

The Provision, Proclamation, Privilege, and Purpose of the Good News

Romans 1:4b-7

45-04

We're in Romans chapter 1 again tonight for our study of God's Word and looking at the first seven verses again, as we examine a very important introduction to the book. We spent a little more time with this introduction because we really feel it sets the tone for the rest of the epistle. And again tonight we look back at these same marvelous seven verses. Let me read them to you as a setting for our thinking tonight. Romans, chapter 1 and verse 1:

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called an 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.

Did you notice that that's one sentence? Paul is famous for that. He writes "Paul" in verse 1, "to all that be in Rome" in verse 7, and adds practically the entire gospel in the phrases in between. And so, we have been dealing with those very important phrases and shall again tonight look at this same marvelous passage.

There was an extremely wealthy man who possessed vast treasures of art. The man had one son who was a very ordinary boy, who passed away his adolescence in obscurity and had little effect on anybody. He reached a certain age in his life and he died rather unexpectedly as a young man. The father mourned the son greatly. Within a few months after the death of his son, the father died as well.

And he left this incredible wealth bound up in art treasures. He left a will and he said that everything was to be auctioned. And strangely enough in the will, the father stipulated that one particular painting had to be auctioned first and that was a painting of his son done by an artist that no one really knew. And so the auctioneer in accord with the will did exactly what was to be done, and first of all, to the large crowd that had assembled, he directed their attention to this painting of the rather obscure son of the wealthy man and started the bidding there. No one knew the boy. No one knew the artist. No one really cared about the boy.

A long time passed without any bid at all, and finally an old black man who had been a servant in the house of the wealthy man came forward and he said he would like to place a one-dollar bid on the portrait of the son, whom he loved very much. And at that point in his life that was all he could afford. There were no other bids and the black servant was able to purchase the painting of the son for one dollar.

Then the dramatic moment came as he read the next portion of the will. It said this. "All the rest of the treasure shall go to the one who loved my son long enough and strong enough to purchase his portrait."

There is no way to comprehend the riches that God has provided for those who love His Son, no way. They are infinite. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure. The Bible says eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things that God has prepared for those who love Him. And this, beloved, is the good news—

isn't it?—that if we love the Son, we inherit all the riches of the Father. In Christ we have treasure beyond imagination. The Bible says that if we love the Son we will have a faithfulness that will never be removed. We will have a life that will never end. We will have a spring of water that will never cease to bubble up within us. We will have a gift that will never be lost. We will have a hand out of which the resources will never end. We will have a chain that will never be broken. We will have a love from which we can never be separated. We will have a calling that will never be revoked, a foundation that will never be destroyed and an inheritance that will never, ever, ever fade away. Now this is the good news.

And this is the message of the epistle to the Romans, that God has good news for those who love His Son. And then as we are beginning the epistle, we are examining just the introduction in the first seven verses. And already we have begun to sense the riches and we're going to see more tonight.

Now these seven verses contain the seed of truth that blooms fully in the remaining sixteen chapters. And we have noted for you that there are at least seven elements to this introduction, seven features regarding the good news. There is the preacher of the good news, the promise of the good news, the person of the good news, the provision of the good news, the proclamation of the good news, the privileges of the good news, and the purpose of the good news.

Now let me remind you briefly of the first three. First of all, the preacher of the good news is introduced to us in verse 1: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." And there we have met the preacher of the good news. And it points us to a very important reality, and that is this, that God has chosen human vessels to be the instruments of the transporting of the good news. Paul, a man like us, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, pointing to the fact that God has chosen to use human agency. God has designed to use men and women to proclaim the good news. In fact, it tells us in 1 Corinthians that God has chosen by the foolishness of preaching to proclaim His message, and even use weak and ignoble and foolish preachers to do it.

So, no one's faith stands in the wisdom of men, but it stands only in the power of God through the weakness of men. God's people are still the instruments. Jesus commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. The preacher: a human instrument.

