Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Promise and the Person of the Good News
Scripture: Romans 1:2-4
Code: 45-03

Let's look together at Romans chapter 1 this morning. We've recently begun a study of the book of Romans on Sunday nights. I would encourage you all to be a part of this tremendous, rich, exciting privilege. And this morning we're looking at one of the messages as we move through the first seven verses in the introduction to this great epistle.

As a setting, I want to read verses 1 to 7, so follow carefully as I do. May I point out, as you look at your Bible and listen, that in these first seven verses Paul gives us a summary of what he will develop in the following sixteen chapters.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which He had promised before by His prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made 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, by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name, among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Socrates once said, "O that someone would arise to show us God." End quote. And Socrates was really articulating a hunger that is in every human heart. One theologian put it this way. He said, "In every man there is a God-shaped vacuum." Man's eternal soul is so made that it knows no rest until it finds its rest in God. And there is no greater, no more graphic illustration of this than the proliferation of religions around the world and through the history of mankind. It isn't a question of whether man will worship; it is only a question of what he worships. It is not a question of whether man will be religious; it is only a question of how he defines that religion. For man's eternal soul seeks for God. But in the bent of his perverse nature, inevitably man rejects the true God and forms, as we find later in Romans 1, gods of his own making. And in his worship of these gods, there is no solution to his sinful confusion, but only an intensifying of the emptiness.

Now there's a basic problem. And maybe I can define it for you in this way. Imagine a little box, a cube, if you will, utterly closed in on all sides. That represents man's world. Inside the box man exists.

He exists in a time-space capsule. Outside is the supernatural. Outside is eternity. Outside is God. Man bangs around inside his little cube; it has no windows. He speculates about what's on the outside. He plays games with his fantasy. He searches to know God. But it is impossible for him to escape, for by very definition, the natural cannot enter into the supernatural. That which is confined to time and space cannot escape into eternity and infinity. And so man is confined in his little cubicle.

But there's something in him that longs to comprehend what's outside. And so, he invents gods that he thinks exist and he dreams of worlds of fantasy. I believe that that is the reason we have not only a proliferation of religion in our world, but today we have a proliferation of interest in the fantasies of space travel, star wars, extraterrestrial beings. All of these are a part of man's fantasy as he wishes so desperately to get out of his box. But he can't. All of the religions of the world tell him he can. "You just be a good person and you'll burst out of your little box and discover God. Just be sure that you fulfill these routines and these rituals and carry out these liturgies and you'll escape and you'll meet God." The pagans used to say, if you just get yourself into *ecstasia* and *enthusiasmas*, states of some kind of high, you'll perceive God.

But it's all a lie because man is confined by his very nature. None of us can go into a phone booth, take off our clothes and come out Superman. Go into a phone booth and take off your clothes and you'll come out into jail. Nobody has that capacity, as much as we would like to be able to do it. And that's where Christianity enters the scene. Christianity acknowledges that man can't get out of his box, and Christianity says, good news, God has invaded the box from the outside. God has entered in to tell us what's out there and to tell us how we too can dwell out there in His presence forever. That is good news, folks. Man is a prisoner. He is a captive. And the end of his captivity is devastation forever unless he escapes. And that's the good news of Christianity. Man couldn't get out, but God could get in. The natural cannot come into the supernatural, but the supernatural can condescend to the natural. And that is exactly what God did. And that is the good news of God that Paul mentions in verse 1, the good news.

In a world filled with bad news, it's really remarkably wonderful that God has given us good news, especially when you think about the fact that we are so unworthy of any good news. And yet Paul reiterates again and again and again about the good news. He calls it the glorious good news of the blessed God. He calls it the blessed good news. He calls it the good news of the grace of God, the good news of peace, the good news of your salvation. And in chapter 1 of Romans he defines what it is. Look at verse 1. It is the good news; that's what *euaggelion* means, the gospel. It is the good news of God. Then in verse 9, it is the good news of His Son. Then in verse 16, it is the good news of Christ. And there's a progression there. First it is the good news of God about what? About His Son. Who's His Son? Christ. It is the good news that God's Son, Jesus Christ, has come into the world.

And it is the message of Romans. It begins with the good news of God, and in chapter 15, verse 16, as Paul comes close to his ending, he talks again about the good news of God.

