

Sunday, April 26th, 2009

Living Hope EFC

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God's Good News for Mankind: Romans 1 (#2)

ILLUS: Selling our house in Paris

- We moved from Paris in 2002 to pastor in West Texas.
- In 2004 I resigned that church – & ended up spraying lawns for 2 ½ years before moving to Colorado July 07. Our house still hadn't sold!
- The house was rented on & off. We tried selling. No serious offers.
- Before we moved we had fixed it up in hopes of selling it = \$5,000.
- At one point: we had to fix the foundation. Total = \$20,000 on Visa.
- Jan. – March 2008: We spent another \$6,000. *All on our Visa!*
- FINALLY, out of the blue, July 08 we get an offer. \$10,000 less.
- The **day of signing**, the lady refused because wanted original garage door opener? And us to pay \$70 for something...
- Two days later it was FINALLY done! August 2008 – house sold.
- **We paid off all our Visa's.** Bought our Toyota minivan (\$4000). Paid for Erica's wedding! And had a few thousand dollars left over.
- *Can you imagine being under unpayable debt all your life?*

SALVATION...on a minor scale! *What relief!*

An earthly experience, on a small scale, of our eternal relief/ salvation from the debt due to our sin! And the agony of being in debt – eternally.

In Romans – Paul unfolds the **Good News from God!** That He has provided salvation for sin's debt, by paying our debt in full by His Son!

In chap.1: Paul introduces five characteristics of this "Good News."

1- It's Source is God Himself: 1:1. It's God's "gospel."

The word "**Euangelion**" (Gospel) was not a new word to the Romans.

- For the inhabitants of the Roman Empire it had special associations with the Emperor-cult. The announcements of such events as the birth of the Emperor's heir, his coming-of-age, his ascension to the throne – were referred to as "euangelion." -*Cranfield, 3.*
- **Paul is drawing a direct contrast** between "God's evangel" and the pretentious claims of self-important men.
- The "good news" Paul has to proclaim is from GOD Himself!
- God is the SOURCE! It affects all men. It is beyond comparison.

ILLUS: Art Linkletter – Picture of God.

A small boy was drawing a picture on his program. What is that you are drawing? Boy: "A picture of God."

Art: "No one knows what God looks like."

Boy: "They will when I get through."

POINT: To fathom the dimensions of God's GOOD NEWS (salvation) we need to begin to see a picture of WHO God is!

GOD IS: (His attributes/ perfections)

(1) Eternal: Not bound or affected by time. God's existence extends endlessly backward & forward. He will never cease to exist. –**Ps.90:2.**

APPLY: God sees the past & future as clearly as the present.

(2) Self-existent (free): Not caused or dependent. No one made God.

- God is in no way dependent on anything outside Himself for His existence. He is totally sufficient by Himself. He is independent.
- Opposite: **Dependent**. We must have food, air, light, water to live.
- **Is.40:13-14** = No one ever added to God's knowledge. - Acts 17:25.
- Ex.3:13-15 "**I Am who I AM**" = from the Hebrew verb "to be."

APPLY: God is under no obligation to anyone. He is not indebted to man, unless He chooses to be. What He does for us is by His choice.

(3) Immutable: Unchanging and unchangeable. He is never inconsistent or growing or developing. –**James 1:17; Ma.3:6.**

APPLY: God's plans & promises are unchanging: Rom.11:29 *irrevocable*.

- WE may **vacillate** in our faithfulness to one another. God does not!

(4) Holy: God is exalted above His creatures and is separated from sin. He is perfect, absolute righteousness. He is distinct and exalted above all creatures in majesty and righteousness. – **Ps.99:1-9**; Is.43:14; 1 Pet.1:16

- Holiness means an absence of evil & the presence of righteousness.

APPLY: This is why **Satan** lost his position in heaven, and **Adam** lost his favor in the Garden, and why God can permit no sin in the **new heaven**.

- And it is why the closer we draw to God, the more we hate evil.

(5) Omniscient: By nature He knows everything actual or possible, completely and eternally, effortlessly & equally well. –**Is.45:21; 46:10**

APPLY: God knows our hearts (1 Sam.16:7), our motives (**1 Chr.28:9**); our needs (Matt.6:8), hairs on our head Mt.10:30; all our days Ps.139:16

- **God never discovers anything.** He is never surprised or amazed.
- You will never do anything that surprises God, nor will the king.
- Every warning God makes to us comes from infinite understanding.

- Though we cannot understand why things happen to us, God has perfect understanding and purpose to bring glory to Himself.