Secondly, we looked at the promise of the good news, verse 2: "Which He had promised before by His prophets in the holy Scriptures." The good news, or the gospel, had already been promised in the Old Testament. That's why in Matthew 5:17 Jesus said, "I didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it." I came to fill it up, to bring it to fulfillment, to bring it to fruition, to bring it to wholeness, to

bring it to completeness. The New Testament is the Word of God that completes the Old Testament; that consummates the promise. So the good news is going to come through a human preacher and the good news is going to be based upon the promises of God in the Old Testament.

And thirdly, we saw not only the preacher and the person, or rather the preacher and the promise, but the preacher and the promise and the person. What and whom is the heart and object of the good news? Look at verse 3. It concerns "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."

The person of the good news is Christ. That's the issue. It is what you do with God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that determines whether you inherit the riches of the Father. And there is in those two verses an absolutely wonderful presentation of Christ. We see His humanness in verse 3; "He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." He was a real human being. We see His deity in verse 4; He was "declared to be the Son of God with power through the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." We see His humanity. We see His deity. He had to be man to take man's place. He had to be God to conquer sin and death and hell and Satan.

Now I want you to notice one thing in verse 4, just as we conclude our thoughts on the person. It says that this was accomplished, that is His power and resurrection, according to the Spirit of holiness. That is another way to say the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit working in Christ; through the agency of the Spirit, Christ did what He did. He expressed His power and He was raised from the dead through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Now this relationship is very important. If you look back, for example, at Matthew chapter 3 for a moment; let me take you just on a very fast tour of how Jesus was related to the Holy Spirit in His incarnation. The Holy Spirit's the third member of the Trinity, as you know. And within the Trinity, they were equal. And yet, when Jesus was incarnate, He submitted Himself to the will of the Father and to the power of the Spirit in a voluntary submission. And we find that at His baptism in Matthew chapter 3; He was baptized in verse 16. He went up out of the water. The heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And a voice from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Now the Father was bestowing on Christ the Spirit. Now mark this. I believe that from this time on, and this was the initiation into His ministry, His ministry was controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now follow a little further into Matthew chapter 12 and verse 31. He said this to those who accused Him of being of the devil. They accused Him of being of Satan. They accused Him of being representative of Beelzebub, which was a pagan term for Satan. And He said in verse 31, "I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven men. And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, a word against the Son of Man can be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven."

Now what was He saying? He's saying you might say something against My humanness, and that would be forgivable. But when you blaspheme the Spirit of God who is doing the work through Me, that is unforgivable. Now we'll see in full what that means. But the point that I want you to see is this, that when they denied the works of Christ, He says you're not blaspheming the Son of Man, you're blaspheming whom? The Holy Spirit. Why? Because He had surrendered to the power of the Holy

Spirit, and when they blasphemed His works, they were blaspheming the Spirit, because it was the Spirit working through Him.

And so, you have just in this introduction in that one little phrase, not only an understanding of the humanity of Christ and the deity of Christ but His relationship to the Holy Spirit, one of the most marvelous of all theological categories.

Well, listen to what it says in Luke 4:1, "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan." After His baptism He went from that place full of the Holy Spirit.

In John 3:34, it says this: "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loves the Son and hath given all things into His hand." When God gave the Son the Spirit, He gave Him the Spirit without measure, in other words, in absolute and utter fullness.

Now this is a mystery, people. Jesus is God. He's one with the Father and one with the Spirit. The Trinity is one and yet distinctly three. But in a marvel of the incarnation, there was some kind of separation. The Son took on a voluntary submission, did only the will of the Father and only through the power of the Spirit. And so it was the agency of the Holy Spirit that empowered Him in His voluntary humiliation. It was the agency of the Holy Spirit that was doing the work through Him. And that shows you, that shows you the utter submissiveness of Christ. And when it says in Philippians that He set aside these things, that he took on the form of a servant and was found in fashion as a man and humbled Himself, it really means that. He did only what the Father showed Him to do and only in the power of the Spirit; quite a submission for one who is fully God and has been and will be for all eternity.

And so, it was the Spirit who empowered Him in His resurrection. You say, "Why is that important?" It is important because it indicates to us that the Trinity, that God Himself is involved in the living and the dying and the rising of Christ. And the greatest affirmation that Jesus was who He claimed to be was that God Himself raised Him from the dead through the instrumentation of the Holy Spirit. So Christ is the God-man, fully man and fully God. And that is fully indicated in that God Himself raised Him from the dead through the agency of the Holy Spirit. That's good news. He came to identify with us. He came to be a man as we are men, to suffer, to understand the role of human life, but at the same time He was God and He overcame by the power of the Spirit and rose from the dead.

