

3. The Book of Romans 1:5

Paul's Epistle to the Romans
A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
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We have begun a study in what many consider to be the greatest book in the Bible—the Book of Romans.

Romans is the Magna Carta of the Christian faith—Martin Luther said it should be memorized word for word and read constantly by God's people that they might know and understand their liberty in Christ.

Paul the Apostle wrote this book while on his 3rd missionary journey as he was staying three months in Corinth at the house of Gaius. He then gave the letter to Phoebe (a Christian business lady who was headed to Rome on business—Romans 16:1-2)—and she carried it to Rome and delivered it to the church there.

I don't think Phoebe had any comprehension of the spiritual treasure that had been entrusted to her nor the impact it would have on countless lives down through the centuries—but we do and that's why we want to study this incredible book.

Paul gives us the theme of the book in the first sentence—“**The Gospel of God**”:

Romans 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God

Twenty-five years before this, Saul (as he was named back then) was on his way to Damascus to arrest Jewish believers in Christ and bring them back to stand trial in Jerusalem—the goal of which being to have them executed for blasphemy (worshipping Jesus as God) and preaching the gospel that bore His name. (Mark 1:1; Romans 1:9)

But then something happened on the road to Damascus—

Acts 9:1–6 (NKJV)

¹ Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” ⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

Saul got converted to Christianity that day—and ever since has called himself a ‘bond-slave’ of Jesus Christ—the very same Jesus Christ he had hated twenty-five years earlier and whose followers he had sought to destroy.

Romans 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, **called *to be* an apostle...**

Paul is more specific in Galatians—

Galatians 1:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace,

And by the way, that is your testimony as well—whether you realize it or not.

Romans 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, **separated to the gospel of God.**

We're all separated to something (money, success, fame etc.)—be separated to something that matters, that counts for eternity.

Be separated to '*the gospel of God*'—or as some have called it 'the gospel of grace'. Since the word 'gospel' simply means '*good news*'—Paul now defines what this good news *from* or *of* God is all about.

He first tells us that this good news is not *new* news—it was promised in the Old Testament—

Romans 1:1–2 (NKJV)

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.**

The Gospel of God is according to the—**Holy Scriptures**—not according to the 'revelation' given to Joseph Smith Jr. by the angel Moroni which became Mormonism.

Or the 'gospel' that started with Charles Taze Russell that became the gospel of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (i.e., 'Jehovah's Witnesses').

There are a lot of false gospels out there (see 2 Corinthians 11:1-4).

But Paul is telling us that the true gospel—***the Gospel of the True and Living God*** was foretold in His Holy Word through His prophets.

Unlike the spiritual writings of other religious leaders and teachers that have come down the pike of human history—this good news is built on its Founder, Jesus Christ and knowing Him personally in your heart through faith—which makes Christianity unique.

- You can be a Buddhist without knowing Buddha.
- You can be a Muslim without knowing Mohammed.
- You can be a Confucian without knowing Confucius.

➔ But you cannot be a Christian without knowing Jesus Christ!

So first this gospel is about a Person—not about religious rules or a code of ethics or a moral standard that has to be kept to please God and earn a place in heaven—its about having a relationship with a Person.

Secondly, this Person has a lineage or pedigree that was prophesied about in the Holy Scriptures (our Old Testament—

“Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh” (verse 3)

This good news has a lineage attached to it—it is about a Jewish Person, Who was born into a particular family—the family of David.

This is the Jesus that Paul is referring to—not any other ‘Jesus’ than the Son of God who became a man, born of the seed of David, and whose coming was prophesied in the Old Testament (333 prophecies of His First Coming).

Any so-called ‘gospel’ that isn’t built on *this* Jesus Christ—isn’t the gospel of God!

So, this Gospel of God was foretold in the Old Testament—in fact it had to be! Any good news that doesn’t go back to the beginning of creation where mankind first fell and therefore includes all of fallen mankind in God’s plan of redemption giving them an opportunity to be saved—isn’t the true gospel.

A ‘*Johnny come lately*’ gospel isn’t the true gospel—in other words, any ‘gospel’ that didn’t start in the Garden of Eden isn’t from God.

You see, Mormonism started in April of 1830 and claimed to be the only true religion presenting the only true ‘gospel’—but what happened to all the souls before that?!

And the same is true with all the religions (and cults) of the world...

