

Sunday Morning Sermon

November 01, 2020

“The Gospel of God, Part 1”

Romans 1:1-7

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¹ Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴ and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. ⁵ Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, ⁶ among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

***⁷ To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

The title of our sermon this morning is “The Gospel of God.” If you’re visiting with us today we have the great joy and privilege as a church to have embarked upon a journey through the epistle of Paul to the Romans. Through Paul’s own greeting now in chapter 1, verses 1 through 7, we’re being introduced to this letter. As we’re working through the introduction – it’s important that we take time in the introduction – we’ve spent some time getting to know our author in verse 1 where Paul introduces himself as a slave of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, separated or set apart for the proclamation of the Gospel of God. Now having introduced himself as the Lord’s slave in verse 1, Paul then begins to develop his subject or introduce the substance of his letter then, in verse 2.

It is the gospel of God, verse 2: ***which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*** So, we have the slave and we have his subject.

Paul has been separated. He has been set apart to the Gospel of God – verse 1. That being understood, Paul wastes absolutely no time in getting down to it in verse 2. Paul no longer lives for himself. He is a slave of Jesus Christ. He’s not his own. He’s been bought with a price. He now lives for the One who died for Him and rose again. Paul, verse 1, is a called apostle. Having been redeemed, having been purchased by Jesus Christ with His own blood, Paul is given a unique calling as an eye-witness of the risen Lord. Paul is then set apart. He’s set apart from his mother’s womb, set apart from sin, set apart from self – from this world – set apart, if you will, from common use. And like a sanctified vessel in the temple, Paul is consecrated to holy use. He is separated to the Gospel of God.

In other words, Paul’s calling, Paul’s mission, Paul’s life work is the proclamation, communication, explanation, application of the Gospel of God. Paul would say to the Corinthians, “I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Although Paul’s calling, Paul’s ministry

certainly unique to the Apostle Paul – Spurgeon would call evangelism, preaching the Gospel, “the life business of the Christian.” – in that we’re to imitate Paul as Paul imitates Christ.

We’ve been given a great treasure. As Paul, we’ve been given a great stewardship. We need to labor with it as Paul did. Paul would say, ***“For necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”*** As we consider the Gospel of God – that Gospel that’s been promised before – remember with me both the source and the substance of the Gospel.

1) The Source of the Gospel

Note first the source. It is the Gospel of God. Paul’s speaking specifically of God the Father. The Gospel is the good news that originates with, is promised by, revealed by, given by God Himself. It is God’s Gospel. Paul would say to Timothy, (1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 11) it is: ***the glorious gospel of the blessed God–***

Therefore, the Gospel is not to be dressed up or dressed down. The Gospel is not to be tampered with, altered, water down, washed out, spruced up. The Gospel is not to be adjusted, tampered with, modified to suit your circumstances. The Gospel is a word from God the Father concerning His Son Jesus Christ, and it is to be proclaimed in His name, given His authority, and authenticated by a work of His Spirit. It is the Gospel of God.

Now Paul told the church at Corinth, He said: ***“when I came to you (brethren, I) did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*** Paul is speaking of the Gospel.

Romans chapter 1, verse 16, Paul would say: ***For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,*** – In other words, there is no salvation apart from the proclamation of the Gospel which God Himself has given. And that’s the source of the Gospel. It is the Gospel of God.

2) The Substance of the Gospel

The substance of the Gospel is the *euangelion* – literally “*the good news.*” We are to proclaim the good news that has come into the world from God, the full revelation of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ by which God Himself reconciles lost sinners, and condemns sinners to Himself. It is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. How the Son of God took the form of a slave, how He came in the likeness of men, the promised Christ, the One anointed by God to be Prophet, Priest and King to His people, how He became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross, a perfect sacrifice for sin, a perfect sacrifice for sinners, then raised from the dead, exalted to the right hand of the Father, reigning now until all His enemies are made His footstool.

It is the good news of how God the Father fulfilled all His good pleasure in glorifying God the Son by exalting Him as a matchless Savior, enthroned in the praise of a redeemed people. That message cannot possibly be improved upon. It can’t possibly be reduced. Damned is the one who tampers with it – Galatians chapter 1. Damned is the one who rejects it – John chapter 3, verse 18 – and keep reading Right?

