



1.
'Overflowing with hope'
Romans 1.1-7

Background

The Lord's exhortation to His people through the prophet Jeremiah is the backdrop to this series working through Paul's letter to the church at Rome.

'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths; ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls' (Jer.6.16).

No other book of the Bible sets out where that good way is more clearly and comprehensively than the letter to the Romans – where and what it is, how we are to walk in it, and what that 'rest' is which we find in so doing.

Although evidently Paul knew many of the folk in the church at Rome (Rom.16 makes that abundantly clear), he hadn't yet been there himself when he wrote the letter, and his letter is therefore both an introduction to himself, and more particularly to the message which he proclaimed: this brief, opening 'salvo' in his letter, which forms the basis of our first study, does both. We meet the man, first, and then the essence of his message.

It's useful, therefore, to see in this passage a summary statement of the gospel. All the main components of the message are referenced in these verses: and all of them will be picked up, and expanded on, by Paul in the course of what he goes on to write in the 16 chapters of his letter.

The gospel is, first, *the call of God*: it's both a word of command, summoning wayward sinners to repentance and faith, and at the same time a word of creative power, akin to Jesus standing at the tomb of Lazarus and calling the dead man out of the tomb.

The gospel is, moreover, *a promise*: this is the Lord's chosen way of working for reasons which Paul will explain through the course of the letter.

Above all, of course, the gospel is *a person* – Jesus Christ our Lord: it's no surprise that Paul puts the spotlight on Him from the start, highlighting His credentials and pointing to the significance of His resurrection.

The message is only 'good news', however, when embraced by faith: the gospel, in other words, is *a summons* which always requires a response – and the nature of that response, and the blessings which flow from it, are made clear again from the start.

Make sure you read the whole passage! Start with 'days' **(2)**, **(5)** and **(7)**.

1) Monday 8th January – all change!

Read [Rom.1.1-7](#)

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God” (Rom.1.1)

How the man describes himself tells you much about the gospel! No longer Saul but Paul, indicative of a radical change. Servanthood now, rather than a former autonomy. How does such change happen? Through the sovereign call and setting apart of God.

If you were asked to introduce yourself to a new congregation in a single sentence, how would you describe yourself?

In what ways does Paul’s description of himself help you understand your own new identity as a believer?

Prayer: *How I thank You, heavenly Father, for Your transforming grace: You have given me a new heart, made me a new person, and caused me now to walk in Your ways.*

2) Tuesday 9th January – what a faithful God!

Read [Rom.1.1-7](#)

“.. the gospel He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures..” (Rom.1.2)

The good news centres around a very basic truth about God – He makes and keeps promises. God’s chosen way of working sees Him flagging up beforehand (in the very public ‘black and white’ of Scripture) what He’s going to do: then gloriously doing it!

Read [Amos 3.7](#): why is this the Lord’s chosen way of working?

Read [2 Tim.3.16](#): in what ways have you found that the Scriptures teach you, rebuke you, correct you and have been training you in righteousness?

The gospel is first of all a promise: why is it so important to grasp that truth about it and what difference does it make in your own life?

God’s promises invariably require patient waiting on the part of His people: what illustrations of that in Scripture spring to mind? How can you develop such patient waiting in yourself when you live in an ‘instant’ society?

Prayer: *Lord, I come before Your throne of grace; I find rest in Your presence and fulness of joy. In worship and wonder I behold Your face – what a faithful God have I!*

3) Wednesday 10th January – behold your King!

Read [Rom.1.1-7](#)

“.. regarding His Son, who as to His earthly life was a descendant of David..” (Rom.1.3)

If the gospel is rooted in a promise, it's centred on a Person. It's all about Jesus. Three important truths about Jesus: (1) He's truly and fully God ('His Son'), (2) He's truly and fully human ('according to the flesh'), and (3) He's the ultimate in royalty, the King!

Read [Hebrews 2.14-18](#): according to the writer of Hebrews why is the full humanity of Jesus so important and significant?

Read [2 Samuel 7.8-13](#): why does Paul underline the fact that, as to His humanity, Jesus is 'a descendant of David'?

Prayer: *Thank You, Lord! You laid aside Your majesty; You gave up everything for me, taking all my guilt and shame when You died and rose again; now today You reign!*

4) Thursday 11th January – Jesus is Lord!

Read [Rom.1.1-7](#)

“.. and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord..” (Rom.1.4)

The gospel is good news: and thus, not just a Person but an event – His being raised from the dead, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The 'God-Man' Jesus is therefore to be embraced as both the Christ (the anointed prophet, priest and king), and the Lord.

Why is the resurrection so significant in terms of both the person and the work of Jesus?

In what ways would it be apparent to those around you that Jesus is indeed 'Lord' in your life?

Prayer: *How glad I am that You are risen from the dead, my Saviour and King! You are Lord – Your work is complete, Your authority total, Your victory given to Your people!*

5) Friday 12th January – the good way

Read [Rom.1.1-7](#)

“.. Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for His name's sake..” (Rom.1.5)

Jesus is Lord. Fact. The most basic present reality of the world in which we live. In a world that's chaotic and out of control, that's got to be good news! But it's also the 'good way' in which we find rest for our souls: we're called to live under His lordship.

Paul was very conscious of, and clear about, the call of God on his life: how can we discover God's call on our lives?

The message of the gospel is for everyone: why does everyone need to hear this message, and what happens to those who've never heard it?

If the call of the gospel is to the *obedience* of faith, how do you avoid thinking of your life as a believer in a rather performance-based and legalistic way?

Paul stresses that the call of the gospel is ultimately “*for His Name’s sake*”, and not primarily for our benefit: how do you explain that to our ‘selfie’ society?

Prayer: *Grant me daily grace, O Lord, that I may be far more concerned for the glory of Your name, and the extension of Your kingdom, than for my own gratification.*

6) Saturday 13th January – the call of God

Read [Rom.1.1-7](#)

“.. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ..” (Rom.1.6)

The message of the gospel is the call of God Himself, invested with the life-giving power of the great Creator God by which people are brought out of the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of His Son. You are no longer your own, you belong to Him!

‘You also are among those Gentiles..’: how and when did that call of God become effectual in your life?

In what ways does the fact that as a believer you now *belong* to Jesus Christ comfort you and in what ways does it also challenge you?

Prayer: *You have summoned me by name, my Lord, and You declare that I am thus Yours! How wonderful to know that I am my Beloved’s and You are mine!*

7) Sunday 14th January – grace and peace

Read [Rom.1.1-7](#)

“.. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be His holy people: grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ..” (Rom.1.7)

The blessings of the gospel are all yours in Christ Jesus: they are tied not to your own performance, but are rather rooted in the love of God and secured through the call of God. Rest and rejoice today in His gracious and ‘wholesome’ working in your life!

Paul refers here to those who are ‘called’: how does that ‘calling’ happen?

Read [1 Pet.2.9-10](#): in what ways are you able to declare the praises of God?

Ponder afresh today as part of your worship with the Lord’s people: what changes in your living does that call ‘to be His holy people’ require of you?

In what sense and in what ways does this combination of ‘grace’ and ‘peace’ provide a summary of the gospel for believers?

Prayer: *O God of peace, make me holy in every way: and may my whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again [1 Thess.5.23]*