And he—in chapter 2, look at this, verse 16—says a very interesting thing, the end of verse 16, he says it is my good news. And he uses a possessive pronoun. It is mine. In what sense is it yours, Paul? It has come into my possession by faith in Christ and it is also mine to preach. And so at the end of the epistle; again he says this in verse 25 of chapter 16 at the very last benediction, "Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my good news." What is it about, Paul? "It is the preaching of Jesus Christ and it is according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God is being made known to all nations for the obedience of the faith." It is my good news about Jesus Christ that God has revealed to me, which in the past has been hidden and now is made manifest and is granted to me to preach, my good news.

If you want to know the real key, the real *sunum bonum*, the real major thrust of Paul's ministry, it is the good news of God. That's why he said to the Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 2, "I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus and Him crucified." That's why he said in 1 Corinthians 9:23, simply stated, "I do all things for the sake of the good news. I do not come with excellency of speech, I do not come with man's wisdom. All the years of training," he said, "I set aside and my utter focus is on the good news." God has come into the box to tell us what He's like and tell us how to know Him and how to escape into His eternal kingdom. And who is the good news about? His Son Christ Jesus, for He is God come into the box. Jesus Christ is the good news, people. Everything besides Him is bad news. He is the utter incomparable personality of all of human history.

You know, even unbelievers recognize that. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The name of Jesus is not so much written as it is plowed into the soil of the history of the world." Socrates taught for 40 years. Plato taught for 50 years. Aristotle taught for 40 years. And Jesus for less than three years, yet the influence of the three years of Jesus' ministry far outstrips the combined 130 years of the three greatest philosophers of all antiquity. Jesus never painted a picture, yet some of the finest paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, da Vinci, and many other artists found in Him their inspiration. Jesus wrote no poetry, but Dante, Milton, and scores of the world's greatest poets have been inspired by Him as by no other. Jesus wrote no music and yet Haydn, and Handel, and Beethoven, and Bach, and Mendelssohn, and myriad others reached the highest perfection of melody and the sweetest sounds in compositions about him.

Jesus has obviously infected and affected human society as no other human being. The incomparable Christ is the good news. And what makes it such good news is that we're such bad people and so undeserving of it. We don't deserve the good news. Charles Wesley, I think, expressed the right thought in this hymn that he wrote: "Depth of mercy, can there be mercy still reserved for me? Can my God, his wrath forbear and me the chief of sinners spare? I have long withstood His grace, long provoked Him to His face, would not hearken to His calls, grieved Him by a thousand faults." And we all identify with that, don't we? Wesley said, I don't deserve good news. And that even makes it better news that God is so gracious.

Now Paul is going to unfold the good news in 16 chapters in Romans, but he can't wait. He can't wait for 16 chapters to say it, so he sums it up in seven verses. And this is in seed what flowers in the rest of the epistle, carefully chosen. You know, I was struck again as I read these words. I kept reading through verses 1 to 7 over and over and over and over. And it literally thrills me that the incredible, infinite mind of God, who is able in a few words to distill and condense the infinite truth of the gospel. You know how hard it is to do that? I mean, look at me, it takes me a long time to say simple things, where the infinite mind of God can say vast, infinite things in few words. I thought about these seven verses. I counted the words and I said, how could God so choose the terms to run the gamut of the gospel in just those few words? And then I was reminded that in English, 297 words are in the Ten Commandments and they sum up all of God's moral law. God set His whole moral law in 297 words, and then He distilled it even more and put it in two verses, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength; your neighbor as yourself." This is all there is. What precision.

The Lord's prayer—the disciples' prayer—which condenses all of the teaching on prayer that is essential, is 65 words in English. That's God. Man doesn't have that capacity. If you don't think so, the other day I read in an article about a recent federal directive to regulate the price of a cabbage, 26,911 words. The infinite genius of the mind of God working through the apostle Paul distills the gospel in seven verses and covers everything from the incarnation to the Christian life. Marvelous.

Now, let's look then at the gospel in miniature, as it were, in these seven verses and we're just going to take one little piece out of the middle of it. First, let's meet the preacher of the good news. Verse 1, we've already gone through this, just to review. Paul is the preacher, and if you look at 16:25 you'll be reminded that he affirms it at the end of the epistle as well as at the beginning. Paul, and he says three things about himself: A servant of Jesus Christ, and he uses the word *doulos*, has to do with bond slave, someone who is a slave by choice, by love, by affection, by willingness. He is a bond slave of Jesus. And mingled in there we saw both honor, because of who it is He serves, and humility because of the fact that he is a slave. And so there is a marvelous tension in Paul's life between being exalted and being honored to be called to Christ as a servant and yet being humbled because

he is a servant.

