

Series: The Faithfulness of God

January 5, 2020

## **Title: God's Good News**

**[Slide 1]**

**Text: Romans 1:1-5**

### **Paul: Christ's Slave**

#### **News Alert:**

It's the news in as few words as possible: a headline that catches your eye, a banner scrolling across the bottom of your screen, a pop-up that begs to be opened. Something big has happened, or is happening right now. You need to stop everything you're doing and check it out.

Sometimes the news flash is about things close to home: a weather alert or a missing child. And sometimes the news affects our entire world.

In Paul's day a news flash came by way of the spoken word or a written document. When a new king or emperor came to power, messengers fanned out across the realm with the "good news." The word for this announcement was the word we usually translate as "gospel." When the messenger arrived in a city or village he would proclaim the gospel or good news that a new king had been crowned. It was a time for new allegiances, new loyalties. It was a time to celebrate the new king.

#### **Paul: Christ's Slave:**

One day in the mid 50's of the first century Paul sat down to write a letter to the house churches in the great city of Rome. Rome was the center of the Empire. Rome's armies kept order from Britain to Northern Africa, and from Spain to the Middle East. Rome's fleets ruled the Mediterranean. One man sat in the seat of supreme power: the Emperor. He was celebrated and even worshiped as Savior, Lord, son of a god. Each year his birthday was proclaimed far and wide as "good news."

So how to introduce yourself to people living in Rome – the seat of all that power? Paul chose a three part introduction:

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*Romans 1:1 KNT*

*Paul, a slave of King Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for God's good news,*

- "a slave of King Jesus": Paul belongs to a King, body and soul, but not the King of the Romans. He belongs to King Jesus – the Messiah.
- "an apostle": Paul is announcing that he has been sent by His King to perform a special mission.
- "set apart for God's good news": Paul's mission is to be the messenger who proclaims that Jesus is King of the world.

And what better place to do that than in Rome?

**Son of God****The promised King:**

Paul reminds his Jewish listeners that their own Holy Scriptures pointed the way to Jesus.

**[Slide 3]**

*Romans 1:2 KNT*

*...which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the sacred writings*

This good news of the coming of God's King had been foretold by the ancient prophets. They had written of how one day God would come to redeem and restore His broken Creation. He would do so through His Messiah – the King.

This good news, in other words, was part of a much bigger story. It marked the turning point at which a broken world began to mend under the hand of the God who created it.

Each one of us know that old broken world all too well. When God's good news comes to us, we find ourselves at the door to His New Creation. That's the power of Good News!

Think of it: right now as you hear these words, the Holy Spirit is inviting you to step through that door into God's New World. All because of King Jesus!

## **The Son of David:**

This King Jesus, Paul explains, was no ordinary Jewish peasant rabbi. He had royal blood in His veins:

### **[Slide 4]**

*Romans 1:3 KNT*

*--the good news about his son, who was descended from David's seed in terms of flesh,*

Paul was not announcing the kingship of some otherworldly deity. He was talking about a flesh and blood human being who had been born in the province of Judea some 50+ years before. He was a descendant of King David – a “son of David.” Just as the prophets had promised, God’s King would sit on David’s throne.

## **Son of God:**

But how could this Jesus of Nazareth, despite His family heritage, be God’s King?

As N.T. Wright puts it:

### **[Slide 5]**

*The Messiah had a task: to rebuild or cleanse the Temple, to defeat the pagans, to rescue Israel and bring God's justice to the world. Anyone who died without accomplishing these things, particularly one who attacked the Temple and died at the hands of the pagans he should have been defeating, leaving Israel unredeemed and the world still unjust, was obviously not the true Messiah. (Wright, Romans, p. 418)*

In every way, Jesus had apparently failed to be Messiah. Rome’s king had dispatched Him through the decree of a petty provincial governor, with a sign nailed to the cross over His head proclaiming Him to be “King of the Jews.”

If Jesus were to truly be King, something else must have happened – something bigger than Caesar and all his armies! And something else did happen:

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*Romans 1:4 KNT*

*...and who was marked out powerfully as God's son in terms of the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead: Jesus, the king, our Lord!*

When God raised Jesus from the dead, He reversed the verdict of *false messiah*. Instead, He validated Jesus the Son of David as Jesus Messiah, the Son of God.

Messiah had defeated not the pagans, but Israel's and our greatest enemy: Death itself. Paul uses the *plural* for "the dead," meaning that Jesus was the *first* of many to be raised in victory over death. He had brought forgiveness and true justice to the world by paying price for our sins and injustice. Through His Spirit, He made all who trust in Him His new Temple.

For that, Paul can call Him Jesus, the king, our Lord!

**God's Good News****A world in need of a king!**

What Paul say to us if he had the chance to write us a letter? Would he be enamored by our technologies and military might? Would he figure that because we had walked on the moon and explored the farthest reaches of the solar system we no longer needed God's King?

No. He would see that our world is just as lost and broken as the one he knew as a Roman citizen in the first century. He would say to you and me what he said to the Christians in Rome:

*"I'm the slave and messenger of King Jesus, Lord of the world. I come with astounding news – news you need more than anything else no matter who you are. I challenge you to stop what you're doing and unpack this good news. God's King Jesus is here right now in the middle of your messy world. He has come to make things right, starting with you!"*

*"It doesn't matter whether you are Jewish or Gentile. Those categories are irrelevant now. The King himself is here, and He is calling each one of you to trust Him and obey Him as your Lord."*

**God's Good News:**

So look at the screen of your inner life. God's Spirit is sending you an alert:

*Jesus is King and Lord of the world!*

What difference will that Good News make in your life this year? How will God's Good News make 2020 different from every year that has come before? What changes do you need to make if Jesus is to be King in your life and your world? What false kings need to be dethroned?

Jesus is King. He holds year 2020 in His hands. He offers to walk every moment of it with you. That's God's Good News!