I've heard it said once before that the Gospel of God is a message of good news about our Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the salvation of His bride, the people of God. And a wedding is such a beautiful picture of this reality. We have weddings here. I love weddings for how they picture the Gospel. We're going to be loaded up with weddings here next year. The calendar's filling up. If you're thinking about getting married you better get on there quick. Central to the proclamation of the Gospel is the person and work of the Bridegroom in His salvation of His bride.

But of critical importance to understanding the wedding is the bridal party that attends the marriage. All the bridesmaids and the groomsmen that flank either side of the happy couple. Well, on the side of the bridegroom – if you want to use this metaphor and think of it in this way – on the side of the bridegroom you have the best man. The good news concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the work of the Bridegroom makes absolutely no sense unless we understand our relationship to God, God the Father, God's holiness, God's goodness, God's justice, God's judgment, God's love, God's mercy, God's grace. We don't understand the Gospel unless we understand our relationship to God.

On the side of the bride, ordinarily you'd have the maid of honor – really you have the maid of dishonor, the reality of our sin. The maid of dishonor. We have the flanking bridesmaids of repentance and faith. We really don't understand the Gospel unless we understand our relationship to God the Father. And we don't understand the Gospel unless we understand those attendants flanking the bride – our sin namely and the response of repentance and faith.

In other words, the mere proclamation of the person and work of Jesus Christ, without these attendants, so to speak, is an incomplete proclamation of the Gospel. And then we're to preach, as Paul would say, the whole counsel of God. It's this message of the Gospel of God that Paul will spend the next 16 chapters in this letter unpacking. He's going to unpack it for us in all its technicolor splendor, as it were, in his presentation of the Gospel. It's the theme of this letter. Now someone might think, "That's the theme of the letter, the gospel? Paul's going to spend 16 chapters preaching the Gospel to this church full of believers at Rome? There must have been a lot of lost people there." No, Paul calls them saints. Paul addresses them as brethren. He speaks of their mutual faith together. Paul says in verse 15: I'm ready to preach the Gospel to you, those believers in the church at Rome.

So why would we – you and I brothers and sisters – why would we need the Gospel of God preached to us from this letter to a church at Rome full of believers, Jew and Gentile? Well, brothers and sisters, I would submit to you that we have a lot to learn about the Gospel. We have a lot to learn. Comprehending, understanding, apprehending, meditating on the truths of the Gospel promotes holiness. It promotes holiness in the life of a believer. It promotes love, doesn't it? It promotes gratitude. It promotes Christ likeness. It's a means through which God's people are preserved in the faith. We need to hear the Gospel, meditate on the Gospel, we need to have the Gospel preached to us all the time. We need the Gospel preached to us as well. It should fuel our worship, exalt your heart in praise at the hearing of the Gospel, what Jesus Christ has done for sinners. It should teach us to love one another; love one another as we've been loved. It should cultivate hope in the heart and mind of the believer. It should cultivate joy. You and I should never get enough of hearing about the Gospel. We're going to spend a lot of time in Romans hearing about the Gospel.

We're going to move faster. We're taking some time in the beginning. We're going to go a little faster eventually. We're not going to go faster today.

So, having considered the source of the Gospel, the substance of the Gospel then becomes the subject of our letter. After introducing himself, Paul introduces his grand subject in verses 2 through 4. And what

we find in verses 2 through 4 is that the Gospel begins with a promise. The Gospel begins with a promise and that promise concerns a Person. We're going to consider our subject now, verses 2 through 4, under three headings. Each of these three headings is an exhortation drawn from Paul's point.

First, we are to trust the promise of the Gospel – verse 2. The Gospel that Paul is preaching is that Gospel which God Himself has promised before. It is a Gospel that is trustworthy. **Repent, and believe in the gospel.** Do you see? Next, we're to trust the Person of the Gospel, verses 3 through 4. The Gospel promise concerns a Person, namely the promised Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. And He is trustworthy in His Person and trustworthy in His work. Lastly, we'll conclude with a brief look forward at our responsibility to pursue the purpose of the Gospel that Paul will reference in verse 5.

