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 Green Run Baptist Church
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 Easter Sunday Morning

THE GOSPEL OF GOD
 ROMANS 1:1-5

INTRODUCTION

*The gospel of Jesus Christ may be summarized as follows: God, in eternity past, foresaw the future sin and consequent just damnation (apart from his grace) of the human race that he would create, and he planned then and there to save lost, helpless, and hopeless sinners. Though all deserved eternal condemnation, he graciously chose people who would comprise a great host—it would include, in the end, men and women from every tribe, tongue, people and nation!—and he set out, in love, to save them from their sin. To accomplish their salvation, he chose his very own Son to enter human existence as the incarnate God-man, to live a perfect life, and to offer himself as a sinless sacrifice for the sins of others, paying the penalties that each of them owed as their sin was imputed to him in his death on the cross. By His resurrection from the dead, God vindicated his Son as the victor over sin and death. And, through repentance of their sin and faith alone in their conquering Savior, all who so savingly believe may be justified before their righteous God, be assured of God’s presence with them through all of life now, and in the end receive eternal life through his name. (Bruce Ware, **Beyond the Bounds**)*

The prologue to Romans provides 6 aspects of the gospel that we will consider on this Easter Sunday morning.

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL IS GOD (1:1)

Romans is a book about God. Every topic Paul covers, he relates back to God. The point of this phrase *gospel of God* is that Paul did not invent the gospel. The gospel was revealed and entrusted to the apostles by God. So when you or I share the gospel, we are not making it up as we go. We are speaking the revelation of God’s good news to the world.

2. THE VERIFICATION OF THE GOSPEL IS SCRIPTURE (1:2)

Although God revealed the gospel to the apostles, He had first revealed it to the prophets of the Old Testament who wrote it down as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Paul’s point is that this gospel is not new information. It was promised long ago and the fact that Jesus fulfilled promises made about him hundreds of years before His birth is verification of the truth of the gospel that Paul is now proclaiming.

3. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GOSPEL IS JESUS CHRIST (1:3-4)

The good news is good news about God’s Son. We must get this straight in our minds. Jesus is God. God is one essence or nature existing in 3 eternal persons. So when we

read that Jesus is God's Son, we are not saying that God created Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God in the sense that He does the will of His Father. Jesus is equal to His Father in every way, yet he willingly carries out the decrees of His Father and therefore, relates to His Father as His Son. In Scripture, we see God as the originator of creation and salvation and we see Jesus as the active agent carrying out God's plans.

(3.1) God's Son added a human nature to His divine nature (1:3)

Here Paul speaks of Christ's human nature. Within this phrase, there is the clear indication that Jesus possessed a nature other than his human nature. That other nature is his divine nature. This statement helps us to see that Jesus has existed from before the beginning; He is eternal. In the incarnation, Jesus, eternal God, added humanity to His divinity. That is an essential aspect of the gospel of God.

As a man, Jesus was born as a descendant of David. Jesus had to be a descendant of David in order to fulfill the Old Testament promises concerning the Messiah (2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 89:3-4, 19, 24; Isaiah 11:1-5; Jeremiah 23:5-6). This is good news (gospel) because Jesus was to be the fulfillment of all of God's promises.

(3.2) God's Son was murdered and raised from the dead (1:4)

In verse 4, Paul says something that was both shocking and thrilling. He says that Jesus was **declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.**

This was shocking because the majority of Jewish people in Paul's day expected that the Messiah would come with power and a political agenda, and would defeat the oppressive rulers of the world, the Romans, and establish an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem and live forever governing His people. But what Paul says in verse 4 implies that between verses 3 and 4 the Son of David was murdered. He died! Those who thought he was the Messiah were shocked. Kings do not get crucified. They live and conquer and rule.

Now Paul explains how this shocking death is also thrilling. This dead Messiah, Paul says in verse 4, was raised from the dead. The resurrection is at the heart of the gospel of God for two reasons mentioned here.

First of all, Jesus' resurrection was brought about by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:11 says, *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.* We will be raised to everlasting life by the Holy Spirit who lives in us. The Spirit of God is the life-giving Person of the Trinity. He hovered over the earth while bringing life during creation (Genesis 1:2). He breathed life into the first man (Genesis 2:7). He is the Spirit who brings life to those who are dead in transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1; 2 Corinthians 3:6).

Secondly, Jesus' resurrection demonstrated the power of the Son of God. The key phrase here is *with power*. The point of this phrase is not that Jesus became the Son of God at the resurrection. The truth contained in this phrase is that Christ was openly declared to be the Son of God when, by His commanding of the Holy Spirit, He raised Himself from the dead.

4. THE SCOPE OF THE GOSPEL IS ALL THE NATIONS (1:5)

There are numerous references in Scripture to God's desire to save "the world". 1 John 2:2, *He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.* 1 John 4:14, *We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.* This is meant to help us grasp the wideness of God's love. Jesus did not come to only save a few.

It is without a doubt that God has set His covenant love upon His elect in a way that guarantees our salvation, but let us not think that this act diminishes God's love for the world one ounce. God loves the world and He has made a sincere offer of grace to anyone who will receive Christ as Lord and Savior.

Anyone in the world, in any place in the world, who by faith looks to Christ will be forgiven and accepted by God. And God intends to see that this happens in every nation on this planet. By the time of Christ's return, there will be no nation that has not heard the good news of Christ.

5. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL IS OBEDIENCE THAT COMES FROM FAITH (1:5)

What is the call of the gospel? What was Paul pleading for when he preached? He is first and foremost calling for sinners to repent of sin and place their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. This is the call of every spokesman of God. How do we respond to the question, *What must I do to be saved?* We proclaim, *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...*"

But Paul does not see faith as an end in itself. Paul declares that obedience to God will spring from genuine faith. The purpose of the gospel is to change you into a person that obeys God. How do you know if you have genuine faith? Do you have a sincere desire to obey God? Do you see obedience becoming a greater part of your daily life even though you continue to struggle with sin? Do you find yourself grieving over sin in your life? The evidence of genuine saving faith is that it eventually produces consistent (not perfect) obedience in your life.

6. THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE GOSPEL IS THE HONOR OF CHRIST'S NAME (1:5)

We could ask the question, why does God not want us to work for salvation? Why must our lives be rooted in and sustained by His grace? The answer is clear. The ultimate goal of God's dealings is that His name would be praised and glorified for His wonderful grace. God's aim in all of history is that His name be known and worshipped. He is the giver of salvation, repentance and faith and therefore, he will eternally receive the glory. So your confidence should rest in the grace of God.

CONCLUSION

Because of the cross, we know Jesus as the "man of sorrows" and because of the resurrection, we know Him as "Lord over all". He has taken our sin and defeated our last enemy, death. Let God now enable us to repent of a life without Christ and grant us faith to take hold of Him with child-like faith.

[Several of the main points for this message were borrowed from John Stott, **The Message of Romans**, InterVarsity Press]