

Romans 1_2-4.mp3.mp3

Todd Fletcher [00:00:04] "Paul, the servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by His resurrection from the dead Christ our Lord." Thus reads the words of the Lord you may be seated. So as we come in to 2021, one of the things that I think we've all come to realize is that the news is difficult to pay attention to. What news source you're using, what talking heads you're listening to, one of the things about news is that it can be incredibly depressing. And you know, today it seems like bad news is the best news when it comes to clicks, and reading, and television viewership, and so bad news is oftentimes what you hear and we just don't hear very often good news, do we? And I think if you go through human history most people and most civilizations only worried about their own country or their own city or their own neighborhood, but now we have these little devices here that connect us to the entire world. And so now not only do we take on our own problems in our local areas, we now take on the problems of the world. So we're constantly being fed diets of bad news.

Todd Fletcher [00:01:43] Well, isn't it time for some good news? Exactly, and I want to ask you a question, what is your news routine? I don't remember where I heard this, it was some old pastor at some point, and he said every morning he would grab a newspaper and his Bible, he would, of course begin with the Bible. And then he would open up his newspaper and someone asked him why he always reads the Bible and then the news, and he said, because I want to know what God is doing and I want to know what Satan is doing. And I thought that was such a good example of, when we read the news, we need to realize who is behind the news in this world? He's the prince of the power of the air and children of disobedience are following his every whim, and we shouldn't be surprised when we see bad things on a regular basis. But if you're not in the good news, if you're not in the gospel, if you're not in the Bible, you're going to become depressed and anxious and cast down, downtrodden, all those types of things, because as Christians, we are called to dwell on the good news. I have a stupid analogy for you, but it's one that just makes sense to me, and I don't know if you know, the NFL playoffs are going on right now. And I just thought of this, I shared this downstairs and they thought it was weird, but I'm going to share upstairs as well because I think it's excellent. It's as if you watched a Super Bowl game, you knew the winner, you DVR it and then you went back and watched it again a week later you knew who won, you knew your team won, you knew you had the victory. But as you're watching the football game, you're a total wreck because your team is down in the fourth quarter. And you don't have any hope that you're going to pull it out, but, you know, you won. Isn't that kind of how we are? We have read the book of Revelation, we know that Jesus has the victory, we know that He comes back, He establishes His eternal kingdom forever, that those who are in Christ Jesus will reign with Him and that our inheritance is permanent and nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. We have the victory, but so oftentimes we get so depressed and anxious about the bad news in this world. And I just want to remind you is that you already have the book of Revelation, hopefully you've read it and you realized you have the victory. Why are you so anxious? Jesus says, don't be anxious about today, or tomorrow, for today is enough anxieties of its own. Don't be anxious, God takes care of the birds, He takes care of the flowers in the field. Jesus is saying, "seek first the Kingdom of God in all these things will be added unto you," don't worry about tomorrow, don't worry about the food that you need to eat, don't worry about the clothes that you need to wear, God will provide, God will give you exactly what you need to survive this dark hour.

Todd Fletcher [00:04:48] But we're so quick, like Doug off of "UP," every time we see a squirrel, we just 'squirrel' and we get so distracted from the Word of God, don't we? That's one of my favorite illustrations. But as we think about our news routine, I just again want you to think about what does your morning look like, what does your evening look like? I just did some research in the stats, the most up to date stats I can find on media consumption is that the average American consumes seven point five hours of media every day. You may be saying, "well, not me." Well, how often are you on this? now that there's my timer, just so you guys see, I'm being I'm being a good preacher. How often are you on media? How much news are you consuming, says the average person consumes about one point five hours of news a day, and that doesn't include all the social media posts that include news, that doesn't include texting about news, that doesn't include everything surrounding the news. So it's safe to say that the average person is consuming at least two hours of news media a day. You wonder why you're depressed, why you're struggling? How many hours are you spending a day in God's Word, the good news of Jesus Christ dwelling, praying to your King, hoping in the return of Jesus Christ, praying the prayers of Revelation come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

