

## "The Heart and Soul of the Gospel"

### Romans 1:1-7

#### I. Introduction

##### A. Bad news tends to get more attention than good news

1. The gospel is good news
2. The Greek word used here is *euaggelion*, which is where we get the word *evangelism*
3. Paul used the word *gospel* sixty times in the book of Romans
4. The word *gospel* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *godspell*, which means *good story*; God's story is a good story
5. The term originally came from Roman times
  - a. Heralds who were sent out into the public square to proclaim news
  - b. Someone who would make a favorable announcement

##### B. Why do I need to hear the gospel?

1. You probably haven't heard the bad news yet
  - a. Romans 1:18
  - b. Romans 3:23
2. When you understand how bad the bad news is, you will love the gospel
3. All have sinned, the wrath of God has been revealed, and you have to pay for that yourself—or let somebody else do it for you

##### C. The book of Romans is the Christian manifesto of freedom

1. Romans tells us that we have been set free, unshackled from the grip of sin and Satan, and that we are set free to become God's slaves—a slavery of freedom
2. The theme of the book is the righteousness of God
3. The book can be divided into four sections that fall under the banner of the gospel
  - a. The wrath of God
  - b. The grace of God
  - c. The plan of God
  - d. The will of God

#### II. Its Servant (v. 1)

##### A. Apart from Jesus, Paul was the most significant person in the New Testament

1. Paul was born to Jewish parents in Tarsus in Silicia—modern-day southeast Turkey
2. His name at birth was Saul, and he was probably named after King Saul
3. His Roman name was Paulus, which means *small* or *short*

##### B. Saul was a Pharisee, educated by an anti-Christian rabbi—Gamaliel

1. Saul became the chief antagonist of the early church
2. He was converted on the road to Damascus, and the chief antagonist of Christianity became the chief protagonist
3. After his conversion, Paul considered himself a bondservant of Jesus Christ
  - a. On the road to Damascus, Saul asked two questions:
    - i. "Who are You, Lord?" (Acts 9:5)

- ii. "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6)
    - b. The second question made him a bondservant of Christ
    - c. The term *bondservant* should describe every believer, and every Christian should ask both of these questions
  - C. As a Pharisee, Saul was separated from the Gentiles; after his conversion, Paul was "separated to the gospel" (v. 1)
    - 1. What are you separated to?
    - 2. It's not all about what you don't do—it's about what you do
    - 3. How do you serve the Lord?
      - a. It is possible to have a saved soul but a lost life
      - b. You can be right with God and believe in Jesus Christ but not ask Him what He wants you to do
- III. Its Source (v. 2)
- A. The gospel has its source in God
    - 1. No human would create the gospel story; nobody would write a story that says all men are condemned apart from Jesus Christ
      - a. Man-made religions are about what man can do for God—the goodness of mankind
      - b. The gospel is about what God has already done for man—the goodness of God
    - 2. The apostles didn't invent the gospel—they discovered it as it was revealed to them (see 2 Peter 1:16)
  - B. The New Testament is not an addition; it has been anticipated all along
    - 1. Matthew 5:17
    - 2. "The New is in the Old contained—the Old is in the New explained" —Augustine
    - 3. Jeremiah 31:31-34
    - 4. Acts 2:16
    - 5. Acts 26:22
  - C. The gospel is part of a continuous, progressive revelation that started in Genesis 3:15, continued through Genesis 22 and the exodus, and was predicted in Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and about 300 other Scriptures
    - 1. Biblical prophecy is not just a good guess
    - 2. It always contains multiple contingencies that cannot be known or controlled, and this gives evidence that divine authorship is involved
    - 3. Luke 24:25
- IV. Its Subject (vv. 3-4)
- A. Jesus Christ is the main subject of the Bible
    - 1. John 5:46
    - 2. The Old Testament is the anticipation of Jesus Christ
    - 3. The Gospels are the presentation of Jesus Christ
    - 4. The book of Acts is the continuation of the work of Jesus Christ
    - 5. The Epistles are the explanation and clarification of Jesus Christ
    - 6. The book of Revelation is the consummation by Jesus Christ
  - B. The prophets had many questions themselves

1. They wrote the prophecies but didn't know the totality of what they were writing
  2. I Peter 1:10-11
  3. They didn't know it when they wrote it, but it all came true in one person
- C. The Bible is about one person and two events:
1. Jesus Christ
  2. His first coming: to deal with sin
  3. His second coming: to rule and reign with those who have been cleansed from sin
- D. Paul referred to the dual nature of Jesus Christ with two titles:
1. The Seed of David
    - a. Jesus was fully human
    - b. As such, He fulfilled all of the predictions of the Messiah who would be born
  2. The Son of God
    - a. Jesus was fully God
    - b. Conceived by the Holy Spirit
    - c. Jesus has the same nature as God
- E. The good news isn't about a good man—it's about the God-man
1. Because He was fully man, He had the ability to substitute for mankind
  2. Because He was fully God, He had the capacity to save all mankind
- V. Its Scope (vv. 5-7)
- A. The gospel is not just local news; it's worldwide news
1. God sent us to tell everyone everywhere the good news; it's for every people in every place at every time
  2. Romans 3:29
  3. God's plan encompasses the whole world
- B. Christianity is not a Western religion; it's no more Western than it is exclusively Middle Eastern
1. Christianity originated in the Middle East
  2. To say that it's a Western religion defies intellect and basic knowledge of geography
  3. Matthew 28:19
  4. Luke 2:10
  5. John 3:16
  6. Acts 1:8
- C. As the gospel crosses all social and cultural barriers, so must the Christian
1. Medicine works universally; it doesn't discriminate
  2. The world has many religions, but only one gospel
- VI. Conclusion
- A. God's headline is good news
- B. The gospel is good news for two basic reasons:
1. It tells us that God exists and that He is knowable
  2. It tells us that we can know Him through the saving work of His Son, Jesus Christ
- C. Has the gospel come to you like that?

**Figures referenced:** Augustine

**Cross references:** Genesis 3:15; 22; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 5:17; 28:19; Luke 2:10; 24:25; John 3:16; 5:46; Acts 1:8; 2:16; 9:5-6; 26:22; Romans 1:18; 3:23, 29; 1 Peter 1:10-11; 2 Peter 1:16

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