And then we see not only is he a servant but he is a sent one. He is a called apostle. He didn't choose on his own, Christ put him in the ministry. It was a divine calling, giving sort of a divine quality to his function as an apostle. He is a slave. He is sent. And thirdly, he says he is separated. He cut the cord with everything. He was literally consumed. As I quoted earlier, 1 Corinthians 9:23, he says, "I do all things for the sake of the good news." That was his whole life. If it didn't relate to that, he didn't do it. He didn't do things on the side. He was utterly given over.

And, beloved, I believe with all my heart that those are three things necessary for any life of any one who preaches the gospel: a sense of slavery, both of its dignity and its humility; a sense of being sent, that is, you don't just go, God commissions you, you are called by Him; and a sense of separation so that there is a single-mindedness in the ministry.

So, we meet the preacher of the good news. Secondly, let's look at the promise of the good news, the promise. Verse 2: Which—that is the gospel of God—“which God had promised before by His prophets in the holy scriptures." Now he says the good news is not something out of continuity. It isn't a novelty. It isn't a new idea. It isn't a change in the strategy. It isn't a shift in the plan. It isn't something dropped in that's obtuse. It is the gospel of God which was promised. It gives us the Old Testament continuity, and this is utterly important.

You'll recall that the apostle Paul was accused of being anti-Jewish. The Judaizers went around condemning Paul and condemning his message because they said, he's anti-Jewish, he speaks against Moses, he speaks against the law, he speaks against this people, he speaks against the temple. They accused him in Acts 21 of dragging Gentiles into the inner area of the temple where they were forbidden to go. They accused him of desecrating Moses. They accused him of denying circumcision and the sustaining of the law. They were saying, he preaches some new, some revolutionary new message that is no way connected to traditional Judaism. And so, Paul, in order to put the record straight, says the good news of God which I preach is not new good news; it's old good news that was indicated to us in the promises of the prophets who wrote in holy Scripture.

That verse 2, I tell you, you could preach on it for weeks, it's just loaded with truth. The Old Testament promises of the New Testament gospel, oh my, just in one area there are at least 332 prophecies in the Old Testament referring to Christ, most of which were fulfilled in His first coming. The Old Testament is literally loaded with truth, laying out the groundwork for the coming of the New.

Jesus faced identically the same situation that Paul faced. Jesus did not connect up, as it were, with the extant or contemporary Jewish theology of His day. He did not identify with the Pharisees their devotion, and called it hypocrisy. He denied the theology of its day...of His day its validity and called it the tradition of men. And so, the people said, is this new truth? Is this something other than what we've been taught? Or are you in continuity? Is this really the one speaking for God? I mean, he doesn't say what the Pharisees say. He doesn't identify with the Jewish establishment. He doesn't do what we do. His disciples don't fast when we fast. He doesn't treat the Sabbath like we treat the Sabbath. He doesn't teach what we learned.

In fact, quite the opposite: Jesus said to them in the Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard it said by them of old." In other words, your tradition teaches you, "but I say unto you..." And He gave them completely different instruction. And He said it over and over again. "You have heard it said...but I say...You have heard it said...but I say...." But the "you have heard it said" part was not Old Testament; it was the perversion of their tradition that He was denying.

Did Jesus come with a new revelation disconnected from the Old? No, He did not. And listen to His own words in Matthew 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." I came to fill it up. And until heaven and earth pass, not one jot, not one little tiny mark or one tittle shall in any way pass from the law till all is fulfilled. I am not come to set the law aside but to fulfill the law and to do away with the traditions of men that have perverted it. That's why He said your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees.