[00:06:15] As as I think of Claude Thomeke, if you ever talked to him all he talked about was the return of Jesus Christ and he would say, I'll either see you there or in the air. And he always talked about we don't know if Jesus is coming back today and he had this infectious hope in Him. Now, Claude passed away last year and I think our church has suffered for it. I think we need more Claudes, people who are always pointing our eyes upwards rather than towards phones and computer screens and TVs. We need to get back to the good news, get out of these echo chambers that were in. Where we're just hearing the things that are reinforcing our thoughts rather than going to the Word which challenges our convictions, which challenges our thoughts, which gets our minds back on to Jesus Christ. So what we see here is we get to Romans Romans chapter one verses one through two or one through four. And we went over verse one, the last two sermons. But I want to just hit it real quick because it sets the stage for where we're going next. "Paul," that's the author, "an apostle of Jesus Christ," a slave of Christ Jesus, he says, "called an apostle." That is his office, so his Master is Christ Jesus the Messiah, his office is an apostle, one of the 12 or 13, depending on how you count them up. And then he is set apart for the gospel of God. This word set apart means "marked off for this is his purpose in life." Galatians one says that even before he was born, God had called him to be an apostle. So he says, this is my very purpose. This is why I exist, this is why I'm on the planet, is for the gospel of God. The word gospel is good news, the good news is euangelion, that's how you translate it, good news. I'm set apart for the good news of God, the good news that belongs to God, it's possessed by God, not by this world. "Which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by His resurrection from the dead Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Todd Fletcher [00:08:32] So what is the gospel? What is this good news? It's Jesus Christ. And that is Paul's driving motive in life. He comes to preach Christ crucified, to live is Christ, to die is gain. You see these words coming out from Paul all the time. You could kill him, that's gain for him, you could beat him, to suffer, to live is Christ, Paul was bleeding Christ, Paul was breathing Christ. And we should to. So what we see in the section, I'm going to break it into three points, the good news is what we're talking about today. The most unlikely news, we talked about the most unlikely convert, the most unlikely apostle, now we're talking about the most unlikely news, the gospel. We're going

to break this into three parts, the first part is verse two, the good news is the Son of promise, part two, verse three, the good news is the Son of David. Next, verse four, the good news is the Son of God. The Son of promise, Son of David, the Son of God, this is how Paul starts off his magnificent letter to the Romans. It's all about Jesus and it's identifying the correct Jesus. You can get Jesus wrong and get everything wrong, you can believe in a Man named Jesus, but believe in the wrong Jesus. What I mean is there are Mormons who believe that Jesus is less than God the Father, that He is a created Being. There are Jehovah's Witnesses also that believe that there was a time when the Father was when the Son was not, giving priority to the Father over the Son in His very essence. I will tell you, those people have Jesus wrong.