1) Trust the Promise of the Gospel

Now look first with me at verse 2. The Gospel of God is that which He, God the Father – **promised before through His prophets** (notice they are His prophets) **in the Holy Scriptures.** Now this is a critical point beginning at verse 2. It's an intensely important point that Paul makes right here at the outset of the letter. There were those in Paul's day, namely Jews, who would have been walking around, running around after Paul, who would have said, "Paul, you're a heretic. You're preaching something new. You've abandoned the Law. You've abandoned the prophets. You've abandoned our moorings of the Old Testament. You've abandoned monotheism. You've abandoned the Shema 'Our God, our God is One.' You've abandoned everything we grew up with." They certainly would have said, "If it's new, it's not true." And they rejected Paul and they rejected the Gospel message that Paul was preaching. Paul says, "No. No! The Gospel I'm preaching, the Gospel of God, was something that God Himself promised before."

Notice the means, verse 2, through which the promise of the Gospel was given. God promised the Gospel through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. Now listen, when Paul references God's prophets in verse 2, He's not using that term for prophets in a limited sense, referring to those major and minor prophets you find at the end of your Old Testament. Paul is referring to that prophetic office. He's referring to those men, anointed by God, sent by God to speak the Word of God to the people of God. Now notice it was God who had promised the Gospel before, through the means of His prophets. In other words, when the prophet spoke, God was speaking. When the prophet spoke, he was speaking God's words. Now Moses was described as a prophet. David was referred to as a prophet. Hebrews chapter 1, verse 1: **God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets** – by means of His prophets, those men that spoke from God.

Now notice the further means of this revelation in verse 2: That promise of the Gospel that God had given through His prophets was communicated or revealed in Holy Scriptures. It's not particular 'in the Holy Scripture.' It's just 'in holy writings' – 'in Holy Scriptures.' In other words, we have the revelation of God given to the prophets and now we have Scripture given by inspiration of God. Do you see the two points? The revelation of God and inspiration. Notice the character of that revelatory work of God, the Word, the promise given through His prophets in Holy Scriptures. The character of that revelatory work of God is this: this writing, this revelation of God is set apart. It's certainly morally pure, but also, it's distinct. It's unique, set apart from common use and consecrated for God's use. It is God's promise, God's Word given through His prophets in holy, set apart, consecrated, sanctified Scriptures. These writings are holy writings.

Why? Why is that the case? Because God is speaking. When you read your Bible, God is speaking. It is God's Word. That joke comes to mind, "You want to hear God speak? Read your Bible. You want Him to speak audibly to you? Read your Bible out loud." God is speaking in the Bible. God is speaking in holy, set

apart, sanctified, consecrated Scriptures. Peter would say, 2 Peter chapter 1, verse 20: ***no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation***, (Did you get that? – because) ***prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit***. That's a means of describing inspiration, the inspiration of the Scriptures. This is the inspired breathed out Word of the Living God.

So, the promise of the Gospel then, given by God Himself beforehand is contained, is revealed in the writings, the holy writings of Scripture. The character and the nature of that written revelation is holy. It is set apart to a divine purpose, set apart for divine use to reveal the promise that God spoke or gave before. Do you see? That's the purpose of the Scriptures spoken before by God. Now, what's Paul referring to here? Paul's obviously referring to the whole of the Old Testament. Now think with me, Paul's referring to the entirety of the Old Testament Scripture where God Himself made this promise of the Gospel beforehand. The Gospel, in other words, that Paul is preaching in his day, the Gospel that Paul is preaching through this letter to us, to you and I, is the Gospel which God promised before through the means of His prophets in holy writings, in Holy Scriptures. He's speaking of the Old Testament.

In other words, this is not a human book. This is not a human book. It's not that men thought up these things and over millennia wrote down their own opinions about how these things were to go and somehow disclosed this glorious message that we have. No, that is futile and absurd. These are the promises, the words of the Living God. These Holy Scriptures reveal what God Himself has promised before through His prophets. Men appointed by God, to speak the Word of God, to the people of God and to the nations. They are prophecies, they're words from God to the nations.

Listen to Peter, 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 10. This explains this well. Listen: ***Of this salvation*** (you could say of this Gospel promise) – ***Of this salvation*** (this Gospel promise) ***the prophets have inquired and searched carefully***, (those prophets) ***who prophesied of the grace that would come to you***, (This is fascinating to me. Those prophets were prophesying of the grace that would come to you and I in the preaching of the Gospel. The searched carefully) ***searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating*** (That's inspiration. Do you see?) ***when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow***. (Where are the promises? Where is the revelation of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow? Where are those contained? They're contained in the Old Testament.) God promised the Gospel before through His prophets in the holy writings, in the Holy Scriptures.) ***To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us*** (to you and I) ***they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into***. It's a fascinating text.