So, the good news was old good news. Jewish people say, "Well, I can't become a Christian because I'm Jewish and I would be denying my heritage." No, the fact is if you're Jewish and you haven't become a Christian you've denied your heritage, because you are completed only in the new covenant, as Jeremiah 31 said, as Ezekiel 36 and 37 promised. When Jesus Christ arrived on the scene, He began to preach the good news of the Kingdom and the people wondered if it was revolutionary. But He cleared the air and said no, it's just that your theology today is so heretical you've lost the continuity. Hebrews 1 says, “God at sundry times in time past through diverse means spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, and God has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world.” And he went on to say: “who is the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person.” God spoke in the Old and God spoke through His Son in the New.

In 1 Peter chapter 1, you read verses 8 to 12. And it says the prophets wrote and they didn't understand what they wrote and they looked at what they wrote and they searched what manner of time or what manner of person was signified in what they wrote. They knew they were writing about a future that they couldn't yet understand. And the writer of Hebrews says they were not perfected without us. In other words, there was an incompletion until the coming of the new covenant. So the good news has been promised throughout all the Old Testament.

Every sacrificial lamb spoke of the ultimate lamb. Every verbal prophecy spoke of the time when the Messiah would come. All of the truth about restoration and the Kingdom spoke of what the Messiah would do. And then the incredible event of all history, when it all comes to consummation, they killed the Messiah and deny that He had any continuity at all with the Old Testament. Paul says the gospel is the gospel of God, it's the gospel of God's Son, the gospel of God's Son Jesus Christ and it is exactly what was promised.

By who? Look at verse 2, "by the prophets." What does the word "prophet" refer to? It refers here to all the Scripture writers because it says "by the prophets and the holy Scriptures." And by the way, just to show you this, the Old Testament, in the mind of a Jew, is called "the law and the prophets." They just call it the law and the prophets. Basically they divide it to those two general categories. Some would single out the writings, *Hagiographa*. But basically it's the law and the prophets. And the prophets would encompass everything but the law. And the law was written by whom? Moses, and of course, in the Bible Moses is called a prophet, so that the term "the prophets" can encompass all of the writers of the Old Testament. And that's exactly what he's saying. The gospel was promised before by the writers of the Old Testament; note this, in the holy Scriptures. That is a very important statement, the holy Scriptures.

What do you mean by that? That the Scriptures are holy; they're not authored by men. They are not designed by men. They do not reflect the thinking of men. They are holy. It means set apart, divine, unique, sanctified, righteous, godly, the holy Scriptures. People say, why should we believe the Bible is inspired? For one reason, the Bible says right here it's holy. These are holy Scriptures. And they spoke of the gospel.

In John 5:39, our dear Lord said, "Search the Scriptures." Told the Jews look at the Old Testament, "For they are they which speak of Me." On the road to Emmaus He said to them, opening the Scriptures, "He spoke of all the things concerning Himself, beginning at Moses and the prophets." He said if you knew the Scripture, you would know these things. Repeatedly He affirmed that. In

Hebrews 10:7 he says, "In the volume of the Book it is written of Me." The Old Testament is filled with the promise of the good news whether you go to Genesis 3:15 at the beginning and talk about the seed of the woman or you go to Malachi 4:2 at the end and talk about the sun of righteousness who rises with healing in His beams, or anywhere in between, you will find the revelation of Jesus Christ.

One writer put it this way: “I find my Lord in the Bible wherever I chance to look. He is the theme of the Bible, the center and heart of the book. He is the rose of Sharon. He is the lily fair. Wherever I open my Bible, the Lord of the book is there. He, at the book's beginning, gave to the earth its form. He is the ark of shelter bearing the brunt of the storm, the burning bush of the desert, the budding of Aaron's rod. Wherever I look in the Bible, I see the Son of God. The ram upon Mount Moriah, the ladder from earth to sky, the scarlet cord in the window and the serpent lifted high, the smitten rock in the desert, the shepherd with staff and crook, the face of my Lord I discover wherever I look in the book. He is the seed of the woman, the Savior virgin-born. He is the Son of David with whom men rejected with scorn. His garments of grace and of beauty the stately Aaron deck, yet He is a priest forever, for He is of Melchizedek. Lord of eternal glory, whom John the apostle saw, light of the golden city, lamb without spot or flaw. Bridegroom coming at midnight, for whom the virgins look; wherever I open my Bible I find my Lord in the book.”

Paul said it was promised, the gospel by the prophets in the holy Scriptures. Beloved, don't you for a moment ever question the holiness of Scripture.

Later on in Romans, Paul will develop this as he develops every other theme. In Romans 7 and verse 12, he says, "The law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good." God's truth is pure.