[00:10:26] This is why Paul spends a lot of time at the very beginning getting Jesus right. He is the Son of David and He is the Son of God, those two parts of Jesus, those two aspects of His very Person are essential to understand in order to get the gospel right. And what we need to do as Christians, this is this is my ask from the pulpit, is that we need to start focusing on good news again, don't we? If you're cast down, if you're downtrodden, it's because your mind is set on things below. Colossians says, "set your mind on things above, not on earthly things." What does that mean that we should be so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good? Of course not. Paul did a lot of stuff on earth, if you didn't notice. But Paul was so heavenly minded that Earth couldn't touch him. His joy was secure in the vault of God's sovereignty. And that is where our hope is or should be. And so now as we look at the Son of promise, we're going to be talking about the entire Bible, so I hope you have all day set aside from just kidding. We're going to be talking about what's called the grand narrative, I call it the grand news of the Bible. You know, there's a scarlet thread running through your entire Bible. Did you know that? Have you seen it? It's the gospel. It's in the Old Testament, it's in the New Testament, if there is one moment that I could go back to in the Bible, it would be the road to Emmaus, to see the resurrected Jesus Christ and have Him open up the entire Scriptures to me and show all the Scriptures concerning Himself going to the Old Testament where Jesus says this points to My Messiahship, this points to My Sonship, this points to My death and resurrection, this points to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is not plan B, the gospel has always been the plan. You go to Ephesians one "before the foundations of the world, He chose us in Him to be holy and blameless and righteous, set apart." That the gospel was a part of Plan A. And so when you think about the Bible as a whole, this is all about the unfolding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the grand narrative, the scarlet thread, and as you pull on the scarlet threads, your whole Bible starts to crinkle because it's all about Jesus. That should be what our lives are all about, Genesis 3:15, the Proto Evangelion, the very first declaration of the promise. But the promise didn't begin there, the promise began before time. That's how secure the gospel is, Satan has had his attempts to destroy the gospel, he's tried like a madman to destroy God's plan. But again, go to the book of Revelation and realize, we win, we already have the victory. God is outside of time, He's the Alpha and the Omega is the beginning and the end. He authored this entire book and then breathed it into existence, something C.S. Lewis couldn't even dream of. God is magnificent.

[00:13:43] And you see, what Paul says here is that he has set apart for this magnificent story. This magnificent gospel of God, it is his driving force in life, it is what drives him. What drives you? What drives you? Is it the gospel? Maybe on our best days, we could say, yeah, I'm gung ho for the gospel, but most of the time that's just not what drives us. Finances drive us, security, friendships, family, being liked. I don't know, there's so many different things out there that can drive us, but the one thing that ought to drive us is the gospel, and it should drive us so much that when times of persecution come, we are not

surprised and that we are ready in the power of Jesus Christ for whatever may come. If you will take your Bibles to 2 Corinthians and go to Chapter 11, I just want to show you how much bad news Paul had in his life. In this juxtaposition between good news and bad news, Paul is perhaps the best example of what it looks like to experience bad news on a regular basis but to have your hope in good news. Just listen to this, 2 Corinthians 11 starting in verse 16, this is Paul's account of his sufferings, "I repeat, let no one think me foolish, but even if you do accept me as a fool," I love that, "so to that I may boast just a little bit," it's okay, you could call me a fool, but I'm just going to do a tiny bit of boasting, okay, just a tiny bit." What I'm saying with this boastful confidence, I say now with the Lord's authority, but as a fool," I love, I love Paul, "since many boast, according to the flesh, I too will boast. For gladly bear with fools being wise yourselves. For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. To my shame, I must say we are too weak for that! But whatever anyone else dares to boast of, I am speaking as a fool." Do you get something that's happening here? Is this called sarcasm? "I also dare to boast of that. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are the Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one, I am talking like a madman," yes, he kind is, "with far greater labors, far more imprisonments with countless beatings and often near death. Five times I've received the hands of the Jews forty lashes less, one," 39. "Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked at night and day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, dangers from robbers, danger from my own people, dangers from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure," sounds like Bear Grylls. "And, apart from other things, there is daily pressure on me on my anxiety for all the churches." Where is his anxiety, for the churches? "Who is weak, am I not weak? Who has made me to fall, am I not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that I show in my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ He who is blessed forever knows that I am not lying." You think you got a bad, Paul had it worse.

