

The Gospel
Rom 1:1-6
Tim Anderson 9/10/22

Paul had never visited the church in Rome.
But Rome was the capital of the empire.
Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles.
So he would have been a bit slack if he hadn't written them a note.
His letter to the Romans is a bit more than a note.
It's a really thorough exposition of the Christian faith.
Every Christian should read it and meditate on it.
So we are going to do that for a couple of months.
We're in good company.
Martin Luther's faith was transformed by reading Romans,
so was St Augustine's, so was John Wesley's.
These are three of the giants of church history.
That much alone tells you that this book is worth a read.
I didn't say it was easy though, did I?
That's OK.
If you stretch yourself, you grow.

So today we are looking at Paul's greeting at the start of the letter.
He's basically just introducing himself.
But there's so much in his introduction that we must pause on it.
Here's the thrust of it.
I'm Paul.
I'm here to preach the gospel.
This is what the gospel is.
Now that's an important word for the church today.
In the church today,
there is considerable confusion about what the gospel is.
I won't go into details about all the confusion that exists out there.
Let's just see what Paul says the gospel is.

1:1 "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus,
called to be an apostle

and set apart for the gospel of God."
So the first thing Paul tells us about the gospel,
is that it is the gospel of God.
The origin of the gospel is God.
And that's very important.
Yes this is Paul's gospel because it's the gospel he preaches.
But the message originates with God.
You think about Paul's life.
He didn't sit around pondering his philosophy on life,
and then decide that he had it all sorted.
And then set out to tell the world
all these things he'd worked out about Jesus.
It didn't work like that at all.
He hated Christians because they were preaching Jesus.
He went to get them arrested.
And then Jesus appeared to him on the road.
He was blinded.
And God gave him a job preaching the gospel
when his sight was restored.
God gave him the message.
He didn't think it up,
work it out,
or otherwise concoct it himself.
It was given to him by God.

Now that's very important.
It gives the preacher authority.
Paul absolutely.
He's an apostle.
Personally chosen and set apart by God.
He has authority because of who gave him the job.
If I send Orielle to tell Alvoli dinner's ready,
Alvoli can't say, "You can't tell me what to do."
Because Orielle has a message from me.
Alvoli wouldn't be ignoring Orielle, she would be ignoring me.
The preacher has a message from God.

If they are doing their job, they do.
And so they speak with the authority
of the one who gave them the message.
That is with God's authority.
And that even applies to the preacher today.
To a lesser extent.
I wasn't personally chosen and set apart by God.
I was chosen and set apart by the Anglican Church.
There is a sizable difference.
But nevertheless, the message I preach is God's message.
I didn't make it up.
It means when I'm preaching, I can speak with far greater authority
than I can at other times in my life.
If I'm chairing a PC meeting,
I'm the chair of the meeting.
But my opinion on the topic being discussed
whether Holy Trinity should adopt the Jerusalem Declaration
or something
is my opinion.
But today when I tell you that Paul's gospel is the gospel of God,
I am telling you something that comes from God.
And so I speak with an authority that is not my own.

The second thing Paul tells us about the gospel
is that it was promised in the Scriptures.
1:2 "The gospel he promised beforehand
through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures."
When we read about the servant of the Lord in Isaiah,
the one who was pierced for our transgressions
and crushed for our iniquities,
we are reading about Jesus.
When we read about the Son of Man in Daniel,
who was given authority, glory and sovereign power;
all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him,
we are reading about Jesus.
When we read in 2 Samuel

that God will put a descendent of David on his throne forever,
We are reading about Jesus.

When we read in Deuteronomy
about the prophet like Moses who is come,
we are reading about Jesus.

When we read about the sacrificial system in Leviticus,
we are understanding that a price must be paid for sin,
and that points us to the death of Jesus.

When God gave ten commandments written in stone to Moses,
it points to the unbreakable authority of the words of Jesus.

When God forgave the wayward sinfulness of his people in the OT,
like literally everywhere in the OT,
it's pointing God's grace in the gospel.

The gospel didn't come from nowhere.

There's a song by Michael Card that says,
"From the pages of the prophets, he stepped out into this world."
It's like Jesus walked right out of the book and into the world.

Why is that important?

It means you won't understand Jesus
if you haven't read and understood the OT.

That's a confronting word for many of us.

That's why I insist on doing a quarter of our preaching from the OT.

It means that the gospel
is the true fulfilment of the hopes of the Jewish people.

There are not two ways to be saved,
either living under the Old Covenant or the New Covenant,
there is but one way to be saved, through the gospel,
promised in the OT and revealed in Jesus.

It means that God didn't have a change of plan
when his first plan didn't work out.

His plan was always to send his Son.

Which leads us fairly naturally
to the third thing Paul tells us about the gospel.

The gospel is about Jesus.

1:3 "Regarding his Son

who as to his earthly life was a descendent of David,

and who through the Spirit of holiness

was appointed the Son of God in power

by his resurrection from the dead:

Jesus Christ our Lord."

The gospel is about Jesus.

That means it's not about feeding the hungry.

That's an outworking of the gospel but it's not gospel.

It's not about making the United States a Christian nation.

That's an impossible project

however much some sections of the US church

think it's what they are called to do.

I don't think too many Australian Christians

are dreaming about making Australia a Christian nation.

We'd just like Christians

not to be sacked from their jobs because they are Christians.

But that's not the gospel either.

The gospel is not about me being relieved of my pain and suffering,
my anxieties or addictions.

The gospel is not about getting the right answers on a theology test.

The gospel is about Jesus.

But there are particular things about Jesus

that Paul highlights as important to the gospel.

Jesus is a descendent of David.

