

Proclaimers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Romans 1:1–7 / Acts 9:1-22

INTRODUCTION

1. The apostle Paul was immediately transformed by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. - *Acts 9:20 (NKJV)* — 20 **Immediately** he **preached** the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.
 - a. **Immediately**: There was no waiting process, no questioning, no need for Apostle Paul to consult with other apostles to be fully convinced, nor a need for confirmation from another person. He was instantly driven by the power of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to immediately proclaim who Jesus was and how people could be saved.
 - b. Paul could have had many excuses not to preach the gospel **immediately**:
 - i. **Doubt**:
 1. **Questioning the recent events and his understanding of righteousness**: Paul might have questioned the truth of his recent experiences, contrasting them with his lifelong certainty that righteousness was obtained through adhering to the Law and commandments.
 - ii. **Fear**:
 1. **Fear of persecution**: Aware of the fierce hatred religious authorities had towards Christians and their intent to destroy them, Paul, having previously been a part of these destructive efforts, might have feared persecution, even to the point of fearing death or being stoned as an idolater.
 - iii. **Shame**:
 1. **Experiencing shame in preaching Christ**: Entering the synagogue to preach Jesus Christ, Paul could have felt immense shame. People might have questioned, "What has happened to this man who once preached about the Law of Moses and now has completely changed his stance? Is he unstable or unclear in his thoughts?"
 - iv. **Comfort**:
 1. **The initial fear of losing everything**: The apostle Paul faced the fear of losing his entire life - economically, financially, and socially - tied to his status as a Pharisee.

By preaching Christ in the synagogue, he risked everything.

c. Why did Paul act this way immediately?

- i. Some might be tempted to say it was because ***Paul had extensive knowledge of the Bible*** and therefore had all the necessary tools to go and preach about Christ Jesus and salvation immediately, but this is not the case.
- ii. Others might say that Apostle Paul did it immediately because ***he had been called to be an apostle***, and apostles have this authority to act with such immediacy and courage.
- iii. However, none of these reasons truly explain why Paul acted immediately. The real reason was that *he had an encounter with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, was confronted with his guilt as a sinner and persecutor of the church, and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he had persecuted, instead of bringing judgment, offered him forgiveness*. The apostle was forgiven for his sins through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was confronted with God's love in the person of Christ Jesus, and upon seeing his great guilt in the light of Christ's great love, he was broken and compelled to live for Christ.

1. Galatians 1:11–17 (NKJV) — 11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. **12** For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. **13** For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. **14** And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. **15** But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, **16** to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, **17** nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

d. What were the effects of this transformation?

- i. **Counting everything as a loss:** This man, who had gained everything according to the world - reputation, status, and perceived by society as a righteous, high-calibre man - was now, due to this profound encounter, willing to count everything as a loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus.

- ii. **Eager proclaimer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ:** Paul, who had been a proclaimer of the Law of Moses, sat at the feet of Gamaliel, was knowledgeable about the Pharisees' and scribes' invented righteousness, and had not only been a teacher of the law but a zealous defender of it, now becomes an immediate proclaimer of the power of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. This is the same Gospel that we have.

*Romans 1:1 (NKJV) — 1 Paul, a **bondservant** of Jesus Christ, **called** to be an apostle, **separated** to the gospel of God.*

- a. **It is the Gospel that saved us:** And because this Gospel saved us, we can say with the Apostle Paul, as he tells the Romans, that we are no longer ourselves, that we don't own ourselves, but together with Apostle Paul, we are **servants** of Christ Jesus, slaves of Christ Jesus. Our life is no longer ours but belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, all because of the power of the Gospel.
- b. **This is the Gospel that commissioned us:** For this reason, we can also say with Apostle Paul that we have **been set apart for the Gospel of our God** and, like him, a messenger of the good news to the nations. Today, we, too, humble, simple, and small as we are, have been set apart. Although Apostle Paul was set apart as an apostle, a role no one else has as pillars of the church, we are also messengers and ambassadors of God's reconciliation with the world through the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

3. This is the example of the apostle.

- a. **The apostle Paul knew that his mission was to proclaim the Gospel of Christ Jesus to the nations,** and among them were the Romans. The Apostle either wrote or went to the churches to accomplish this mission.
- b. **The apostle Paul was aware of the transformative power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** He understood that the mission of the church did not depend solely on himself. Aware of his role as an apostle, he knew his life was being used by God for the expansion of God's kingdom. However, he recognised that ultimately, the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ did not hinge on him but rather on all those who would be saved through the same Gospel. As they were saved, they would become proclaimers of that Gospel. Perhaps he was not fully conscious of the day he would die, but he was certain that the Gospel's continuation did not rely on him; it depended on the Holy Spirit working within the believers.