[00:17:41] Paul experienced more suffering, than likely anyone in this room put together. But Paul was one of the most joyful people you would have ever met. He wasn't cast down, he wasn't downtrodden, his face wasn't long, he wasn't Eore, "woe is me." Paul was joyful because he had been to heaven. He had been in the third heavens. Likely some fathom that he might have died during one of his stonings went to heaven, God said, "you're not done yet," send him right back. And he says, I would rather be in heaven, but it's better for you guys that I remain, but really I would like to be in heaven. Paul knew what was set before him and he was willing to suffer for Jesus Christ because all the sufferings in this world are nothing in comparison with the hope that is set before us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so as we go back to Romans, what we see is, "I have been set apart for the gospel of God, which was promised beforehand." Now, this word is interesting, it means, to announce with certainty in advance. This gospel was announced as though it had already happened, perfect tense. Why, because it was already written. Well, just because you write something doesn't mean it actually will happen, does it? Well, if you're God, it will. He is the Author and just to hit on this point yet again, He is the Alpha and the Omega, that is the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. In our understanding of the English, we'd say from A to Zed, in American, we say Z, Zeno. He's the Alpha and the Omega, He is the beginning of the end.

[00:19:33] He's written it all out and He has actualized it, He is breathed it into existence. And there is nothing that can change His book, nothing. Satan can try the world's can rage, they can do whatever they want to try to throw off God's promise, but nothing will

destroy or cut the scarlet thread, the gospel. So let's just really quickly, briefly, consider the Old Testament in regards to the promise. What is the promise? The promise is God's plan of redemption. The promise spreads throughout the entire history of humanity from the Fall all the way to the Lord's return. Redemption, the buying back process.

[00:20:16] Well, when did we fall? We all know, Genesis Chapter three, when Adam and Eve decided that their way was better than God's way, and rather than obeying God and keeping the promise with God, keeping that 'do not eat of this tree,' and they decided to break God's covenant, break God's law, His commandments. You see, they fell, and God at that very moment within the curses promises the gospel Genesis 3:15. One day the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. The singular seed of the woman, again that's a strange way to talk about a woman you never refer to a woman's seed, you always refer to a man's seed. But when you see it's the seed of the woman, you see specifically there the promise of a virgin birth. Without the man involved, and that this woman's seed would crush the head of the serpent. Well, who's the serpent? Satan, the fallen angel. And then you see promises of a Messiah King, I'm not going to read all these Psalm 45, Psalm 72, the promise of a Messiah King who would deliver Israel from their enemies. A Messiah King that would rule over the nation's. You see a new covenant, Jeremiah 31, let's turn there if you will, Jeremiah 31.

[00:21:42] In Jeremiah it couldn't at times couldn't have gotten much worse, Jeremiah was watching his people, the Israelites, in Judah them being destroyed, being exiled to Babylon. And as he's looking around, he could have given up, he could have given up all hope. But in Jeremiah, 31, starting in verse 31, we read of the promise yet again. "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant that they broke," that's the mosaic covenant, "though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel, after those days, declares the Lord. I will put My law within them. I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be My people and no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brothers saying know the Lord, for they shall all know me. From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord, for I will forgive them their iniquity, I will remember their sin no more." Here's the gospel in the Old Testament. Here's a promise to the people of God, specifically Israel, and then the church inherits, they share in those blessings given to Israel, Romans 11. We see here a promise that God will accomplish the new covenant. Notice the word "I" in there? I will, I will. I will, meaning not you, not you, not you, I. The power is with God. And God has made a promise, and in God's promises all of God's promises are yes and amen, not a woman. Amen. That's a cultural joke if you're paying attention to the bad news. You know what amen means, truly, let it be, verily, so be it. All of God's promises are yes, and so be it. That means that God will accomplish his promises, not you. He may use you to accomplish His promises. That's the amazing thing about God, is that He uses a weak vessel, a fool like Paul, for Christ's sake. Because God is powerful, but He loves using weak vessels to even glorify Himself more, because if He can use a weak vessel like you, He's got to be powerful, right? A weak vessel like me, that's amazing. Do you know me? I've got all types of problems. But God uses someone like me, that glorifies Him. God will accomplish these things, the suffering servant, Isaiah, 52 and 53. Who is the one that purchases our redemption? God Himself, the Son of God incarnate in human flesh, a perfect Lamb without blemish that goes willingly to the slaughter. And by His wounds, we are healed, He was crushed for our iniquities. That's Jesus Christ, you see this all throughout the Old Testament, I have not mentioned New Testament passage yet. Well, I thought the gospel was a New Testament thing. No, it's a Bible thing, it's everywhere. It's