I think that's telling you that Jesus is the king

who was promised to come in the line of David.

As we think about this gospel,

there are going to be two key truths about Jesus.

1. He paid the price for our sins.

2. He is the Lord who deserves our worship.

I guess we might think

that he deserves our worship because he paid the price for our sins.

But the truth is,

he already deserved our worship before he went to the cross.

He just didn't get the worship he deserved.
He already deserved to be worshiped
when he came to earth.
When the wise men gave him gifts,
that's because he was the promised king descended from David
and he deserved that worship.
And it was as one who was already deserving of worship
that he went to the cross.
He was a descendent of David.

He was also through the Spirit of holiness
appointed Son of God in power,
by his resurrection from the dead.
I think the Spirit of holiness is another way of saying the Holy Spirit.
So through the Holy Spirit,
he was appointed Son of God in power.
Now Jesus was already the Son of God.
That wasn't a new thing after his resurrection.
So it stands to reason that the new bit must be 'in power'.
In the manger in Bethlehem,
in the towns and villages of Judea,
in the garden of Gethsemane,
on the cross of Calvary,
he was Son of God in weakness and humility.
But after his resurrection he is the Son of God in power.

What does it mean that Jesus is Son of God in power?
Well there are some pieces of good news that you can take or leave.
There are going to be mint slices for morning tea after church.
If that were true, it would be good news.
But I don't like mint slices.
It's still good news for those of you who do like mint slices.
But I just pass on this piece of good news.

The gospel about Jesus is not that kind of good news.
Jesus is appointed Son of God in power.

After his resurrection,
he rules the world and he will return to judge the world.
The gospel is good news.
But it's good news that must be heeded.
It's good news that we have a king who has been raised from the dead.

I say we have a king who has been raised from the dead.
Who is that we?

1:5 "Through him,
we received grace and apostleship
to call all the gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith
for his name's sake."

This is the fourth thing about the gospel.

It is for everyone.

The scope of the gospel is universal.

Paul speaks of his commission as the apostle to the gentiles
to call all the gentiles.

Jesus proclaimed the good news to the Jews.

It is for everyone.

All of the Gentiles.

That means that in our gospel proclamation
we don't limit the audience to a subset of the community.

Some people play sport on Sunday mornings and others go to church.
Well that's true.

But it's pretty important
that we find a way to proclaim the gospel
to those who play sport on Sunday mornings.

Some people's parents brought them up to know Jesus
and other people were brought up in homes
without any acknowledgement of Jesus.

We need to proclaim Jesus to those who missed out at home.

I'm not saying this is easy.

I'm just saying that the nature of the gospel
doesn't allow us to limit its scope

to those whose parents saw fit to teach them the truth.

The fifth thing about the gospel is its purpose.
It's for the obedience that comes from faith.
As the author of Hebrews puts it,
"By faith, Abraham,
when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance,
obeyed and went."
This is a gospel that we don't just believe,
we obey.
Now we know that we are saved by faith alone.
That is to say,
that good works do not earn us salvation.
We will get into this as we look at Romans.
But when we respond to the gospel that Jesus is Lord,
then he's got to be Lord, right?
You obey your Lord.
Especially when your Lord is the powerful Son of God.
It's total unreserved commitment to Jesus Christ.
It means when they give you the choice
between your job at the footy club
and your church, you choose the church every time
because it's Jesus' church.
Well done Andrew Thorburn.
The purpose of the gospel is the obedience that comes through faith.

Finally, the goal of the gospel.

1:5 "Through him,
we received grace and apostleship
to call all the gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith
for his name's sake."

The goal of the gospel is the honour and glory of Jesus' name.

That's pretty obvious right?

We preach the gospel so that people will worship the Lord Jesus.

Except that it's not obvious in practice.

In practice, there is always a part of me

that thinks the goal of the gospel is the honour and glory of my name.

I got the email yesterday

that Matt and Allison Mitchell with their children
are relocating to Frankston Presy.
When it comes to the honour and glory of my name,
that's a bit of a blow.
Matt wasn't going along to church
when I met him at his grandfather's funeral.
I sat down with him after the service and chatted.
And he started coming along to Holy Trinity.
It's a decent hike from Carrum Downs.
I've often wondered how long it would be
before they decided they needed a church closer to home.
But we've shared their joys and sorrows for four years.
Baby Emily being born with cystic fibrosis.
Allisons' stints in hospital.
We've holidayed with them up on their property at Stanley.
Personally it's a blow.
Doesn't do the honour and glory of my name any good at all.
But what about the honour and glory of Jesus' name?
Well Jesus brought them along here
to get the family back going to a church
where they could praise his name.
And that was really important.
But for the glory of Jesus' name right now,
what he needed was a church where Jasper felt connected in.
We've got a great group of teenage girls in our church.
But in the boy department, we are thin on the ground.
And trips of 25 minutes in the car are doable on a Sunday
but less so on a Friday night when Dad's just come in from work,
and the younger children aren't involved in the youth group.
For the glory of Jesus name, what was needed
was a church with good Bible teaching
and where the whole family could be encouraged in the faith.
Frankston Presy is a church like that.
That's how the name of Jesus is going to be glorified
in the Mitchell's lives.
So the question for me is,

"Am I living for the gospel?"

Because if I am,

I will rejoice about the honour and glory of Jesus' name.

And I won't be concerned about the honour of my name.

That's the goal of the gospel.

And that's the introduction to Romans.

It's all about the gospel.

The origin of the gospel is God.

The gospel is promised beforehand in the Scriptures.

The gospel is about Jesus.

The gospel is for everyone.

The purpose of the gospel is the obedience of faith.

The goal of the gospel is the glory of Jesus' name.