Now listen to this. Holy men of God moved along by the Holy Spirit wrote the Scripture. You have holy God moving along holy men by His Holy Spirit to produce, says Paul, a holy Scripture, unique, pure, the work of God. And it is in that Scripture that we find the third point, the person of the good news.

We've seen the preacher Paul and the promise, the Old Testament; the person of the good news, verses 3 and 4. Now here's the heart. "Concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead."

Now what he's saying here is, really verse 2 is a parenthesis, it is the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord. That's the good news, folks, the good news that God came in the box in the form of Jesus Christ the Lord. Jesus, that means “Savior.” Christ, that means “anointed one.” Lord, that means “sovereign ruler.” He is Jesus, for He will save His people. He is Christ, for He has been anointed by God as King and priest. He is Lord, for He has always been. In Romans 9:5 Paul says He is God blessed forever. And then Paul also says He is over all. Philippians 2 tells us He is God. Colossians 2, the fullness of the Godhead dwelled in Him. So He is the Lord God. He is the Christ, the anointed one to come back and reign in the earth. And He is Jesus, who saves His people from their sins.

You want to know what the good news is then? The good news is God became a man. God became a man. A real man, He came into the world born in a family like all of us have a family, with flesh like we have flesh. He was actually born of a virgin, but nonetheless born of Mary.

Why? That He might become one of us according to the flesh, that He might have that perfect humanness, that He might be a sympathetic high priest, that He might succor us, that He might understand us, that He might be at all points tempted like as we are yet without sin, that He might be a man who could die for men, who could take the place of men, who could substitute for men, who could bear the brunt of God's wrath for men. He had to be a man. And He wasn't just any man. Look what it says. He was of the seed of David. It wasn't just any family, it was the right family, it was the royal family, the only family that had a right to rule in the land, a right to establish the throne on Mount Zion in that holy hill in Jerusalem, the holy city, and from there to rule the world. He was the right man in the right family. If He hadn't been the son of David, He couldn't have been the Messiah. He would have contradicted 2 Samuel, chapter 7, Psalm 89, Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 23, Jeremiah 33, Ezekiel 33, Ezekiel 37. All of them would have been contradicted if He had not been the son of the family of David. So He was a man and He was the right man.

And repeatedly at His birth, in Luke 1, I think at least five times in that chapter it says He's the Son of David...Son of David...Son of David...Son of David...Son of David. The good news, beloved, is this: God has become a man and that man is fully man, fully a Son who can sympathize with man, who can bear the sin of man, who can substitute for man, who can take the punishment of God on man. And not only is He just man but He's the right man, who even with all of that has the right to rule and to reign, who can restore the Kingdom and redeem the creation. Oh, what news.

Then you hear some pea brain come along and say, "Well, we don't know if Jesus ever really existed." You know, even outside the Bible, people don't deny that if they have their head screwed

on. You can go back to historians of the early time: Tacitus who lived in A.D. 114 tells us that the founder of the Christian religion, Jesus Christ, was put to death by Pontius Pilate in the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius. It's an established fact. Pliny the Younger wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan on the subject of Christ and Christians. Josephus, the Jewish historian, writing in A.D. 90, even before John wrote Revelation, has a short biographical note on his...in his writings on Jesus, who is called Christ. The Babylonian Talmud talks about Jesus Christ.

You know what Josephus said? Josephus died before John wrote Revelation and this is what Josephus the historian said in Volume 2, Book 18, chapter 3, page 3 of *Jewish Antiquity*, quote: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principle men among us had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved Him at the first did not forsake Him, for He appeared to them alive again the third day as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him. And the tribe of Christians so named from Him are not extinct at this day." End quote. No way to deny that He lived and He was a man.

And John says it this way, 1 John chapter 4 and verse 2: "By this you know the Spirit of God, every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesses not Jesus is not of God, and that is the spirit of antichrist." People who want to deny that God came in real human flesh are from the antichrist. He was man.

May I hasten to add this as we draw to a close? He had to be more than man. He had to be God also. For if He was man, even the best of men, even the right man of the seed of David, but not God, then He could not have withstood the punishment of God, He could not have risen from the dead, He could not have overcome, but would have been conquered as all men are conquered. And so, verse 4 adds He was declared to be the Son of God with power. And how was that power displayed? By the Spirit of holiness—

that's another way of saying the Holy Spirit—through the resurrection from the dead.