the promise that God has given that He will fulfill, that Satan has been trying desperately to destroy, desperately to cut off, and God says, Satan, you are the fool. You led a rebellion that ultimately led you and your followers in hell, but I have promised redemption for those that I have chosen before the foundation of the world, Ephesians Chapter one, in Christ Jesus. Why doesn't God save everyone? The better question is, why would God save some? We need a bigger God, God is big, but our perception of God needs to be enlarged, that's what I mean. Oftentimes we make a god in our own image that meets our own likings and pleasures and ideals, if you ask someone, do you believe there's a God, most people say, well, yeah, I believe there's a God. And then you ask him, what is your God like? And they'll tell you what their God is, and then you can say, that sounds a lot like you. And they'll say, I know, isn't that amazing? And that means that your God is you. Because if God is a real being and He has a real plan and a real promise, you don't get to determine what God looks like and what God does because God is real. God is fulfilling His plan, and one day every person that has ever existed will stand before His throne. And the entire creation will be rolled up like a scroll. Nothing exists, save His angels, His humans, His throne, and God Himself, Revelation. There's nowhere to hide from this amazing God, His plan is being executed, it will be fully executed. You know, if you had a bad father or even a good father there was likely times where you would receive promises from your father that he didn't keep.

[00:27:19] I heard a story once of a son who his dad was a corporate head and his dad kept promising him that they would go camping. And he said this next weekend we'll go camping and the son would get excited, pack up all of his stuff to go camping. The weekend would come and his father would say, Son, I'm so sorry I had something come up, I just won't be able to go camping this week, next week, I promise. So the son puts the stuff away, goes another week of school weekend comes, goes home, packs up all of his stuff, gets incredibly excited that he's about to go camping with his father. His father says, Son, I'm so sorry another thing came up I've got to take care of this. You're my number one priority we'll do this next weekend. I'm so sorry. Next weekend comes, son wakes up early, doesn't pack anything. Goes to his dad, as dad says, I'm sorry, I forgot I had this scheduled, I just can't do it, the son says okay. I'll do it, I'll make it up next week. Next week comes the son doesn't even get up. And we've all heard that story, haven't we, in one form or another? That's not our God. Our God says we're going camping, guess what? You're going camping. God has never, ever, ever broken a promise ever, and that's why when you go through Scripture, you remind yourself daily of His promises, He is never broken a promise. Well, how do you know that? Look at His promises. Look at all that He has done already. He sent His own Son in human flesh, not by the seed of man by the seed of the woman, who lived a perfect life, who survived all of Satan's temptations in the wilderness, who did everything His Father said. In the Garden of Gethsemane, as He's crying out to God, sweating tears of, sweating drops of blood, saying Lord, not My will, but Your will. If there's any other way, God says there's no other way. The Romans come, Peter takes up a sword, cuts off an ear, Jesus says if you live by the sword, you're going to die by the sword. Picks up the ear, you know, spits on it, cleans it up, puts it back on, dies on a cross. People are saying, wait, wait, wait maybe He'll call some angels, let's see what He does. And Jesus willingly offers up His soul to the Father. That's an amazing promise that you read in Genesis, chapter three, verse 15, Promise kept, promise delivered. Jesus, fulfills all the promises of God. God, let me just give you a little background to the Trinity real quick, this is amazing, there's one will in the Trinity, not three, if there were three wills in the Trinity, you would have three Gods. This is all worked out in the Council of Nicaea and in Constantinople, they determined by the Scriptures in their understanding that God has one will, that the Father is the fountainhead of that will, that the Son accomplishes the will and the Spirit empowers the will like a river, there's one river that the Father is the

source of, the Son is the accomplishment, and the Spirit is the power. And that one promise is willed by God in Trinity, holy, completely, and God as a triune being will accomplish it. And so it's not as though you have competing wills and the Godhead, you have one will and every single member of the Trinity is actually a part of accomplishing that. And so when God says He will do something, He will do something, He promises that.