(6) Omnipotent: *By nature & without effort, He is able to do anything* consistent with His own nature. He is able to control everything. Nothing is impossible with God. – **Rev.1:8; - Is.46:10**

- **Does God have limitations?** Yes. He cannot do that contrary to His nature. He can't be tempted with evil. He cannot sin, lie, or deny himself (2 Tim.2:13).

APPLY: God will never go back on His Word, fall prey to an evil thought.

(7) Omnipresent: *God is everywhere present with His whole being, always.* – **Ps.139:7-8,16.**

- God varies His localized presence: on His throne, above Tabernacle.
- It does not mean that God's being penetrates the universe (**pantheism**). **God is not = to the universe. The universe is not God.**

APPLY: There is nothing, no one that escapes God's presence.

- There is no person in any part of the world, whose cry is overlooked

(8) Infinite: *God has no bounds or limits.* He is in no way limited by the universe or by time and space. All of God's attributes are unlimited & without termination. – **Acts 17:24 ; Luke 1:37.**

APPLY: God never tires of loving, forgiving; the riches of grace are beyond exhausting. His wrath and compassion have no limit.

(9) Love: *God is eternally committed to the welfare of His creatures.*

- God's love cannot be improved: Eph.3:18-19; "His love endures forever." It is eternal and unmerited (1 Jn.4:19). **God is love: 4:8,16.**

APPLY: -Jer.31:3f God's love for Israel is unending; as is His love of the world - John 3:16; and for His children - Rom.5:8, 8:31-39.

- Rom.12:9f – We are to love others as God loves us (5:5)
- **There is no selfishness in perfect love, nor is there fear.**

(10) Gracious: *The unmerited favor of God shown to man,* through Christ, because of God's love. **John 1:16; Eph.2:7**

APPLY: **Salvation is by grace, because it could be on no other terms.**

- **"Unmerited" means "without cause in us."**

ILLUS: Andy Stanley's scratched car. *How Good is Enough, 87*

(11) Personal: He is relational with man. **Ex.33:11; John 1:14; 15:13.**

APPLY: The Good News of God, is that we can be friends with God.

- **To make Christianity a set of morals & rules is an insult to God.**

(12) True: *Everything God discloses is absolutely certain & reliable.*

- Titus 1:2; **Num.23:19**; John 14:6, 17:3-"only true God."

APPLY: God can do nothing inconsistent with Himself. His promises can never be broken or unfulfilled –2 Tim.2:13. His Word must be inerrant.

(13) Sovereign: God is the Chief being in the universe and supreme in power. ***He has absolute authority to control***, sustain and determine.

- **Acts 17:26**; Is.46:10; 44:24-28; 45:5-7, 23; 48:9.

APPLY: **Rom.8:28-30**; Eph.1:11. God superintends all events in our lives.

- Think back to how you came to know Christ. God was in control.
- What are your current circumstances? God has purpose in them.

Sovereignty and Evil:

- By His nature, God cannot be involved in the origin of evil.
- For reasons unrevealed to us, sin is present by His permission, and is a part of His plan. Sin is not created. It is result of the act of Satan.

(14) Good: God is morally perfect & generously beneficial. –**James 1:17.**

APPLY: He never tells us to do anything – for our harm.

(15) Just/ righteous: He is fair and righteous. ***God never acts in violation of His character or Word.*** –**Heb.1:8**; Col.3:23-4:1; 2 Cor.5:10; Ps.89:14. APPLY: God will right all wrongs, reward all service, fulfill every promise

(16) Unique: *One of a kind.* The only God. – **Is.44:6; 45:18**

- There is but one God (Dt.6:4), who is indivisible, consisting of Three Persons of one divine essence.

APPLY: All others are pretenders. False (2 Cor.11:13-14). There is One creator, savior, judge, eternal Father. He has revealed Himself to man.

- Romans 1:20. If a person rejects Him, he does so to his eternal loss.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS:

1- God's perfections are known to us through revelation.

2- The attributes of God describe Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3- God is more than the SUM of His attributes. He is *incomprehensible*.

μ&v: Being "**finite**" it is impossible for us to understand "infinite" concepts. In this sense God remains "incomprehensible."

δ&v: **Although we can never know God exhaustively, we can know Him "truly."** God has given us **genuine** knowledge about Himself.

- Our lack in knowing Him is one of "degree," not a matter of "truth."

FACT IS: We cannot even know one another "exhaustively."

4- While God may display one quality or another at a given time, no quality is independent of, or preeminent over any of the others. -Ryrie

- His love & wrath & holiness & compassion are equally displayed.

