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Sermon Notes

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The Communication and Goal of the Gospel of God

Romans 1:1-7

I. The Gospel of God

A. God the Central Actor in Romans

B. God's Absolute Sovereignty in the Gospel

1. Gospel has two outcomes: righteousness for the believer, wrath for the unbeliever
2. Both are FROM GOD

Romans 1:17 "In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed..."

Romans 1:18 "The wrath of God is being revealed..."

C. Romans IS "The Gospel OF God"

1. "OF" ???
 - a. Of = point of origin... "People of North Carolina"; or "The Novels of Ernest Hemingway"

The Gospel COMES FROM God... This is NOT Paul's thoughts on life & death

- b. Of = ownership... "The possessions of the family"

The Gospel is OWNED by God... therefore He alone has the right to interpret it to us

- c. Of = content... "The story of the wise men"

The Gospel is ABOUT God... God's actions, God's wisdom, God's power, God's purposes, God's nature, God's decisions... **Therefore** this is "Gospel"

2. Gospel = "Good news"...
 - a. only good if its true , certain, guaranteed

- b. only true if it has power

Romans is “good news” because it is the “Gospel of God”...Therefore it is true, certain, guaranteed

- c. good news in that it has power to take you from hell to heaven

3. Summary: The “Gospel of God”... expect it to change everything!!!

- a. God’s sov. In salvation NOT POPULAR... but it alone can save you!
- b. This is God’s glory & your salvation!

Application: Expect meat in this book... expect it to challenge your deepest conceptions; if it did not, would it really be from God??

II. God’s Gospel Communication (vs. 2-5)

Predicted Through Scripture Performed Through the Son Proclaimed Through the Sent-Ones

A. Predicted Through Scripture

vs. “... *the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures*”

1. God’s Gospel is a PROMISED Gospel
 - a. God a PROMISING God
 - b. The Gospel itself is a fulfillment of a long-awaited promise
 - c. Christianity a PROMISED religion, the fulfillment of Judaism
2. All History Lays Open to God
 - a. Gospel worked out before the world began
 - b. No surprises, no sudden unexpected turns
 - c. Christ slain before the foundation of the world
 - d. God’s unique glory: sovereign power over time and history:
 - i) idols can’t do it!!

Isaiah 41:21-22 “Present your case,” says the Lord. “Set forth your arguments,” says Jacob’s King. “Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, TELL US WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS, so that we may know that you are gods.”

ii) God alone can... for He makes all decisions

Isaiah 42:8-9 “I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; BEFORE THEY SPRING INTO BEING, I ANNOUNCE THEM TO YOU.”

God’s prediction of the Gospel long ahead of time gives us absolute certainty that it is from God, and that it is true

3. Predicted through the Prophets

- a. Long promised, long awaited BECAUSE God spoke through the Prophets
- b. Prophet simply someone who speaks what God told him to say
- c. Prophets NEVER made up their prophecies

2 Peter 1:20-21 “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture ever came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but MEN SPOKE FROM GOD AS THEY WERE CARRIED ALONG BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.”

vs. 2 “the gospel HE PROMISED beforehand through the prophets in the holy scriptures”

4. Where are these predictions? THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

- a. Prophets commanded to write down what God told them
- b. Their writings here are called HOLY SCRIPTURES

Look at binding of your Bible ... usually says “Holy Bible”... why? Romans 1:2

- c. Holy = sacred, pure, perfect, separate, set apart, utterly unique

5. What kind of predictions?

Hebrews 1:1 “In the past God spoke to our forefathers at many times and in various ways...”

a. verbally predictive prophecies: God uttered the first

Genesis 3:15 “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

b. typically predictive prophecy

- Noah’s ark a picture of salvation through Christ alone
- Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac a picture of God’s actual sacrifice of His own Son

c. five images from Isaiah

- 1) Is. 1: the sacrificial system... every animal killed a picture of Christ’s death on the cross;
- 2) Is. 2: the mountain of the Lord’s temple: a picture of Christ’s priestly ministry & the salvation of the nations;
- 3) Is. 11: the Branch of the Lord from the stump of Jesse
- 4) Is. 7: the virgin with child called Immanuel;
- 5) Is. 9: “Unto us a child is born: wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace...”