[00:30:54] So now let's look at verse three. Now, real quick, Isaac Watts says this, I believe the promises of God enough to venture an eternity on them, I'll wager everything on the promises of God, I'm putting all my eggs in Jesus' basket. I believe it. Verse three, of Romans, "all these things concerning His Son, who is descended from David, according to the flesh." All these things He promised through the prophets, this amazing gospel that we just covered, all of those promises, all of those things are according, are concerning His Son who is descended from David, according to the flesh. You know this word, flesh in the Greek has the idea to cut, its like to go to a butcher and and you see a big chunk of meat, it's a very bloody word. That His Son came in the flesh, what you should be thinking is, is that the Son of God took on human flesh, that fleshy stuff that bleeds, that fleshy stuff that's that's weak. And I'm saying this because Jesus became flesh, He became a Man, but all of these things are concerning His Son.

[00:32:15] Let me ask you the question, you've probably been thinking this, the entire sermon, what's at the center of the earth? I have a point for this. I was talking to Knox the other day, and Knox is really into science, he's really into all those types of things, and he asked the question, Dad, what's at the center of the earth? And I said, Knox, what do you think's at the center of the earth? And he said, Dinosaurs. Probably some, maybe sunk in that low. Water, well that makes sense there's a lot of water on this big blueberry of an earth. Mud, maybe, I don't know. Dirt, gummi bears? Who knows? What is Todd going on about right now? I have no idea, just kidding. I looked it up on science articles and journals and they said, take out coins from your pocket. And pretty much what's in your hand when you take coins out in your pocket, that's pretty much what the center of our earth is made of, iron, nickel, all those types of things, about 80 percent iron, 20 percent nickel. What's at the center of the gospel? Jesus. Is there any gospel apart from Jesus? You just said there is no good news apart from Jesus. There is no good news apart from Jesus, I like it said better by Goodspeed, who said this, the gospel is centered in God's Son. What's your life centered on? Is it centered on God's Son or is it centered on other things? Reason I say this is because, the gospel that was promised beforehand by the prophets is concerning His Son. It's all about Jesus, all of it. You can't have the good news without Jesus Christ, there is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ, there's no other name under heaven and earth by which man can be saved apart from Jesus Christ. Jesus says, I am the Way, the Truth and Life, no one comes to the Father, but through Me, no one, that sounds exclusive. It is, the way is narrow and broad that leads to destruction, but there is a narrow path that leads to life. You can't get to that narrow path unless you have Jesus Christ. And what we see here is that all this is concerning His Son, whose Son? God's Son. Who was descended from David, according to the flesh, that can melt some brains. God's Son, who is descended from the seed that's actually the Greek, the seed of David. God's Son descended from David? What? Well, you're all good theologians, you've all read the Bible, so you know what that's talking about, but if you didn't, you would be so confused. God's Son descended from David. Is David God? No, He's the Son of David, but he's not God, meaning that this Son preexisted David. Jesus uses this argument from the Psalms, doesn't He? Lord says to my Lord, sit in My right hand, talking about someone higher than David, one of his sons. You see Jesus here, there's so much Trinitarian theology in these

first couple of verses. His son, all of this is about God's Son, who was from the seed of David and then it uses a very fleshy word, according to the meat.