Paul is asserting that the Gospel he is preaching is not a break from the Scriptures. It's not a break from that which God had revealed in the Old Testament. It's not a departure from the Old Testament. It's not a new message. It's actually a very old message. It's promised from the beginning. And what Paul is preaching now is the fulfillment of all that God had promised before. That's why we talk about a promised fulfillment interpretation of the Bible, or a promise and fulfillment hermeneutic – the study of the interpretation of the Scriptures. All that God has promised before, through the means of His prophets in Holy Scripture is now fulfilled or will be fulfilled in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Promise and fulfillment. It's critical for us to understand this. If we're going to understand our Bibles, it's critical for us to understand this. And as we work through Paul's epistle to the Romans, we're going to get an earful of that. It's all throughout this letter.

Paul's letter to the Romans quotes the Old Testament more than any other of Paul's letters. Sixty times he's quoting passages from the Old Testament. What's Paul saying? Paul is saying that this Gospel, this promise of God was given before and this is nothing new. This is a fulfillment of all that God has promised before. It's critical for us to understand.

Now there are people who believe today that people in the Old Testament were saved differently from us; were saved differently than those people in the New Testament. This is going to refute that, going to rebuke that. There are theologians, professing Christians today, who believe that the Old Testament does not apply to us. It's a closed book. You can go ahead and rip the Old Testament out of your Bible. As a matter of fact, go ahead and rip most of the Gospels out of your Bible too because that was preached to Jews. "We don't need that. We're the New Testament church." And they're dividing up the Bible. "We should abandon the Old Testament." Many would say that those Old Testament promises are not our promises. "There's a different people on a different program. They have different promises. They end up in a different place. They end up there at a different time." No, there is one people of God.

Paul says at the beginning of this letter, "No!" That's what Paul is saying, "No!" There is an essential unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament; and Romans is going to explain that essential unity. There is a continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible as a whole – Old Testament, New Testament together – beautifully, wondrously, magnificently progressively reveals over time the promised redemption of sinful man, promised before and fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. To divorce the New Testament from the Old Testament is to divorce the promise from its fulfillment. To divorce the apostolic preaching of the Gospel from its foundation, from its roots, from its ground in the Old Testament.

Now let me give you an example of this. Let me give you an example from Paul's own preaching. Turn with me to Acts chapter 13. This is an example from Paul's own preaching. In fact, Acts chapter 13 contains the first recorded evangelistic sermon that we have here from the Apostle Paul after his conversion. It's the first recorded evangelistic sermon that we have in the Bible from the Apostle Paul after he was saved on the road to Damascus. Paul and Barnabas have departed the church at Antioch on Paul's first missionary journey. And they travel and arrive at another Antioch, Antioch in Pisidia, and what does Paul do? What was Paul's custom? Paul goes into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he sits down. The attendant, the head of the synagogue asks if anyone has a word of exhortation for the people. And in verse 16 Paul begins. Where does he begin? Where does he start? He starts with the Old Testament history of Israel.

Look at verse 16: ***Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it.*** Where does he start? He starts in the Old Testament with God's deliverance of the people of Israel. From the Old Testament history of Israel, Paul reveals the promise of the Gospel that has now been fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 20: ***After that He (God) gave them judges (We've been looking at Judges on Sunday nights.) He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'***

Look at verse 23: ***From this man's seed***, (David, an Old Testament king) ***according to the promise***, (What's the promise? It's the promise of the Gospel. What's that promise? That's the promise of the Gospel!) ***according to the promise. God raised up for Israel a Savior*** (Now where did that promise originate? It originated in the Old Testament. And it originated here with the history of Israel and with the coming of David and the son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ.) ***God raised up for Israel a Savior— Jesus—*** (verse 24) ***after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'*** Jesus Christ would come in fulfillment of Old Testament promises.

Verse 26: ***"Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham,*** (Why does he mention that? Because Abraham was their historical father. Right? Father Abraham.) ***sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation*** (What salvation is he speaking of? That salvation that was promised in the Old Testament) ***the word of this salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him*** (Jesus Christ). Do you see? This is a fulfillment of all the prophets spoke in times past in the Holy Scriptures.