The Good News Paul announces, is from our eternal. Self-existing, unchanging, holy, all-knowing, all-powerful, always present, infinite, loving, gracious, personal, trustworthy sovereign, good, just, only God.

2- It's Trustworthiness: It was announced beforehand: 1:2.

God makes His plans known in advance, through **His prophets**: Is.44:25f

- **He announced** this good news: Is.7:14 (virgin), 9:6 (child born), 40:3 (voice in the wilderness), 42:6-7 (light to Gentiles), 53:6 (gone astray).
- **At least 24 of the 39 OT books contain prophecy.**

ILLUS: **Ryrie** has pointed out it would take **200 billion earths**, populated with 4 billion people each, to come up with one person who could achieve 100 accurate prophecies without any errors in sequence.

The Bible records over 300 prophecies fulfilled in Christ's 1st coming!

- Green, 294

APPLY: God can make such predictions, and wait 100's or 1000's of years to fulfill them, because of who He is! -2 Tim.3:16; 2 Pet.2:20-21.

3 – It's Content: His Son! V.3.

Calvin: "Here is a beautiful passage which teaches that the gospel is contained in Christ so that he who withdraws one step from Christ, withdraws from the Gospel." - *Barnhouse, 23*

POINT: God has NO Good News – outside his Son! **Heb.1:1-3.**

He is Unique:

μεν: **He is totally human**, David's son. Ps.89:20,24,28,29.

- **God could not by divine command or omnipotence reverse the effects of sin.** Man had sinned against God making common cause with Satan. And man must obey God, breaking with Satan.
- **Christ, as a man, won back what Adam lost.** –Romans 5:19

δε: **He was God!** John 1:1-2, 14, 18.

- **As God**, His was a sacrifice of infinite worth! - **Acts 20:28**
- It was ONE-OF-A-KIND! Never to be repeated!

ILLUS: **Two Construction Workers**

Two construction workers fell into a deep pit. One said to the other, "**Save me** from this wretched place. Get me out of this dirt & mud."

Other: "You idiot! How can I help you? *I'm in the same pit!*"

POINT: Since they were both in the pit, neither one could help the other out. Then they heard a voice from above calling them to grab a rope.

A third worker above the pit saved them.

Rom.3:23 = All are sinners. None can help another escape his debt!

- No prophet or apostle or pastor can help anyone out of the pit.
- **JESUS – is unique; sinless, above the pit. He alone can lift us out!**

4 – It's Ability: "Power of God for Salvation" to every bel/:" 1:16.

"The gospel is God's effective power active in the world of men to bring about *deliverance from His wrath...and reinstatement into that glory of God lost through sin.*" - Cranfield, 19

NEGATIVELY: It saves us from God's wrath. Rom.1:18; John 3:36.

- **Is.53:6** Christ bore our debt and God's wrath for us. Rom.3:22.

POSITIVELY: It restores us to glory with God. 2 Cor.5:21.

- **God can make such a salvation promise on the basis of complete satisfaction in the death and resurrection of His Son.**

5 – Its Purpose: To reveal the righteousness of God: 1:17.

1 – How God makes righteous the sinner: Rom.3:20-24.

- He imputes Christ's righteousness to the sinner.

2 – How God remains righteous in doing so: Rom.3:25-26.

ILLUS: Andrew Jackson's Pardon

In **1829** a Philadelphia man named **George Wilson** robbed the US mail, killing someone in the process. Wilson was arrested, brought to trial, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged.

- Some friends intervened in his behalf and were able to **obtain a pardon** for him from President Andrew Jackson. *Good News right?*
- Wilson wouldn't accept the pardon.
- The **sheriff** wouldn't hang Wilson. How could he hang a pardoned man? An appeal was sent to President Jackson.
- The perplexed President turned to the **Supreme Court** to decide the case. **Chief Justice Marshall ruled that a pardon depends on its acceptance by the person implicated.**
- **If refused, it is then not a pardon!** George Wilson was hanged, although the pardon lay on the sheriff's desk!" – Green 317

CONCLUSION

Paul was sent to announce Good News to mankind: **God's Pardon!**

- Man is guilty! No question.
- But we have One who has intervened for us, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.
- **His payment for our sin has affected a pardon from the Judge.**
- But a pardon refused, is no pardon at all. The sentence must be carried out.
- **Have you received His pardon?**
- God, who cannot lie, has promised you can go free from your sin.
- We each must take Him at His Word, and accept His pardon/ Son.