The marvel of His humanity and deity and that mysterious union we can never fully understand. And we can never fully understand how He was related to the Father and how He was related to the Spirit because it is so mysterious. We can't really grasp it all. But that is precisely what the Bible teaches, fully man and fully God.

I think maybe you can understand it a little bit by just looking at illustrations of it. Listen to Matthew 17:24, "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tax money came to Peter and said, 'Does not your Master pay taxes?' He said yes." Now that's interesting. Jesus paid taxes. Think of that the next couple of weeks; make you feel better. Jesus paid taxes. That shows His humanness. That shows that He was a man like other men.

"And when he was come into the house, Jesus spoke first to him, saying, 'What are you thinking about, Simon?' Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute, of their own sons or

strangers? Peter said unto Him, 'Of strangers.' Jesus said unto him, 'Then are the sons free.'" In other words, He's saying, in effect, we don't really belong to the system. They really tax their own and we are not of this world, but nevertheless, lest we should offend them, right? We don't really belong to this world but lest we should offend them, we're going to pay our taxes just like everybody else. And then He says this, "Go down to the sea and throw in a hook and pull out the first fish you catch and open its mouth and you'll find a piece of money. Take that and give it to the tax collector for you and Me."

Now wait a minute. It's one thing to pay your taxes, but that's another way to get the money that none of us can handle. You see, there you have a perfect illustration of the marvel of His humanity and His deity. He paid His taxes but He had ways of providing that were absolutely supernatural.

In Mark chapter 4, verse 35, and we've read this recently, "The same day when the evening was come, He said unto them, Let's pass over to the other side [going across the Sea of Galilee] and when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the boat and there were also with them other little boats," a little flotilla going across. "There arose a great storm of wind and the waves beat into the boat so that it was now full." Now you know as well as I do that it's okay for the boat to be in the water but it's not okay for the water to be in the boat. And get this, verse 38, "And Jesus was in the stern of the boat asleep on a pillow." Now that's His humanness. He was tired. The crowds literally dogged His steps without relenting. He was tired and He was asleep in a storm.

"And they said to Him, 'Master, don't you care that we perish?' And He arose and rebuked the wind—rebuked the wind—and unto the sea He said, 'Peace, be still.' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm." You see His humanity in the one hand; He's asleep because He's so tired. On the other hand, He stops the storm instantly. You can't explain the mystery, you can only see it.

Luke 23 verse 39, and one of the malefactors who were hanged railed at Him saying, "'If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us.' But the other answering rebuked Him saying, 'Dost not thou fear God seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss.'" There you see His humanness. He's a victim, mercilessly hammered to a cross with a cloak of blood and flies, spit on, mocked, stared at in His nakedness, humiliated. "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.'" That's His deity. And you see this co-mingling all through His life.

So, we meet the preacher. We see the promise and the person of the good news, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh doing the will of the Father, whose Son He has become in the power of the Spirit.

Now let's come, number four, to the provision of the good news, the provision. If you love the Son, what happens? If you receive the good news, what happens? Two things first pop out of the treasure-trove that God has provided. Verse 5 says, "By whom we have received grace and apostleship," and you can stop there.

What is it that the good news gives us? What is it that the good news bestows upon us? What is the treasure that we inherit when we love the Son? First, grace; second, apostleship. First, watch this, conversion; second, vocation. First, to be called; second, to be sent.

First, let's look at grace. We receive grace. What do you mean, Paul? Well, there is the possibility that he could be meaning the grace of apostleship, that's possible. But I like to think he's saying something more distinct than that, that the translation of the Authorized is right, that he is saying we have received grace and apostleship. What is grace? It's unmerited favor, unearned favor. The good news is that salvation is by grace. Ephesians 2:8 and 9 says, "For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man [should what?] should boast." We're saved by grace: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." It is grace, unmerited favor, the kind goodwill, the mercy, the loving kindness of God grants this as a gift and all we do is respond in believing.

