

What did Paul mean when he referred to the gospel? **Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 together as a group.** This passage has Paul's summary of the gospel, which includes the death, burial, resurrection and witness of the living Christ. And in Romans 1:16-17, Paul makes it clear that this gospel is powerful for those who believe in it—to those who believe, it is the very power of God. By Gospel, Paul means the good news or the story of the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Romans 1:16-17, let's focus in on two words as we conclude this lesson. The first key word in the divine vocabulary of the gospel of Christ is that it is the **power** of God. The good news of Jesus Christ has power. The Greek word for power is *dunamis*, the root of our English word dynamite. And Paul has in mind the fact that the gospel of Christ carries with it the omnipotence of God - the all-powerful God is behind it, operative in making us new. The gospel is the power of God, and it is the answer to our fallen state. The gospel has the power to change us, fulfill us—satisfy our good longings, to save us—from the shame of what we have been through and the guilt of what we have done and the power to change us—to transform us. The gospel is the revelation of God's grace and salvation through Jesus Christ, which takes our unrighteousness and sinfulness and replaces it with the righteousness of God.

All we need to do from verse 17 is **believe**, which is our second word. If the power of God can do it, for whom does it do it? For every one that believes. Salvation power operates only through faith. Where there is faith, there is the power of God operative in salvation.

*How important is our faith in releasing the power of the gospel in our lives and the lives of others?*

### Personal Application

How has your understanding of the gospel changed? How does it affect your life?

### Prayer

Share prayer requests and pray for them as a group. Share any testimonies of answered prayer.

# WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

## Week 1 – The Gospel Defined

### Announcements

**Biblical Foundations** – Mondays starting February 22 | LCC  
**Legacy Update and Offering** – February 27-28 | All Services  
**Doctor & Dentist Dinner** – March 14 | email [damos@churchoftheking.com](mailto:damos@churchoftheking.com)  
**Servolution** – March 26 – April 4  
**Kid's Camp** – June 21 – 24, June 28 – July 1 | Loranger, LA  
**VBS** – June 7 – 11 | LCC  
**SERVE Expo** – February 27-28 | LCC

### Warm-Up

What do you think of when you hear the word gospel?

### Word

In this new message series, entitled **What is the Gospel?**, we are going to spend six weeks studying the first eight chapters of the book of Romans.

Why are we looking at the book of Romans? First, Romans has the most succinct explanation of what the gospel is. It is truly one of the most theologically rich books of the Bible. Additionally, it is one of the most practical books in regards to our relationship with God and the outworking of that relationship in our lives. Some theologians believe Paul's writing of the book of Romans contains the greatest biblical

explanation of what God has done for us in Christ and God's desired response from us. It is critical that we, as Christians, understand what the *main thing* is. The Gospel is our message! Paul wrote the book of Romans as the handbook or blueprint of the gospel. So, in this lesson, we are going to review the book of Romans, particularly looking at the book's author, Paul, and gaining a fresh understanding of **The Man, The Mission, and The Message**.

### 1. The Man. Let's get started by reading Romans 1:1-7

**together as a group.** It would be difficult to understand the book of Romans without looking first at book's author, Paul. He was a real **mix** of things. He was a Jew, a citizen of Rome, a trained rabbi, a Pharisee, and even a tent maker. He was also a strong leader, powerful orator and capable writer. Paul was passionate and fiery. Before coming to Christ, Paul saw Christianity as a heresy to Judaism and even travelled around persecuting and killing Christians. He was present and actually oversaw the stoning of Stephen in Acts chapter 7.

We read in Acts 9 that Paul was transformed by Jesus Christ. From that point, God called him to be an apostle, a messenger of the gospel to the Gentile or non-Jewish world. Immediately following his conversion, Paul spent a number of years in Arabia and Damascus. It is believed that in these "silent years" Paul grew deeply in his relationship with God. It was also during this time that he gained a grasp of the calling of God on his life – *to carry the gospel message*. In response to his call, Paul travels on three missionary journeys taking the gospel throughout Asia and Europe. Paul ended up writing 2/3 of the New Testament and is responsible for making Christianity a worldwide movement.

In Romans 1:1 we clearly see God's call on Paul's life. It reads: **Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.** This one verse alone shows Paul as a **servant** - who is honored to belong to Christ. The word here for servant, *doulos*, is the common word for a bondservant or household slave and shows the deep humility in Paul's heart demonstrated in his commitment to Christ. Not only was Paul a humble servant, but he was an **apostle** – that simply means "one called and sent out on a mission."

*When you have thought about the Apostle Paul, how would you have described him? Have any of these facts about Paul surprised you? If so, why?*

**2. The Mission.** In Romans 1:8-15, Paul outlines his plan. **Read this passage together as a group.** In the ancient world that Paul lived in, all roads led to Rome. Paul must have thought – if I can only get to Rome, and share the gospel, it will spread rapidly and reach the entire world. Paul desired to go to the imperial city - not only to launch the gospel from Rome, but to bless the people there. However, he was not able to make it to Rome until years later. When Paul wrote Romans in approximately A.D. 56, he had not yet been to Rome, but he had been preaching the gospel since his conversion in A.D. 35. Now he was nearing the end of his third missionary journey. This letter is, therefore, a mature statement of his understanding of the gospel. In view of his personal plans, Paul wrote to introduce himself to a church he had never visited. At the same time, he set forth a full and orderly statement of the great principles of the gospel that he preached. In the book of Romans, Paul gives us a comprehensive teaching on the righteousness, justice and goodness of God.

Paul also wrote this letter because he wanted to unite the Jews and Gentiles in Rome under the common theme of the gospel. Paul preached a gospel of racial reconciliation – he preached to the Jews, the Gentiles, the barbarians, the rich, the poor, the educated, and the uneducated. I believe Paul modeled through his teaching and his life what churches should strive for in their preaching of the gospel – inclusive of everyone – sharing the life and light of the gospel with all men.

*Have you ever read the book of Romans? If so, what parts of Paul's message stand out most to you and why?*

**3. The Message.** In verses 16 and 17 we see the essence of Paul's message in the book of Romans. Read **Romans 1:16-17 together as a group.** **What does the word Gospel mean?** The Greek word as it appears in the original language means 'good news.' It originally did not refer to the story of Christ as a whole, but literally meant the 'good news,' and generally referred to an oral report of good tidings about the work of the gods, the announcement of the birth of a royal child, or the good outcome of a battle.