[00:35:44] The reason I hit on this is because the Gnostics. Secret knowledge, gnosis, the brain, Gnosticism of the brain, special knowledge. They believed, like Plato and others before them, that matter, flesh was bad, it's worthless. We need to free ourselves from the flesh. John deals with this and first John, you see, as he's talking about those who are living licensuously, they're giving to orgies and drunkenness and all that type of stuff because they believe a sin against the flesh doesn't touch your spirit because they're eternally separated. So you can sin with your flesh all you want because your spirit is with God, you're safe. This is gnosticism, and they could never believe that Jesus would become flesh because God would never become flesh. According to Plato and others plutonic beliefs, Neoplatonism, they believe that God is so set apart, He's the perfect One, He's spirit, in a spirit world and that He's emanating eons and eons and eons and that as far away from God as you can get, is the fleshy world. And so the goal of Plato and others was to free yourself from the flesh and get back to God. You see this in Nirvana with Hinduism, Buddhism. Free yourself from this nasty thing that's so bad, isn't it? Problem with that is that God said, when He created man in the flesh that it is...good. Flesh is not the problem, the problem is sin. Jesus took on flesh, to redeem flesh, this is so important, He became one of us. Athanasius, the great early church father, says this, "what has not been assumed has not been redeemed." Gregory of Nazianzus, this is I was talking about Darlene, says something similar, "what has not been assumed has not been healed." This is so important? If God didn't become one of us, He could not have saved us, or if God had become 95 percent human, He couldn't have saved 100 percent of humanity. God had to become one of us, take on this fleshy thing, weak. You know, Jesus slept, to the chagrin of His disciples in a boat in the middle of a storm? They are like Jesus wake up. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. What? We're drowning. Are we? Hey winds, shh stop, that's Todd's paraphrase, not a very good paraphrase. But you see here that Jesus really became one of us. That's amazing. The only story in history where God becomes Man, rather than man having to do everything he can to just get God to pay attention to him. You know child sacrifice, in ancient times, the God Molech, you go to the Inca Empire, you go around the world, child sacrifice is actually a pretty common thing in most ancient histories. Do you ever wonder why people would sacrifice their own child, is it because they didn't love their children? Of course they love their children. That's built into us when we have a child that we love them because they were trying to get God's attention, and if I could just sacrifice my child, maybe God would notice me, maybe God will love me. And if we kill all of these men are strong warriors and we offer them up to the gods, maybe, maybe then God will love us. How amazing is it that God, in His own initiative, sent His only begotten Son to take on human flesh and to die for you? You didn't have to sacrifice your child, He did, He came down in human flesh. C.S. Lewis has an amazing illustration of this, it's called the Diver. He gives all these examples of how beautiful the stories he says, or one may think of a diver first reducing himself to nakedness, then glancing in midair, then gone with a splash, vanished, rushing down through green and warm water into black and cold water, down through increasing pressure and to death like region of ooze and slime and old decay. And then up again, back to color and light, his lungs almost bursting until suddenly he breaks surface again, holding in his hand the dripping precious thing that he went down to recover. He and it are both colored now that they have come up into the light down below, where it lay colorless in the dark he lost his color too. You were that precious thing at the bottom of a lake that Jesus set aside His glory to retrieve. And He became one of us, He took on the flesh and He died for us in order to save you. That is so important and Paul is covering this in his introduction. He condescended for you, for us. What an amazing God. Let me get to verse four, the Son of God, and he was announced,

He was proclaimed, He says declared, which I don't like, I'll explain that in a second. He was announced to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by His resurrection from the dead. Jesus Christ, our Lord. The reason I said I didn't like that word, "declared" is because it doesn't mean that, there's theological issues here. Doesn't it sound bad that Jesus was announced to be the Son of God? Does it couldn't that be taken like He wasn't the Son and then he became the Son? That that's how some people have taken it, that's an ancient heresy in the church that some have held to even within evangelicalism where they think they think there was a moment that He became the Son. No, He's always been the Son. The Father, the Son is, Athanasius said, as long as there has been a Father, there has been a Son because the two are kind of important to each other, right? How could there be a Father if there's no Son? God, the Father has always been a Father because He's always had a Son. And so what we see here is that there is an announcement the ESV Translation declared, many others do too, because they think it's just it's better to say it declared because it has this kind of like a cleaner, a cleaner feeling to it, but announced to be the Son of God in power. Well when was Jesus announced to be the Son of God in power, when was that declaration? At the Resurrection.