A baby breathes because it is slapped. And we enter into the kingdom of God and receive the gift of life from Him, because with divine sovereignty He whacks us and we begin to breathe spiritually. If we are alive, it is because His breath has been breathed into us. We are born from above. There's no place for self-congratulations. There's no place for human achievement. We are not saved by works. In fact, in Romans this will be developed for us in the third chapter so that you could never miss it. In Romans 3, verse 24 it says, "We are justified freely by His grace." Verse 27: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law or works? Nay, but by the law of faith." We believe and God is gracious.

In Romans chapter 5, he'll develop that more. In verses 20 and 21 talks about where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Mercy without cause, kindness without deserving. So, salvation did not come by confirmation, salvation does not come by communion, does not come by baptism, does not come by church membership, does not come by church attendance, does not come by trying to keep the Ten Commandments or trying to live the Sermon on the Mount. It does not come by giving to charity. It does not come by believing there is a God, or there is a Christ. It does not come by simply being moral and respectable. It does not come even by claiming to be a Christian. It comes when we receive by faith the gift of grace. By the way, hell will be full of people I've just described who think they have salvation in the wrong thing.

And so, Paul says we receive grace. That's the first provision of the gospel, that you don't have to earn it. You couldn't if you wanted to. It's impossible. "For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Dr. Barnhouse had a good word. He said this: "Love that looks upward is worship. Love that looks outward is affection. And love that stoops is grace." And God has stooped to give us grace though we don't deserve it.

The dying saint Payson said this: "Grace is the only thing that can make us like God. I might be dragged through heaven, through earth and through hell and I would still be the same sinful polluted wretch unless God Himself should cleanse me by His grace." And we're going to see a lot more about grace, so I'm just going to leave it there. But it is free. It is a gift. The first provision: grace.

The second: apostleship. And I think Paul is expanding his thinking here. He starts with himself, "Paul." By the time he gets to verse 5 he has the word "we." We have received grace. And I think he embraces the believing community. We have received a certain kind of apostleship. I know he sees himself in that "we" and he sees the other apostles there and those who worked with him. It's also possible he senses the breadth of that term in its broadest possible context. The gospel not only brings us the grace of salvation, but the task of apostleship.

And we saw, didn't we, in our study this morning, that it means to be sent, to be a sent one. We are called and saved to be sent to reach the world. And for Paul, his apostleship was that very unique apostleship, a very unique...in fact, there was none like it. There was the twelve: Judas fell out, Matthias was added, that kept the twelve intact. And later Paul appeared on the scene as born out of due season, an apostle as truly as any of the others who saw Christ personally after the resurrection. And yet there was a uniqueness about his apostleship. And I think he sensed that. But he also realized that all of us are encompassed in the concept of being sent ones. You know that Hebrews 3:1 calls the Lord Jesus an Apostle? He was sent from the Father.

So, in its widest sense, I believe, the term refers to any gospel messenger. Commentator William Hendriksen agrees with that. He says, "Anyone who is on a spiritual mission, anyone who in that capacity represents the sender, anyone who brings the message of salvation is in a sense an apostle." But please don't be confused. We are not equal to the apostles of the New Testament. They were unique for their own time.

But you can find as you study, and we've seen this in past lessons so we won't belabor the point, that there were many who were sent ones. For example, in Romans 16:7 it says, "Greet Andronicus and Junias." Have you ever heard of them? You know anything about them? I don't. It says, "Who are of note among the apostles." What kind of apostles were Andronicus and Junias? Well, certainly not apostles with a capital "A", not the official ones. But they were dispatched. They were sent ones on a mission of proclaiming the truth of Christ in His behalf. And so, I believe this is what we are learning here, that there is not only the grace of salvation but the challenge of being sent.

By the way, in Acts 14:14 it calls Barnabas an apostle. He wasn't one of the twelve and nor was he the equivalent of Paul in that sense. And this goes on throughout the Scripture. You have the term apostle being broadened and broadened in many texts so that we can't confine it to just some limited specific individuals.