Verse 28: ***And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death.*** The death of Jesus Christ, was that a cosmic accident? God has this plan for Jesus Christ and all of a sudden Jesus Christ gets condemned and goes to the cross? No, no, no, no. This was all as God had determined that it would take place. This is the Gospel promised before through the prophets in holy writings. Verse 29: ***Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him,*** (When they had according to the foreknowledge of the determined purpose of God taken Him by lawless hands and crucified Him according to the Scriptures) ***they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you*** (good news) ***glad tidings—*** (we declare to you the Gospel) ***that promise which was made to the fathers.*** (When was it made to the fathers? Old Testament. In the Scriptures. Verse 33: ***God has fulfilled this*** (fulfilled this promise) ***for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus.***

As it is also written in the second Psalm: (quoting the Old Testament) Do you see what Paul is doing? Paul is taking this glorious Gospel, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, this Gospel that has been fulfilled in His person and His work, and He is anchoring that Gospel, anchoring that work in the Old Testament. In the proclamation of the Gospel in the Old Testament. – ***As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are my Son, today I have begotten You.'*** (speaking of the Lord's resurrection. Verse 34) ***And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:*** (Isaiah chapter 55, verse 3 – Old Testament) ***'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'***

Verse 35: ***Therefore He also says in another Psalm:*** (Psalm 16, verse 10) ***'You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption.'*** Do you see what Paul is doing here? Paul is belaboring this point, isn't he? And this is replete in the preaching and teaching of the Apostle Paul. All over the Bible.

Verse 36: ***For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:***

A prophecy of salvation. A prophecy of judgment. All that God has spoken in the Old Testament will come to pass. All of His promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ. All of His promises of coming judgment will be fulfilled by the Judge Jesus Christ. He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness. He has given evidence of that to all by raising that Man Jesus Christ from the dead. ***‘Behold, you despisers, marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, a work which you will by no means believe, though one were to declare it to you.’***”

Well, on the next Sabbath almost the whole city comes back out again to hear more about how the Gospel of God was promised before in the Old Testament. Can you imagine? You have the Scriptures, the Old Testament Scriptures, all that God has written in the Old Testament that has largely been mysterious to you; you can’t quite put it together. And all of a sudden at the preaching of the Gospel the Holy Spirit enlightening your understanding, giving them eyes to see, ears to hear, and the Scriptures come alive and you see in them, everywhere you look the Lord Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of the promise where before you didn’t see it. It’s beautiful, right? Wondrous! The whole city comes back out to hear him.

Listen, that’s what it was like when the Lord saved me. This book was just like a closed book to me. Just a trail of stories and axioms and instruction to have a good happy life. But I didn’t see it. I didn’t apprehend. I didn’t comprehend, nor did I apprehend. I just didn’t get it until the Spirit of God gave me eyes to see and ears to hear. And it’s a wonder! It’s a marvel, what God has done in Jesus Christ!

The Gentiles there heard that God had determined in the Old Testament – God had determined to preach the Gospel to them; that light was to come upon the Gentiles. And they heard that from the preaching of the Gospel in the Old Testament. Amazing, isn’t it? Verse 48: ***they glorified the word of the Lord*** (it’s God’s Word) – ***they glorified the word of the Lord.*** (the gospel promised by God Himself before) ***And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.***

It’s interesting, isn’t it? What was it that convinced them that Paul’s preaching was the truth of the Gospel? What was it that convinced them? They saw it themselves in the Bible. They saw it themselves in the Old Testament Scriptures! This was a promised message! Listen, that’s the way that we need to be. We need to be convinced, not by man’s opinions, not by persuasive words of human or worldly wisdom; we need to be convinced from the Scriptures about everything that we think, and believe, and do. Everything!

It’s not the Gospel, it’s not salvation to you for you to merely believe something sincerely. Now that gets preached all the time today. “If you just believe with your heart. Believe with all your heart.” Listen, it doesn’t matter how sincere you are if you’re bring sincere about error. It matters what you believe and it matters Who you believe. This is the Gospel of God promised before in the Holy Scriptures and that promise concerns a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. It matters what you believe and Who you believe in. What doesn’t matter is your sincerity and believing in error. You’ll find yourself in hell. Like the Bereans in Acts 17, they searched the Scriptures diligently to see if these things were so. They searched the Scriptures.