[00:42:36] Let me tell you some things Jesus said during His life. He said many times, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, He'd be walking with the disciples, they'd be talking about the flowers, the suns, all these types of things, the sun's, not like they're on a different planet, and He would say, did you guys know that the Son of man must suffer and by the hands of the Pharisee's be betrayed and die, and then after three days risen from the dead. And they were like, what? What were we talking about? It's almost what happens every time Jesus is like, hey, did you guys know the Son of man must suffer many things, He'll die and after three days rise again and they're always like, okay. He says this over and over again. And then He dies and after three days, all of His disciples are waiting at the tomb for the resurrection. No, why? Because they just weren't listening, they weren't paying attention. But if Jesus had not risen from the dead, catch this, He would have been a false prophet. Deuteronomy 18:20 is very clear that all of God's prophets have a 100 percent accuracy rate and that if anyone gives a false prophecy, they are a false prophet and should be stoned to death. Well, Jesus made claims that He could forgive sins that upset people, they said, well, you know, it's easier to say, you know what's easier to say? Forgive someone sins or, hey, you stand up, you've never stood up before, take your sheet and go away. Jesus made a lot of huge, bold claims and He could have been a very bad false prophet. But in His resurrection all of the things that Jesus said we're certified by God the Father. He was announced as the Son of God, He always was the Son of God. But it was proven at His resurrection. This is so important, the resurrection is everything, Paul says, if you reject the resurrection you might as well give it all up. He says, if we don't have the resurrection, then we're still in our sins and we're the most to be pitied. The resurrection is everything, and what Paul says is here is the gospel, he was a man descendant, the descendant of David, according to Second Samuel seven, He is the Messiah King, but He's also the Son of God, declared in power at His resurrection. And he goes on to say, according to the Spirit, Romans in the resurrection, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in power. He was resurrected and now He reigns as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, so in power is what Paul is talking about. We have we have a God of power, He's not like Gandhi, who's still in the dirt, He's not like Buddha, who's still in the dirt, He's not like Muhammad, who is still in the dirt. Jesus Christ is in heaven alive, resurrected in power. And he says, "according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ, our Lord." Jesus is the God man. He's the Man of promise, He's the seed of the woman. Again, C.S. Lewis said you have three options before you, a man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a

great moral teacher ,underlined that in your minds. A man that who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. You know what he would be he would be one of three things, He would either be a lunatic, on a level with a man who says he's a poached egg, or else he would be a devil of hell. You must make your choice, either this man was and is the Son of God or else a mad man or something worse. If Jesus was not the Son of God, He is of the worst sort, but the resurrection proves that He is the Son of God. So, when you think about the gospel and you think about the good news think about it's power. And the fact that it's already been accomplished, and that Jesus will return, and all the bad news that surrounds us will be silenced in a moment, in the blink of an eye. That a sword jets out of His mouth and that immediately all of His enemies will be liquidated, that's in Revelation. And that you will see all of the people standing before His throne. So, what do you do with all this? You hope in it. Charles Spurgeon says. "no sense in sacred history, no scene in sacred history ever gladdens the soul like the scene of Calvary," let's hope in that good news. Let's pray. So Father, we we come to You as those who are weak, prone to wander. Lord, our hearts are deceptive above all things, who can know them? God, our our hope is so easily taken off course, so easily distracted. And Father, I pray that like that old pastor who would wake up in the morning and grab a newspaper and the Bible. I pray that every morning we would first turn to Your Word to read the good news and then as we look at the news in this world that we would remember that all of that is taking place within Your overall sovereign plan, and that ultimately all leads to the good news of Jesus Christ and His victory over sin and death, we pray this in His name, Amen.