a business loan, you take a mortgage, whatever, you're in debt to the bank until you pay back every cent and they're coming for that every cent.

The second way is that somebody entrusts you with some form of money or an object for you to give to somebody else.

I don't know if this happens too much in our day but it would be a very common thing in the ancient world. You then become a debtor until you have handed over that message, that item, that sum of money to the person it was intended for.

So likewise with the gospel we have been given this enormous sum and I think by the way it's the second one that is very helpful for us. So likewise with the gospel we have been given an enormous sum freely and lavishly by God.

He has given us salvation. He has given us his very son. And Paul is saying here that it is not just a prize or a gift for us to hold and to cherish but the way to truly cherish the gospel to truly cherish Christ is to continue sharing him with others.

[38 : 02] It's an ongoing debt that we owe to all whom the Lord desires to call to himself that we are connected to. Now that freaks you out it's okay consider verse 15 so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Paul is not saying listen you are heavy laden with a debt to evangelize suck it up. He is communicating immediately after that he is eager that he is excited that he is joyful to do so.

Listen to struggle with sharing our faith is a real thing but again circling back to prayer and the community that you're a part of is to rightly understand that you can't do this by yourself.

Again this is an implication of the gospel but not for you solo but for you to look to others for strength and pointers and that includes reading biographies and church history and digging into the scriptures and asking the Lord for help but nevertheless this is our calling this is gospel implication.

I think it starts at home. I think it starts among us. Notice how Paul is very clear that in verse 13 that he is hoping to reap a harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.

[39 : 25] Verse 15 he is eager to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome. Paul is trying to preach the gospel to Christians not because he thinks that they need to get saved every day or every moment but rather the gospel is something for the unbelieving world but also for us so start at home.

Start in your home. Start with your children if you have them, with your spouse if you have one, with parents or friends, with fellow believers here. It doesn't mean hey let me tell you about the bridge analogy.

You know you hand somebody a track here on a Sunday but it's saying listen the Lord has blessed me this week. Let me tell you how it happened.

Or I was just thinking through this implication of what it means to live according to the gospel in Romans chapter 1. this is what the Lord spoke to me or gave me an insight about.

And all of a sudden we begin to talk about the Lord. We begin to talk about Christ and that becomes the next thing after small talk. It also is my job to help equip us to feel confident to share the gospel to rightly understand it and your job to dig deep and to not give into feelings of apathy or fear.

[40 : 43] in some there's more implications but in some these three applications in some the implication of the gospel is that you will be formed and shaped into the likeness of Christ.

You'll become an imitator of him and participate in the life and ministry of Jesus himself. Let's close with this. In Matthew 13 Jesus tells two parables.

They're back to back. They're super short. One is about a man who finds a treasure in a field. Another is about a merchant who seeks an expensive pearl. In both cases these men upon finding the treasure and the pearl they sell everything they have to acquire them.

Everything. It seems crazy. It seems crazy. But Jesus tells this parable to help us see that the gospel isn't just a nice add-on to our life that kind of makes things a bit more cheery or guarantees us a place in the world to come and we kind of have that taken care of.

We move on with life. It's something that is to be all-encompassing, something that should bring us great joy and excitement. Nevertheless, for those who hear the gospel and are excited by it, who feel like, yes, there's this treasure in a field or yes, there's this pearl that I have found, yet I'm kind of afraid of throwing it all into one basket or to put all my eggs into one basket.

[42 : 15] The cost is too much. The implications are too life-changing. I want to say I hear you. And yet, on the same time, I do not want to diminish those two parables because they are beautiful and they, at the same time, are jarring.

The implications and cost of the gospel, they are great, but friends, let me assure you that there is no better life than knowing God and being known by him because of what his son has done on the cross of Calvary.

I can, and maybe this is me sharing the gospel with you guys, and maybe after the service you can do the same to one another. God has never left me or forsaken me. Okay?

The times where I think the cost is too much, here I am. Maybe you guys have a similar testimony. Okay? Maybe you have gone through a really difficult season and you're thinking the cost is too much to trust God for the everyday of my life, and yet you are still here.

He has never left you or forsaken you. Okay? This is the gospel proclaimed to you this morning from me, but proclaim it to one another. And friends, if you have that treasure in the field, if you see that pearl, sell everything you have and buy it.

[43 : 39] The cost of the field, the price of the pearl, it is worth it. And remember, you're not alone. We get to do this together. As we go through Romans these next few weeks, this is my prayer for our time in this wonderful epistle.

That we would grow into this gospel reality together. That we would bless and encourage one another. Yes, by meals and nice words and kind gestures and acts of service, very important.

But above all, by proclaiming the gospel to one another. And growing in our ability and strength to proclaim the gospel to the world we live in.

For the good news is that God has loved us. And he has demonstrated his love in us, to us, in his blessed son.

Amen. Amen.