Now let me just see if I can give you an illustration to help you. I grew up with athletics as a background. And I was on a lot of different teams. And some coaches that I played for in various sports were kind souls. Others were not so kind; winning was everything. But I can remember several different teams that I was on in my life where a boy would come and he would try out for the team and he really wasn't very good, didn't have a lot of ability. But maybe his father had died, or maybe he was a poor fellow, or maybe he was just kind of the sort of person that draws sympathy out of you. And every once in a while a coach would just put him on the team, you know. Just give him a uniform, make him feel a part. But he'd never play, never get in the game.

And I thought about that in reference to this. The Lord doesn't work that way. If you get on the team, you're going to get in the game. It's going to be grace and apostleship that He's called us to. It is not just to be redeemed, it is to be redeemed and then sent. He graciously puts us on the team. And by the way, we're all like that little kid who couldn't do anything. And He puts us on the team and then He uses us. And we saw this morning in our study what a tough bunch we are to work with. The good news, beloved, is that He provides conversion and vocation, the high and holy privilege of serving Jesus Christ.

Oh my, do you have any comprehension of what a high calling that is? It says in Ephesians 2:10 that

we have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. We have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works. That's the whole point.

A victor at the Olympic Games in ancient times was asked, "Spartan, what will you gain by this victory?" He replied, "I, sir, shall have the honor to fight on the front line for my king." That's it. We're called to serve with all of our limitations.

D.L. Moody gave an address one time in Chicago. And it was typical Moody. At the close of the address a highly educated man came to him and said, "Sir, excuse me, but you made eleven mistakes in your grammar tonight." Mr. Moody said, "I probably did. You see, my early education was very limited and faulty, but I'm using all the grammar that I know for the cause of Christ. How about you?"

That was the right answer, wasn't it? One time some fellow came up to Moody and said, "I don't like your invitation. I don't think it's the right way to have an invitation." He said, "Well, you know, I appreciate that." He said, "I've always been uncomfortable with that, too. I wish I knew a better way. What's your method of inviting people to Christ?"

"Oh," the fellow said, "I don't have one."

He said, "I like mine better."

Whatever our limitations are I believe that God wants us to not only have grace but apostleship, to be sent. And I know the primary point here is that Paul is reflecting on his own apostleship and the grace of God in his own life. But it's much bigger than that.

Dr. Barnhouse reflected on a very interesting time in his life that parallels an experience I had and I just want to share them with you. He was being ordained into the Presbyterian ministry and he writes that: "The moderator of the presbytery asked me questions and I answered them. They told me to kneel down. Men came toward me and one man was asked to make the prayer. I felt his hand come on my head and then the hands of others touching my head and pressing down on his and the other hands. The ring of men closed in on me and one man began to pray. It was a nice little prayer and had one pat little phrase in it, 'Father, guard him with Thy love, guide him with Thine eye and gird him with Thy power.'

"I kept thinking about those three verbs: guard, guide and gird. It seemed as foolish as performing a marriage ceremony upon two people who had been living together for a quarter of a century and who had a family. I knew I had been ordained long ago and that the hands that had been on my head were hands that had been pierced and nailed to a cross.

"Years later, the man that made the prayer that day signed a paper saying that he was opposed to the doctrine of the virgin birth, the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, the doctrine of the miracles of Christ, the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures as tests for ordination or a man's good standing in the ministry.

"When I read his name on that list, I put my hand on the top of my head and smiled to myself, wondering how many dozen times I had had my hair cut since his unholy hands had touched me.

And I had the profound consolation of knowing that the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, wounded and torn because of my sin, had touched me and given me an apostleship which was from God and which was more important than any that man could approve by their little ceremonies."

Now you've got to hear Dr. Barnhouse preach that to understand how strong he said it. God gave him his ministry and his mission. I read that and thought of my own ordination. Good and godly men were there. They asked me all kinds of questions. And they came up and they put their hands on me and they prayed. All of them signed my ordination certificate. In fact there weren't enough lines for them and there's one name written bigger than any other name. It must have been an ancestor of John Hancock, great huge writing. He wrote his name on the first line of my ordination that hangs on my wall.