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 [His humanity], ⁴ and declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead [His divinity].

- The Jesus Christ of the Gospel of God—is both fully God and fully Man!
- He was born a flesh and blood human being on the earth through Mary (1 John 1:1-2);
- but He proved His divinity through **“the resurrection from the dead.”**

Commentators question how Jesus’ resurrection could prove His divinity when others were raised from the dead (like Lazarus in John 11)—and it didn’t prove *they* were God.

There are two possible explanations:

1. Jesus said that He would raise Himself from the dead—which only God can do.

John 2:18–19 (NLT)

¹⁸ But the Jewish leaders demanded, “What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it.” ¹⁹ “All right,” Jesus replied. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

John 10:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

(Note: the New Testament tells us that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were all involved in the resurrection of Jesus).

2. The Greek in verse 4 simply reads that **“Jesus was declared the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness—by the resurrection of the dead (literally “resurrection of dead ones”).”**

Some believe that what Paul is saying is that Jesus proved His divinity by raising people from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit which was upon Him (Luke 3:21-22; Acts 10:38).

But the really good news is that when Jesus was raised from the dead never to die again—He conquered death and made it possible for us to conquer it as well—through Him. (“*Because I live, you will live also.*”—Explain)

Romans 1:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name...

“Grace” is unmerited favor, undeserved blessing.

You see, what makes the good news of God so good is that—God is offering man salvation according to His grace (a gift), and not according to our goodness and human achievements—

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

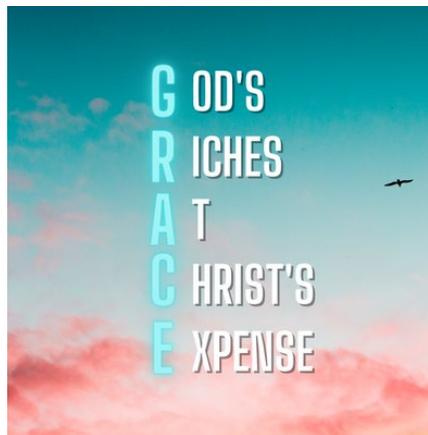
Romans 3:24, 27 (NKJV)

²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...

²⁷ Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

The reason the good news is so good to us is because God has taken eternal life out of the realm of human achievement and good deeds—and has made it a gift to anyone who wants it. **All they have to do to receive it is—to ‘reach out their hands’ and accept it by faith!**

Someone has defined ‘**grace**’ using it as an acronym:



God’s—Riches—At—Christ’s—Expense

So, just because God offers us salvation as a free gift—doesn't mean it's cheap!

➤ It cost God a great deal to save us and offer us eternal life as a gift of His love (John 3:16).

When a person tries to 'buy' or 'pay' for their salvation through works—tries to pay for the love that God offers freely—it's the ultimate insult to Him—we call it 'prostitution.'

This is the central theme of the good news—that salvation doesn't come by: water baptism; confirmation; communion; church membership; or church attendance. It doesn't come by good works, or by being a good person, or by living a moral life, or by giving to the church or the poor, or by working as a volunteer in the local soup kitchen.

It is a gift of grace you receive by believing in and receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior and turning your life over to Him as your Master—it is a gift to be received, not a reward to be earned.

Paul will have a whole lot more to say about grace later—so we'll save the bulk of our comments until then. So again, verse 5 tells us that through Jesus—"we have received grace and apostleship..."

By saying this, Paul isn't saying that as Jesus' disciples—we are exactly like and on the same level with the Twelve Apostles—but rather, he is using the word 'apostle' in the broadest possible sense.

The Greek word for 'apostle' is *apostolos*—which literally means, 'one who has been sent out with a commission.' But the word also carries with it the idea of being 'authorized to act on behalf of another (often on behalf of a king or governor)'—

John 20:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Matthew 28:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

Think of an apostle the way we would think of an *ambassador*.

The Great Commission is all about Jesus, our King, sending us out into the world with the good news of God's pardon (redemption) through His Son and His coming Kingdom as we represent Him as His ambassadors on foreign soil.

Since all believers in Jesus have been commissioned by the Lord—all believers are apostles of the Lord (but not like the Twelve—).

This is always the case—there are no spectators in the Body of Christ—all who have been converted have been commissioned—all who have been saved have been sent—every member is a minister—every saint is a servant:

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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