Listen, if there was ever any question in anybody's mind about whether He was the Son of God, the resurrection should have ended it. He had to be man to reach us, but He had to be God to lift us. And so, the second way, and mark it in verse 4, the second way He manifested His sonship was in His resurrection. It says, "And He is declared the Son of God through a powerful act wrought by the Holy Spirit in raising Him from the dead."

Listen, if some guy came along and said, "I am the Son of God," and he was a phony, do you think God would raise him from the dead? God would be playing into the hands of a phony. If God raised Christ from the dead, it was an affirmation that what He said was true. And so, He was begotten in resurrection. He is a Son twice-born. And the key to this thing is the word "declared." Do you see it in verse 4? Declared; it could be translated various ways. It is a marvelous word. It is the word in Greek *horiz*. And we get our English word "horizon" from it. *Horiz* means “horizon.” And horizon is the clear demarcation line between earth and sky, isn't it? And what he's saying is this: There may have been some question in some people's minds about whether He was the Son of God when they looked at His humanness, but the line was drawn in absolute clarity, the horizon between earth and sky is instantly made clear by His resurrection from the dead. You see? As clearly as the horizon divides the earth from the sky, so clearly does the resurrection divide Jesus from the rest of humanity. He is God. When God raised Jesus from the dead, irrefutable evidence marked out and distinguished the Son of God from all other human beings as clearly as the horizon distinguishes the sky from the earth.

Now listen. He became a Son in incarnation, but that was clearly marked out to end all question in resurrection. That's the good news. The good news, people, God came into the box, became a man. The good news, He can get back out of the box because He's also God and He can take us all with Him. And He demonstrated His ability to do that in His resurrection from the dead, which was energized by the Holy Spirit. And we're going to talk about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ in our next study. So we won't do that this morning.

Listen, in the eighteenth century, the United States Congress issued a special edition of the Bible of Thomas Jefferson. It was a very simple Bible that Jefferson had. It was just like your Bible or my Bible except Jefferson had gone through and eliminated all references to the supernatural. And all Jefferson wanted of Jesus in his Bible were some historical facts and the moral teaching of Jesus. He cut all the rest out. Here's the last statement in Thomas Jefferson's Bible; these are the closing words: "There laid they Jesus and rolled a great stone at the mouth of the sepulcher and departed." That's the end.

But that's only the end of Thomas Jefferson's Bible. That is not the end of the gospel, right? Thank God our Bible ends with, He is risen and He’s coming back for His own. Good news, people, good news. Jesus Christ has come into our world to tell us about God, to take us back out into God's glorious eternity. When I think about the Lord Jesus Christ, I think of Paul's term, "His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord," and then his term in verse 4, "The Son of God." He uses all of the terms that pick up all that Christ is. I marvel and wonder at the incredible majesty of the person who is the good news of

God.

Someone wrote: "I know a soul that is steeped in sin that no man's art can cure, but I know a name, a name, a name that can make that soul all pure. I know a life that is lost to God, bound down by the things of earth, but I know a name, a name, a name that can bring that soul new birth. I know of lands that are sunk in shame, of hearts that faint and tire, but I know a name, a name, a name that can set those lands on fire. Its sound is a brand, its letters flame, like glowing tongues of fire. I know a name, a name, a name that can set the soul on fire." Let's pray.

While your heads are bowed, just in closing, do you know that name? Do you know the good news? Jesus is come, told us about God, taken our punishment, conquered death, shown that He can burst out of our little box and take us with Him to God's eternal world. I hope you know Him. If you don't, right where you sit, open your heart and invite Him in. The hymn writer Samuel Stennett wrote: "Majestic sweetness sits enthroned upon the Savior's brow; His head with radiant glories crowned; His lips with grace o'er flow. No mortal can with Him compare among the sons of men. Fairer is He than all the fair who fill the heavenly train. He saw me plunged in deep distress and flew to my relief. For me He bore the shameful cross and carried all my grief. To Him I owe my life and breath and all the joys I have. He makes me triumph over death and saves me from the grave."

Father, thank You for that great confidence that Jesus Christ is good news. And may no one live another day without that knowledge, in Christ's name. Amen.

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