Not long after that, he abandoned the ministry, was involved in replete immorality, denied the faith, denied Christ, became an outspoken atheist, became a philosophy professor at USC. And I, like Dr. Barnhouse, thank God that my apostleship, my ministry, didn't come from men, but it came from Christ Himself.

Listen, what is the provision of the good news? It is grace to save, apostleship to serve. So, we see the good news: the preacher, the promise, the person, the provision. And then we come to the proclamation. Now that we're going to serve, we're going to be sent with a message. What is it we proclaim? Verse 5 again, we proclaim obedience to the faith among all nations. And then he says in verse 6: "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ."

In other words, just like you've been called to Christ, we're going to go out and call others to Christ. This really extends the last thought, the good news about Jesus Christ which has brought us grace and service leads us to go out and proclaim it and to call for the nations of the earth to be obedient to the faith. That's a great statement, folks. I wish we had time tonight just to go over the whole thought of obedience to the faith. You ought to write; put a circle around that phrase in your Bible, "Obedience to the faith." A tremendous statement, a statement just literally jammed with meaning. And it appears again at the end of Romans in chapter 16, verse 26, the next to the last verse: "To make known to all nations the obedience of faith." The obedience of faith; listen, if there's one thing about faith, it is that faith is what? Obedient. You show me someone who says he believes and lives a life of disobedience and I'll show you someone who is not redeemed. For faith, if it does not manifest works of obedience, is dead. We are not saved by works; we are saved unto good works. And the message of Christianity is a call for people to be obedient to the faith.

When you come to Christ, you affirm the faith. And by the way, that is a very definite statement—the faith. And Jude uses it, "The faith once for all delivered to the saints." It means the content of the gospel, the content of the message. It means teaching them to observe "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." That's how you go about preaching. It is obedience that we preach, obedience to the faith, the duly constituted faith. We are preaching a message of obedience. And sadly that isn't the message that people are hearing today. We must call people to faith, but faith that obeys is the only genuine faith. People say they believe and live the life of disobedience, they lie and the truth is not in them. People who really believe will obey.

And so, the design of our apostleship, the design of Paul's apostleship, was to bring all nations to obedience to the faith. And the faith is more than just believing in Jesus, it's the faith. It's all that our faith embodies. The faith once for all delivered to the saints. If you want to know what the faith really

is, it is the full content of the Word of God revealed. We call people to obey.

Now listen to me. It is not faith plus obedience equals salvation. No, it is an obedient faith equals salvation. True faith is verified in obedience. That's why the Bible constantly says that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus is Lord, because that demands submissive obedience. There's no faith without obedience. There has to be obedience for faith to be genuine.

Look at, for a moment, a good illustration right in Romans chapter 1 verse 8, verse 8. "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." How so? How was it that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world? Chapter 16 verse 19, here's how, 16:19, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men."

In the beginning it is your faith that is spread abroad. In the end it is your obedience that is spread abroad. Why? Because one must exist with the other; it is not faith unless it obeys. Salvation is submission. Salvation is affirmation of the lordship of Christ.

Now you don't want to have a theology that makes a Christian out of somebody who lives a life of absolute disobedience. There is no recognition of the lordship of Christ. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth," Romans 10:9 and 10, "Jesus as Lord," and that means obedience to His lordship, "thou shalt be saved." That is the true stuff of which salvation is produced. "Let all the house of Israel know," says Peter, "that God has made that same Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ." And Jesus said to the Pharisees, in effect, in Matthew 5, "I don't care what you believe; by the way you live you deny salvation." A faith without obedience is a faith that won't save anybody. It is piling on the broad road that leads to destruction. That's what it is. It's building a nice big religious super-structure on sand. A faith without obedience is no saving faith. It's the kind of thing that deludes and deceives but doesn't save.

People say, "Oh, I believe in Jesus, I believe in the Bible, I remember when I walked the aisle, I remember so forth and so forth." That doesn't save unless there's a life of obedience. Listen to Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men," now listen to this, "and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." No holiness, no heaven.