6. Predictions through prophets all focused on CHRIST and the Gospel

Revelation 19:10 “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Summary: Our Gospel is a long-expected Gospel... it was promised in the Garden of Eden, and promised again and again through one prophet after another, one image after another... this gives absolute certainty that it is the Gospel of God

B. Performed Through the Son

vs. 3 “...regarding His Son, who as to His human nature was a descendent of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead—Jesus Christ our Lord.”

1. Gospel acted out in flesh by God’s Son, Jesus Christ
2. Long-expected Messiah comes at last in Jesus... David’s son now comes to take David’s throne

3. Key doctrines in a nutshell:

- Deity of Christ... He is God Himself, “His Son”
- Humanity of Christ... physically descended from David
- Dead for sin... read between the lines, for you can’t be raised without first dying
- Raised from the dead powerfully by “Spirit of Holiness”
- Declared therefore with POWER to be God the Son
- He is “Jesus Christ OUR LORD”... we have believed on Him, we have obeyed His Lordship

Every one of these doctrines is essential to the Gospel... every one is essential for your salvation; If you reject the deity of Christ, or His humanity, or His death on the cross, or His resurrection from the grave, or His Lordship over you personally... if you reject any of these doctrines you will die in your sins

4. Christianity a religion of POWER

- a. Christ lived and moved in the POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT
- b. Christ powerfully destroyed sin’s penalty through the cross
- c. Christ declared with power to be God the Son by resurrection
- d. The Gospel alone possess power over sin!!

C. Proclaimed Through the Sent-Ones (Apostles)

vs. 5 “Through Him [Christ] and for his name’s sake we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.”

1. Next stage of God’s Gospel: Proclamation through Sent-Ones... the apostles
2. Through Christ, Paul & other apostles received their apostleship
 - a. Witnesses to Christ’s miraculous life
 - b. Witnesses to Christ’s atoning death
 - c. Witnesses to Christ’s powerful resurrection
 - d. Proclaimers of these truths with authority

e. Therefore, the FOUNDATION of the church

Ephesians 2:20 “...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”

Our access to the apostles and the prophets? The Holy Scriptures!!

Paul and the other apostles travelled throughout their world, proclaiming the message of the Gospel, so that all nations might come to the obedience of faith

3. BUT not just apostleship, but GRACE and apostleship

- a. Paul saw his ministry as grace from God
- b. Other places it is God’s sovereign determination to save us in Christ despite what our sins deserve
- c. Here, it is God’s sovereign empowerment for ministry, despite Paul’s status as a sinner

4. The message of GRACE

- a. utterly foundational to understanding Romans... 155 times in NT, over 100 times in Paul, almost one-quarter of them in Romans
- b. Generally misunderstood: man in the street
 - i) Grace = Princess of Monaco who died in a car crash in 1982
 - ii) grace = the beautiful movements of a skilled ballerina
 - iii) grace = a simple prayer said before a meal
- c. Biblically: Grace is what Paul says took him from hating Jesus Christ and persecuting Christ’s church to worshipping Jesus Christ and building Christ’s church
- d. Grace comes through Christ: **“Through HIM, and for His name’s sake...”**
- e. Grace comes to the completely undeserving... it can never be earned or it is no longer grace

Romans 4:4 “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift but as a debt.”

Romans 11:6 “If it is by grace then it is no longer on the basis of works. If it were, grace would no longer be grace.”

The moment you work for it, it is not grace... grace comes by faith through Christ FREELY GIVEN to the one who does not work

We receive grace simply by faith... a passive reception of God’s precious gifts

5. Grace as apostleship
 - a. spiritual gifts given by grace

Romans 12:6 “We have different gifts according to the grace given us.”

- b. Paul considered his life as an apostle a gift of God’s grace
 - c. so also is YOUR calling AND your spiritual gift... Sunday school teacher, administrator, evangelist, helper
6. Grace empowered Paul to do his ministry... day by day, he received what he needed to carry out his ministry to the Gentiles

1 Corinthians 15:10 “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect; no I worked harder than all of them; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.”