SERMON: 3 Reasons Why We must Actively proclaim the Gospel

1. Reason 1: God has revealed the Gospel only to you.

Romans 1:2 (NKJV) — 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,

a. Explanation

i. Theology:

1. **God has revealed the Gospel exclusively to Christians, only to us.** When I say 'us', I'm making a distinction between two types of people in the world: true Christians who have been saved by grace and the rest of the world. God has revealed His Gospel uniquely and solely to true Christians.
2. **This means that if you are the only Christian** in a family where everyone else is not a Christian, or if you are the only Christian in a workplace where all others are not Christians, or if you are a Christian in a neighbourhood where all others are not Christians, or if you are a Christian in a city where the rest are not Christians, THEN God has sovereignly placed you in those places to be the proclaimers of the Gospel because we are the only ones who have the revelation of the Gospel of God.

ii. From the text - V2

1. **The Gospel was a mystery revealed by God through the Scriptures to the nations:**
 - a. **Romans 16:25–27 (ESV) — 25** Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and *the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of **the mystery** that was kept secret for long ages 26 but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations,* according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— **27** to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.
2. **The mystery of God is Jesus Christ in us.**
 - a. **Colossians 1:24–27 (ESV) — 24** Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, **25** of which I

became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, **26** the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. **27** To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of **this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

b. Application

- i. Christ in us! Only the Christians have this mystery and hence should be light to those around them.
- ii. The role of the Scriptures in the revelation of this mystery. The Scriptures set the boundaries for this mystery's promise, revelation and proclamation.

2. Reason 2: The Gospel is about your Lord.

***Romans 1:3–4 (NKJV)** — 3 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.*

a. Explanation: The victorious incarnate Son of God.

i. Theology:

1. The central message of God's Gospel is the Lord Jesus Christ and no one else. The power of God's Gospel can only manifest when Jesus Christ is fundamentally central and exclusive to the Gospel.
 - a. The Gospel is not about the **world**; although it is true that the world will be redeemed through the Gospel, its central message is not about the world.
 - b. The Gospel is not about **humanity**; indeed, through the Gospel and the work of redemption, humans will be redeemed in the church and will not perish due to the redemptive work in the Gospel, but the Gospel is about Jesus Christ, not humanity.
 - c. Additionally, the Gospel is not about the **church**. While it's true that the church receives all the benefits and blessings found in Christ Jesus, and it is in the church that both the world and humanity are redeemed, the focus of the Gospel is not the

redemption of the church, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

d. Furthermore, the Gospel is not about **yourself**. As Christians, it's true that your life has been transformed, you have received many blessings, and you have many promises, but the Gospel is about the Lord Jesus Christ, not about you.

2. If Jesus Christ is not central to the Gospel, then the Gospel loses all its redeeming power. We might be speaking truths of the Gospel and discussing its true benefits, but if Jesus Christ is not at the centre of this Gospel, it loses its power of redemption.

ii. **From the Text: What Jesus?**

1. **The biblical Christ**

a. **2 Corinthians 11:1–4 (ESV) — 1** I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! **2** For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. **3** But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. **4** For if someone comes and proclaims **another** Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different **spirit** from the one you received, or if you accept a different **gospel** from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

2. The Gospel is about the victorious Son of God Incarnate: **Romans 1:3 (ESV) — 3** concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh

i. **1 Timothy 3:16 (ESV) — 16** Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

- ii. Victorious
1. Over Death
 2. Lord over us

b. **Application:**

- i. We should only proclaim Jesus and not anything or anyone else
- ii. We hold the message of victory and truth

3. Reason 3: Because we have a calling that impacts all nations

Romans 1:5–7 (NKJV) — 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.

a. Explanation

- i. **Our calling:** While the calling of all Christians is different from the apostolic calling of Paul and the other apostles in the first century, it is still true that we have all received the same grace for the obedience of faith among the nations. All Christians have received from the same Spirit and grace that was in Paul, making us instruments that fulfil God's promise that the saints from all nations will be called.
- ii. **The purpose of the calling:** the spread of the Gospel among all nations (Gentiles in particular) was for the purpose of glorifying Jesus Christ.
- iii. **Motivation of this calling:** Those who are called to belong to Christ are loved by God.

b. Application

- i. **Colossians 2:1–3 (NKJV) — 1** For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, **2** that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, **3** in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
- ii. Prayer is a very important means of revealing this mystery: **Colossians 4:2–4 (ESV) — 2** Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. **3** At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— **4** that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.
- iii. **Ephesians 6:18–20 (NKJV) — 18** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—**19** and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth

boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

CALL: Let's be proclaimers of the Gospel, Jesus Christ in us, the hope of Glory:

Brothers and sisters, it is essential that with our eyes fixed on Christ Jesus, we become proclaimers of this glorious Gospel, which is the power of God for salvation. This Gospel has been revealed to us, and it is Christ Jesus, the hope of glory within us, who gives us the power to speak and say the words we need to say. When we do not know what to say, He strengthens us; when we are weak, He gives us light in our darkness. With our eyes set on eternal things, the temporal loses its value. God has revealed this powerful Gospel to us, not through the mind but through Christ Jesus, the hope of glory, and we are the hope for this lost world. Let us be filled with a fervent desire to preach the Gospel where we live, in our city, and reach out to our neighbours, our friends, and those who are lost. Let us not be negligent in this task, but let us be filled with the grace of God to do what He has called us to do.