So, the proclamation is to bring all men to the obedience of faith, to the obedience of faith. And, beloved, this is something he says in verse 6 that we should long to do because it's something we've received, "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ." In other words, you've been called to this, now you go call the other nations to this same thing. It's a great statement in verse 6, "Ye also are the called of Jesus Christ." We've been drawn to Christ. We've come out of that life of disobedience into a life of obedience, out of unbelief into faith. And he says because that's happened to us and we're a part of those called to Christ, we ought to carry the message to call others. We sang that chorus, "God forgave my sin in Jesus' name. I've been born again in Jesus' name. In Jesus' name I come to you to share His love as He told me to. He said, 'Freely, freely you have received, freely, freely [what?] give. Go in My name and because you believe, others will know that I live.'" That's what he's saying.

We are sent for obedience to the faith among all nations because that is what has happened to us. We are the called who have been drawn to Christ.

So, we see the preacher of the good news, the promise of the good news, the person of the good news, the provision of the good news—grace and apostleship—the proclamation of the good news. And it is a proclamation of obedience. Beloved, don't ever leave that part out. I'll give you two in closing: The privileges of the good news, the privileges.

Look at them in verse 7. "To all that be in Rome," and he sure can extend it beyond that, to all believers. He...he gives them three marvelous truths about their privileges. First, they are beloved of God. Second, they are called, and you ought to put a comma after that, and if you have some words in italics, that means they aren't there in the original. There's three things here: beloved of God, called and saints; beloved of God, called and saints. Those are the privileges of the good news.

What does it mean to be beloved of God? Well, it just means we are loved. And that is all over the Scripture. God has loved us. He has put His love upon us. In Ephesians chapter 2, (I just love that verse) verse 5...verse 4, rather, "God who is rich in mercy for His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in sins has made us alive together with Christ." He loved us. He loved us even when we were dead in sin. In 1 John 3:1 it says, "Behold what manner of love." And the word "what manner," a very interesting Greek word, *potapan*, it has to do with something that's foreign, something that's other-worldly, something that belongs in outer space. I mean, what kind of a strange inhuman thing is this to love us?

In Ephesians 1:6 it says that through Christ we have been made accepted in the Beloved One. God can love us because He loves us in His Son. Romans 5 says: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Romans 8 says: "Nothing will ever separate us from the love of Christ." Nothing. And so, the privilege of the good news is that we're loved by God, and when God loves God pours out blessing.

Secondly, we are called. We're called. And that is the effectual call. That is referring to the actual call to salvation. And we'll see that in detail when we get to chapters 9 and 10. But we have been called. We are saved because of the sovereign act of God. This isn't referring to some general external call. Not just the proclamation as in Isaiah 45, "Be ye saved all the ends of the earth," or Isaiah 55, "Seek the Lord while He may be found." This isn't just the general call like Ezekiel 33 when He cried, "Turn ye, turn ye," or Matthew 11 where Jesus said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor," or John 7, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," or Revelation 22, "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come,'" or Romans 10, "Faith comes by hearing a speech about Christ." It isn't just that general calling out of the gospel. This is an indication of that very effectual purposeful call to redemption that comes by the sovereign will of God. We are the called. It's another word, if you will, for the elect, for the elect. We are the chosen. The Bible says chosen in Him before the foundation of the world; a tremendous truth. We are the called, called by God, the elect.

You can study this through the New Testament. And as I said, we get to chapter 8, 9 and 10, we'll see it in detail. But there are over and over again statements made to the effect that anyone who is a believer is one who was sovereignly called and predestinated by God.

May I add this quickly? It is never ever calling alone, but there is always with that call the act of faith in Christ that goes with it. But nonetheless, we're called. From our viewpoint, we come to Christ as an act of our will. But from God's viewpoint, it was determined before the world began and He called us to Himself. It's a marvelous truth. And we'll see it unfold as we go on in the epistle.

So, we are the beloved and we are the called. And grab that third one, we are saints, we are saints. You say, "You don't know me very well." Oh, but I know you well enough to know that if you're a Christian, you're a saint. You know what it means? A holy one, *hagios*, a holy one. By virtue of being beloved of God, by virtue of being called, you are a saint. You've been made holy. What does it mean? To set apart, to set apart from the world unto God.