This is a common refrain in the preaching of Paul. We’re going to see it repeatedly throughout this letter. Promise and fulfillment. Let me give you an example: Romans chapter 3, verse 21: ***But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*** (another phrase in the Bible, word group for the Old Testament) ***even*** (verse 22) ***the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.*** What was it that was witnessed by the Law and the Prophets in the Old Testament? – ***even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.***

“The people in the Old Testament, they didn’t get the whole Gospel.” I beg to differ. Paul begs to differ. They heard the Gospel. They had the Gospel preached to them, revealed to them. That’s how people in the Old Testament were saved, just as people in the New Testament today are saved.

Listen to how Paul closes this letter. Romans chapter 16, look there beginning at verse 25. Paul closes the letter, Romans chapter 16, verse 25. Listen: ***Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.***

This is a mystery, the mystery of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ now made manifest. And it's made manifest – look at what Paul says – made manifest by the prophetic Scriptures. In other words, made manifest by the Old Testament Scriptures; those holy writings according to the commandment of the everlasting God. Paul was preaching what God had always intended, what God Himself had promised long before. He was preaching that through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, now fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Galatians chapter 3, verse 7: ***Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*** (Who are the sons of Abraham? Those who are Jews outwardly? Who are the sons of Abraham?) ***Therefore know that only those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, (Old Testament Scripture) foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel (that Gospel promised long beforehand by God) preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you (Abraham) all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*** It's a wonder. It's a marvel. It's glorious. It's beautiful. It's matchless in its wisdom! Matchless.

Romans chapter 11, Paul is meditating on all that God had promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. And he was marveling with wonder and amazement, astonishment at the fulfillment of all those promises with a thundering 'Yes!' and 'Amen!' in Jesus Christ. And his awe of all God's work through the Gospel leads to worship. Paul says:

***Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!***

***“For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has become His counselor?”
“Or who has first given to Him
And it shall be repaid to Him?”***

***For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things,
to whom be glory forever. Amen.***

Now we should, brothers and sisters, as we consider the wisdom of God in the Gospel which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, we should be compelled to worship in wonder and amazement for all that God has done. It's amazing! It is an absolute wonder.

What is Paul's point then, in connecting the Gospel that he is preaching to the Old Testament Scriptures? What's Paul's point? Here, at the very outset of the letter, verse 2, he's stating that this is a trustworthy message. This is a trustworthy message. Trust the promise of the Gospel! The Gospel is grounded in the Old Testament. Listen, brothers and sisters, the Gospel is grounded in the very words of the Living God from cover to cover in the Bible. It is God's Word, no matter what naysayers and fools will say.

Us today, we are to trust and to learn to love your Old Testament, learn to understand how the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We are the sons of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ! We've been grafted in. These are our Scriptures! They are written for our admonition, Paul says, "upon whom the end of the old ages has come." This should impact how you and I read the Old Testament, how we understand the Old Testament, what we believe from the Old Testament, how we see the Old Testament interpreted by New Testament authors. This should all impact our understanding of the Bible, how we read the Bible, how we see and understand the Bible. And we're gonna grow in our understanding of that as we work through this letter together.

2) Trust the Person of the Gospel

Now notice next – point two on your notes – that promise of the Gospel, which God promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerns a Person. That promise concerns a Person. Paul is calling us to trust the promise of the Gospel. Paul is calling us to trust the Person of the Gospel. The Gospel, the good news is that which God, verse 2: ***promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures***, (verse 3) ***concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord***, – See that connection? It's His Son, our Lord. The promised Gospel concerns a Person. The Person is the Son of God. His Son, verse 3, who is Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, the Gospel that Paul is preaching concerns Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the Gospel, the good news that Paul says was promised by God before, through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures; the books of our Old Testament. So, who then, is the focus of the Old Testament Scriptures? Who's the focus of those holy writings? Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of all those promises. Do you see? Jesus Christ is the focus of the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus Christ our Lord. With this statement Paul is simply affirming what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said about the Old Testament Scriptures. Listen: Jesus Christ in confrontation with the Jewish leaders in John chapter 5, verse 39, Jesus said: ***"You search the Scriptures***, (he's talking about the Old Testament) ***"You search the Scriptures, for in them (the Old Testament) you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*** (Jesus says. Verse 46:) ***For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; (Why? Because Moses) wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"***

With the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke chapter 24, verse 27, listen: ***And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets***, (the Old Testament) ***He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*** That's why Paul would say to the Corinthians: 'I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' Why? Because Jesus Christ is the focus of the Scriptures. Old Testament, New Testament.