You must understand grace early in this book... or Romans = stumbling blocks

Summary: God’s Gospel Communication

- A. Predicted Through Scripture
- B. Performed Through the Son
- C. Proclaimed Through the Sent-Ones (Apostles)

III. God’s Gospel Goal (vs. 5-7)

Question: Why the Gospel of God? What is God’s goal? God is a purposeful being, what is His purpose in this long-predicted gospel which He fulfilled through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, and which He now proclaims through Sent-ones

- A. Glad Submission of the Nations

B. “For His Name’s Sake”: The Glory of God

A. Glad Submission of the Nations

vs. 5 “... we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.”

1. Universal call: “Call” is the proclamation of the Gospel
 - a. a command from the eternal sovereign King: repent and believe the good news
 - b. supernatural call: Holy Spirit moves while the words are being said and produces faith in the hearts of hearers
 - c. Universal: ALL the Gentiles... no people group, no tribe, no language is excluded
2. Call to what? Obedience that comes from faith
 - a. Faith comes from hearing the word
 - b. Saving faith immediately produces OBEDIENCE!!!
 - c. No such thing as accepting Jesus as Savior but not as Lord

vs. 4 “Jesus Christ OUR LORD”

- d. Paul is going to hammer on this in Romans 6: You are slaves to the one you obey
3. Obedience problem is ALWAYS a FAITH problem
 - a. pattern of disobedience: work on your faith
 - b. saturate your mind in the word of God
 - c. submit to its vision of a sovereign Lord
4. What kind of obedience? GLAD OBEDIENCE
 - a. treasured possession

vs. 6 “You also among those called to BELONG TO JESUS CHRIST.”

- b. not obedience of a slave

vs. 7 “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints...”

- c. “Loved by God” = treasured possession

d. called to be saints = set apart as joyfully holy, Christ's treasured possession

The initial goal of the Gospel is the glad submission of people from every tribe and language and people and nation... no longer rebels under the wrath and curse of God, but now treasured possessions, even adopted children, holy and dearly loved!

BUT that is not God's ultimate end, not His ultimate purpose:

B. "For His Name's Sake": The Glory of God

vs. 5 *"Through Him and FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE we received grace and apostleship..."*

1. Name = name of Jesus Christ
2. Name is the summation of all the God is in Christ

Piper: "The ultimate goal of all God's dealings is that His name (or the name of Christ who is His image) would be known and admired and cherished and praised above all other realities."

3. God is utterly passionate about the glory of His name

Psalm 138:2 *"... you have exalted above all things your name and your word."*

Romans 9:17 *"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.'"*

Ephesians 1: *"to the praise of His glory"* **Three times!**

The primary reason God saves anyone is for the praise of His glorious name

4. Paul's passion in ministry was the glory of God's name
 - a. God's grace empowered him moment by moment
 - b. Thus God got all the glory for Paul's apostleship
5. PIPER: BUT is God's passion for His own glory loving??

Two answers:

- a. Our salvation depends on God exalting His own name

Romans 10:13 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

If God stays quiet about the glory of His own name, we will never call on that name for salvation

- b. Our eternity in heaven is totally focused on the glory of God

Romans 5:2 “...we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

We REJOICE, we are GLAD to exult in the glory of God’s name... the truly redeemed LOVE to talk about the majesty of God’s name—they’ll spend eternity in heaven doing so

The glory of God’s name is the goal of ALL truly redeemed people

IV. Summary and Application

A. What We Have Learned

1. “The Gospel of God”

- God is sovereign in salvation
- The gospel is HIS... He thought it up, He rules over its power, He Himself is the content of the gospel... He will not change its content to please the modern ear
- Therefore, the gospel is powerful, guaranteeing salvation for its believers
- AND THAT IS GOOD NEWS

2. God’s Gospel Communication

- Predicted through the Scriptures
- Performed through the Son
- Proclaimed through the “Sent-Ones” (Apostles) “Grace and apostleship”

3. God’s Gospel Goal

- Glad submission of the nations **“The obedience that comes from faith”**
- His own glory **“For His name’s sake”**

B. How Should We Live?

1. Submit yourself to the gospel... don't try to change its message; let the words of Romans come to you as from God Himself
2. Realize this gospel has come to produce the obedience that comes from faith... "Faith comes from hearing"... hear this word!
3. Begin to think of yourself as living moment-by-moment only for the glory of God