

By the Resurrection from the Dead

Romans 1:1-4

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be 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, 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.” (Romans 1:1-5)

Today we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. All of humanity has lived under the curse, in bondage to the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15). Yet by His death, burial and resurrection, Jesus Christ has reversed the curse for repentant sinners. This is the Lord who reverses the course of failing lives and restores His people to fulfilling lives. In short, the Risen Lord can renew your life. This is what we celebrate on this Resurrection Sunday.

Invisible and Visible

What is it like when the invisible meets the visible? When you ponder that question, probably the first illustrations that would come to mind would be dawn and dusk. Before dawn, the darkness reigns. Unless the moon is bright, or the stars are clear, it is difficult to see the difference between the earth and sky. On overcast nights, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between them with the naked eye.

But when the first glimmers of daylight arise, even on an overcast day, you can start to see the difference. A little light highlights the difference. Light bounces off of something solid, something you can see. But light passes right through the invisible air and the invisible space above the earth. So there is still a boundary of sorts between what is invisible and what is visible.

Within each of one of us, the invisible meets with the visible. Our souls, our spirits, are an invisible component, dwelling in our visible bodies. Yet we all know that the invisible part of our lives has a very real impact in our visible actions.

So there are very important things that we cannot see with these eyes of flesh. They are invisible to us, yet we know that they are there. And to answer the most important questions of life, we have to cross that barrier between the visible and invisible. *Where did we come from? What is the Source of our existence? Why are we here, existing as we do at this moment? What is our destiny – in this earth or in a life beyond? Where are we going?*

On this Resurrection Sunday that we commonly call “Easter,” we can learn about the connection between the invisible (spiritual) world and the visible (physical) world. This is so because today we celebrate Someone who crossed the boundary between the visible and the invisible. In fact, in Romans 1:1-4, the apostle exalts Three Persons who brought this about: The

Tri-unity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. According to 1 John 4:12-14, no one has seen God the Father at any time. But the apostles testified that they have seen the Son whom the Father has sent. And the Spirit of God bears witness to Christ in the heart of every believer. And the Son of God, whom the apostles saw, is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). And today, we celebrate the historical evidence: the most visible, verifiable result of all, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We can see a hint of this evidence is the opening line of our text today: **“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God...”** (Romans 1:1). That religious zealot, named Saul, had been determined to slaughter the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1). But something happened to him on the road to Damascus that changed the course of his life. God’s adversary, named Saul, became God’s apostle, named Paul! This is evidence from history. Something that is invisible to us produced a visible effect, transforming an adversary into an apostle. If you and I had been alive at the time, we would have seen a visible person who served Someone who was no longer visible to us. And this was the common thinking of all the apostles. Peter was a humble man in the fishing business who followed the Lord but failed miserably – denying that he even knew the Lord. Yet God’s Holy Spirit transformed him into the zealous and courageous apostle who preached at Pentecost.

So let’s stop to ask the question: What reversed the course of Paul’s life? What reversed his cursed behavior? What renewed the apostle Peter after he had failed miserably? In all of these we learn how the invisible God breaks through to work in a visible manner in the lives of human beings. If you are looking for evidence of this, you need look no further than the eyewitness accounts passed down to us. The New Testament is full of these eyewitness accounts (such as 1 John 1:1-4). What would these eyewitness accounts show us?

Let’s study Romans 1:1-4 to find out. In this passage, the Gospel comes into sharp focus. It is “the Gospel of God” meaning that God is the Source of this Good News.

First, this Good News comes from God the Father.

Second, this Good News is about God the Son, Jesus Christ.

Third, this Good News was proclaimed by the power of God the Holy Spirit.

I. This Good News Comes from God the Father.

“...the Gospel of God, (which He had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures) the Gospel of God, (which He had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,)

The Father promised the Gospel of God through His prophets in the Scriptures. Primarily, the apostle Paul was speaking of the Old Testament prophets. God expressed these promises through the words of His prophecies so that people could test the truthfulness of His words. The Lord promised Abraham, **“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice”** (Genesis 22:18). But these promises were not merely

general blessings. They were specifically given to point the way to Jesus Christ. For instance, the prophet Micah wrote, **“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting”** (Micah 5:2). And Jesus, the blessing for all the world was born in Bethlehem, just a short distance from Jerusalem.

The Good News of the Gospel came from God the Father to fulfill the promises that He had made. And these promises concerned His Son, Jesus Christ.

II. This Good News is about God the Son, Jesus Christ.

“... the Gospel of God ... concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;”

The Gospel of God is about the Son of God. The Gospel of God is about Jesus, the Christ, and our Lord. The Gospel of God is about the Son of Man – the human descendant of David.

The angel described the coming birth of Christ to Mary this way. **“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David:”** (Luke 1:32). Isn't this remarkable? The Son of the Highest is the Son of David!

The Son of God took on **“flesh and blood ... that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”** (Hebrews 2:14). By becoming a human being, it became possible for God's Son to endure physical death, to die for the sins of mankind. He died the death that sinner's deserved. He offers Himself as the Substitute for every repentant sinner. This is certainly good news – the good news of the Gospel – concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ.

III. This Good News was proclaimed by the power of God, the Holy Spirit.

“... the Gospel of God ... declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Today, we do not celebrate Jesus Christ as a great leader who lies in a martyr's grave. And the reason is very simple. By His infinite power, the Holy Spirit raised Jesus Christ from the dead. In so doing, the Spirit confirmed the identity of Jesus as the Son of God. The Invisible God performed this in our visible world to verify His promises.

The Trinity, the Tri-unity of the Three Persons of the Godhead (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) have given us the Gospel of God. And this Gospel was confirmed by the Holy Spirit in raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

On this Resurrection Sunday, take heart in the way that the Apostle Paul applied Christ's Resurrection to every believer:

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? *It is God* that justifies. *Who is he* that condemns? *It is Christ* that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Romans 8:33-34).

Applications

The very real work of the Invisible God in this visible world placed the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in front of eyewitnesses. Here is how the Apostle Paul applied Romans 1:1-4:

“...by whom [Jesus Christ] we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name.”

- God’s servants have been enabled and authorized by Gospel grace.

Let’s put this authorization to work today. God’s grace is laboring in our midst as we speak. God worked in Paul as an apostle. God’s grace is perfecting us at this moment.

- The Gospel of God has been given for the obedience of faith among all nations.

This Gospel grace is for all the world to see. In our local area, in our state, our nation and throughout the world, the Gospel of God is to be obeyed by the nations.

- The Gospel of God is for God’s glory.

Ultimately, this is all for God’s Name – His glory – and not our own.

On this Resurrection Sunday, let us rejoice that the Invisible God has intervened in this visible world. He has done so by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And the Risen Lord can renew your life.

Pastor Gordon Dickson, Calvary Baptist Church, Findlay, Ohio <https://www.cbcfindlay.org/by-the-resurrection-from-the-dead/>