We find the first recorded mention of this promise – that which was promised before – we find that all the way back in Genesis chapter 3, at the very beginning of your Bible. Genesis chapter 3, verse 15. Immediately upon the fall of man into sin and despair, God reveals the promise. That promise concerns a Person. Listen:

So the Lord God said to the serpent: (this is in the midst of the curse) ***the Lord said to the serpent "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed;*** (Paul would later say, "Notice, it's "Seed" singular.) – ***between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."***

What's revealed there? What is that that is being revealed? Genesis chapter 3. That promised good news, promised long before by God through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerns the Seed of the woman. A descendant of the woman who would crush – that word means "to crush" or "to strike" – would crush the head of the serpent. That promise has been fulfilled – Praise God! – fulfilled in a Person.

Galatians chapter 4, verse 4: ***But when the fullness of the time had come,*** (Why wasn't it the immediate Seed of the woman? There's something called "the fullness of time" that needed to be filled before the Promised Seed would come.) ***But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son,*** (at the right time) ***God sent forth His Son,*** (our Lord) ***born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.***

We're gonna consider the glorious person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ next week. It would be these truths that would compel Paul to say in Romans chapter 1, verse 16: ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it*** (in the Gospel) ***the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written,*** (quoting an Old Testament prophet Habakkuk – Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 4) ***"The just shall live by faith."*** We'll talk about that passage more next week.

What has also been revealed there though, in the garden, contained there in the curse associated with man's sin is also Romans chapter 1, verse 18. ***For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*** – The wrath of God is revealed there in the garden as well.

The righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel overcomes the condemnation of the Law against our sin. And just as the Gospel was promised by God long before and now speaks to us in the present, the Law also speaks to you in the present. The Law exposes your sin. The Law exposes your transgression against a Holy and Just God. The Law condemns you as a guilty sinner. There is no way to diminish that, to sweep that aside, to somehow minimize that. The Law condemns you as deserving of death; physical death, spiritual death, eternal death. The Law does not pronounce salvation. The Law pronounces condemnation. Why? Because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The Law addresses us from without, revealing our guilt and our shame; our condemnation. The Gospel addresses us with the power of God from within. – ***it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes*** –

Listen, if you're here today and you have never turned from your sin to trust the promise of the Gospel, and to entrust yourself to the Person of the Gospel, listen, all the promises of God are 'Yes' and 'Amen' only in the Lord Jesus Christ. These things have been promised before, long before, at the very beginning. At the outset man fell into sin. You are now a sinner, not because you have sinned but foremost because you are by nature a sinner! And now you sin! You live in sin! The Bible says the thoughts and intents of your heart are only evil continuously, and you're condemned under the Law of God as a sinner.

And where the Law comes to you and preaches condemnation, God gives a promise. All the way at the beginning, even within the very curse after the Fall, God says, "Listen, I'm going to send my Son, the Seed of the woman, and He's going to set right all that has been wronged, all that has been disordered, all that has been corrupted, all that had been perverted, all that has been polluted. He's going to fulfill all of My promises to redeem a people for the glory of My Son the Lord Jesus Christ." And that promise today has been fulfilled. If you're sitting here listening today, the promises of God have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ and only in Jesus Christ! And if you do not turn to Him in faith, you will die in your sin! That glorious message! How can it not be so to reject such love? to reject such grace? to reject such a promise of mercy from our God who is just and holy and righteous? Don't turn your back on His offer of grace and mercy.

The promise has been fulfilled. The Promised Seed has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The promise of a coming Redeemer has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The promise of an Anointed One has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The promise of a Prophet, the promise of a Priest, the promise of a King for His people has been fulfilled in the mediatorial role of the Person of Jesus Christ. The promise of a Savior has been fulfilled. The promise of the indwelling Spirit of God to open your eyes, to turn you from darkness to light; that promise has been fulfilled in

Jesus Christ! The promise of a Kingdom, fulfilled in Jesus Christ! And the promises of future glory will as certainly be fulfilled in Him!

Why would you persist in your sin? *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."* Trust in the promise of the Gospel. Trust God who promised that good news long before, through His prophets, in the Holy Scriptures. And trust Jesus Christ our Lord. The promise and Person of the Gospel; the One sent by the Father to take away the sins of the world.

All praise, honor, glory, and blessing to Him, the One to whom all the Scriptures point. Amen?