In the Old Testament, they had many things that were set apart. They said that the holy place was set apart; the Holy of Holies was set apart. The tithe was set apart. The priests were set apart. In Exodus 19:6 says the whole nation of Israel was set apart. In other words, all those things were holy: the holy place, the Holy of Holies, the tithe, the priests, the nation were all holy unto the Lord. In other words, they were set apart unto God.

In the New Testament we don't have that anymore. The Holy of Holies doesn't exist, the veil was rent. The holy place is no more, the temple's been destroyed. The tithe isn't anymore because we're not under a theocracy. The priests aren't around anymore. The nation of Israel has been temporarily set aside. What is left that is holy? I'll tell you what it is: It is the new temple of God, which is His church. And we're holy. We're set apart unto God. Set apart from sin unto God. And we're to live like that.

But think of it, the privileges to be beloved of God, to be called from before the world began to be His child and to be set apart from sin unto Himself, separated to Him. Oh my, fitting that to such a people is the benediction in verse 7, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

You know something? The only people who could ever receive such a benediction would be those who were beloved of God, called of God, and made holy by God. We're the only ones who can receive His grace and the only ones who can experience His peace—grace and then peace.

Now listen as we close. Finally, after all the other points that we've seen, I want to give you the purpose for the good news, the last point. We've gone through all of them except this, the purpose. And it's at the end of verse 5.

Why does the preacher preach? Why was the promise made? Why did the person come? Why have we received the provision of the gospel? Why have we experienced the proclamation responsibility? Why has God given us the privileges?

For one reason, the end of verse 5: "For His [what?] name." And I know that those of you who have been at Grace Church for any time understand this. This simply means that everything focuses on the glory of God. People are to be saved. Why? Oh, you say, "To keep them out of hell." That's secondary. "Oh, so they can experience the love of God." That's secondary. "Oh, so they can go to heaven." That's secondary. "Oh, so they can have God guide their life." That's secondary.

People are to be saved for the glory of God, because it is *affrontery* to His holy nature that someone should live in rebellion against Him. It is His glory that is the issue. And that is the reason for everything. In Philippians 2 it says that every knee should bow and confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father. Salvation is for His glory, the gospel is for His glory. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:15, "We preach the gospel that the thanksgiving of many may redound to the glory of

God." The reason we want to bring you to salvation is so you can praise God's glory.

See, God is glorified when you believe His gospel. God is glorified when you love His Son. God is glorified when you accept His diagnosis of your sin and your need. God is glorified when you take Him into your life. God is glorified when your plans become His plans and your thoughts become the thoughts that are common to Him. We live and exist for the glory of God.

Madame Guyon wrote, "Glorious, Almighty, God without end, when wilt Thou melt the mountains and descend? When wilt Thou shout abroad the conquering rays and teach these Adams Thou hast made Thy praise?"

And so we come full circle. The good news comes from God. It is the gospel of God, verse 1. And it is preached by the preacher, promised in the Old Testament, personified in Jesus Christ, providing grace and service, proclaimed by those who receive eternal privileges and it is all for the purpose of glorifying God.

I trust that God will be glorified in your life as you respond to His good news and proclaim it. Now listen. I've just touched on so many vast subjects, it frustrates me to death. But we're going to see these unfold as we move through the book of Romans together. Will you bow your heads and listen to these words by William Blaine?

"He who wept above the grave, He who stilled the raging wave, meek to suffer, strong to save, His shall be the glory.

He whose sorrow's pathway trod, He that every good bestowed, Son of Man and Son of God, His shall be the glory.

He who bled with scourging sore, thorns and scarlet meekly wore, He who every sorrow bore, His shall be the glory.

Monarch of the smitten cheeks, scorn of Jew and scorn of Greek, Priest and King divinely meek, His shall be the glory.

On the rainbow circle throne, mid the myriads of His own, never more to weep alone, His shall be the glory.

Man of slighted Nazareth, King who wore the thorny wreath, Son obedient unto death, His shall be the glory.

His the grand eternal wait, His the priestly regal state, Him the Father maketh great, His shall be the glory.

He who died to set us free, He who lives and loves even me, He who comes whom I shall see, Jesus only, only He, His shall be the glory."

And, Father, we know that's the heart of Paul and the message of the book. Help us to see it ever so

clearly for Christ's glory. Amen.

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