Sermon 1: The Glorious Scope of the Gospel: Romans 1:1-7

Text: Romans 1:1-7 "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which 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 to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ…"

Introduction:

- **Romans is perhaps Scripture's fullest exposition of the gospel.**
    - **Romans 1-8 expound how the gospel establishes our position before God and secures our future with Him:**
        - **Our present justification by faith alone: 1:18-4:25**
        - **Our future glory: 5:1-8:39**
    - **Romans 9:1-11:36 expound God's sovereign purposes for Jews and Gentiles**
    - **Romans 12:1-15:13 expound how the gospel shapes our daily practice**
    - **Romans 15:14-16:27 explain Paul's desire to partner with the church for gospel advancement.**
- **This passage sets the tone for the truths Paul will highlight to the church.**

Summary: The church must be convinced that the gospel alone is the answer to their greatest problem, and that lives built on that message will be stable and passionate about what really matters.
Proposition: We must grasp the weight of the gospel and purpose to live lives built on that message.
Interrogative: How can we do this?

Truth 1: We must magnify its message:

- **There were natural cultural tensions between Jews and Gentiles in the Roman church:**
- **The recent history in Rome had added to these natural tensions.**
- **In AD 49, Claudius expelled Jews from Rome, and this expulsion would have impacted the demographics of the church.**

    - **Acts 18:2** In Corinth Paul "Found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome…"
    - **Romans 16:3** "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house…"
- **When Jews were permitted to return to Rome in AD 54, Jewish and Gentile Christians in the church would have faced significant cultural baggage as they worked to re-assimilate into a unified church.**
    - **Romans 1:11-12** "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established…that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith…"
    - **Romans 1:15** "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also…"
- **He also understood that this return to a gospel-centered focus was the key to his desire to partner with the church to take the gospel to Spain: Romans 15:24** "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you…"
- **Implication:** The solution to resolving this tension was to drive the church back to the heart of the gospel.

Truth 2: We must submit to its authority: 1:1 "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God…"

- **Humility: 1:1** "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ…"
    - **Paul's servanthood: δοῦλος**
        - A servant in bonds was not free to do as he pleased.
        - He had no right to use his service for self-promotion.
        - His goal was consistent faithfulness to his Master's will and for his Master's glory.
    - **Implications:**
        - Paul was not creating his own doctrine or using his ministry to promote his own name.
        - He was simply communicating the truth from God with the desire to be faithful.
- **Authority: 1:1** "Called to be an apostle…"
    - **Paul's apostleship: ἀπόστολος**
        - An apostle was formally commissioned and sent out with a specific duty by someone with authority.
        - Christ's apostles were eyewitnesses of His ministry and resurrection.

        - They were formally called, appointed, and sent out under His authority.
        - They were known to the early church as ministers who bore Christ's authority.
        - Their ministries were validated by apostolic gifts.
    - **Implication:** Despite his humble tone, the message bore God's full authority.
- **Motivation: 1:1** "Separated unto the gospel of God…"
    - **Paul's commission: ἀφορίζω**
        - The term in this context describes someone being separated from one thing to another.
        - The perfect tense indicates that God's gracious action toward Paul forever changed his identity.
        - His former identity was characterized by what he was separated from.
        - His new identity was characterized by what he was separated to.
    - **Implications:**
        - The same passion that compelled Paul as an unconverted Pharisee continued to shape him as a converted Christian.
        - God redirected that passion from rebellion against the gospel to unwavering passion to proclaim it.
        - Paul laid the unmistakable claim that this is God's word, not his word.

Truth 3: We must glory in its revelation: 1:1-3 "The gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord…"

- **It tells us He is good: 1:1** "The gospel of God…"
    - **First: He is the source of the gospel:** It comes from Him.
        - **Ephesians 1:7-9** "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace…Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself…"
        - **2 Timothy 1:9-10** He has "Saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began…"
    - **Second: He is the object of the gospel:** It is about Him.
        - **His righteousness: Romans 3:25-26** "God hath set forth [Christ] to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare…his

righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus…"

- **His love: 1 John 4:9-10** "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins…"
- **His grace and mercy: Ephesians 2:4-7** "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved…That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus…"
- **His glory: 2 Corinthians 4:6** "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ…"

- **Implications:**
  - The gospel is His story not ours.
  - It starts with Him and is entirely consistent with who He is.
  - Any struggle with the content of the gospel ultimately reveals one's resistance to glory in who He is.

- **It tells us He is faithful: 1:2** "Which he had promised afore…"
  - **It is rooted in His promise: Psalm 36:7** "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings…"
  - **God is faithful to keep His word:**
    - **Hebrews 6:16-20** "God, willing…to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever…"
    - **Hebrews 10:23** "He is faithful that promised…"
    - **Titus 1:2** "God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began…"
  - **Implications:**
    - God's word and character are the ultimate objects of our faith.

        - Our security in Christ is not built on our obedience, righteousness, or works, but rather on His promise that Christ's righteousness and redemptive work are sufficient.
        - Our sense of assurance rises and falls on our persuasion that God is faithful to His word.
- **It tells us He is patient: 1:2** "By his prophets in the holy scriptures…"
    - **God worked in history in this way, for our good.**
        - **OT:** He made promises and appointed pictures to point people to faith in the coming Savior.
        - **NT:** He points back at those promises and appointed pictures for people today to be persuaded that He fulfilled His promises.
        - **He used a radically transformed life to leave a convincing witness that these things are true.**
    - **Implications:**
        - We could not know this message, if God had not communicated it.
        - Whether we are reading Scripture before the cross or after the cross, there is a perfect continuity pointing to the life and ministry of Christ.
        - He is the central figure, and His work is the central work of Scripture.
        - We should be persuaded that this message is true, and we should rest alone in the finished work of Christ.

Application:

- **Address trouble at the root:**
    - We must regularly hear and live out the implication of the gospel.
    - Don't run from conflict or attempt superficial solutions to your spiritual problems.
    - The gospel must always be the foundation.
- **Submit to God's Authority:**
    - Scripture is not a man-made book with man-made opinions and solutions.
    - It is God's inerrant word and is sufficient to address every spiritual problem we will face.
    - We must dig into it and submit to its absolute authority.
- **Glory in His goodness:**
    - The gospel begins with God's goodness and points us to the need to glory in Him.
    - It reveals His righteousness.
    - It gives us a glimpse into His grace and mercy.

    - It demonstrates the depths of His incomprehensible love.
- **Rest in His faithfulness:**
    - God has promised and does not lie.
    - When His word is tested, it will always reveal His trustworthiness.
- **Purpose to build your life on the gospel:**
    - Preach it to yourself every day.
    - Incorporate gospel centered reflection into your prayer life.
    - Purpose to obey out of your position in Christ.