



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

GLOBAL MISSIONS SUNDAY • AMONG THE NATIONS •

ROMANS 1:1-6 • 3/3/2024

MAIN POINT

God has given us the great invitation through Christ to be a part of His mission.

INTRODUCTION

What's the most memorable thing that has ever happened to you while sharing your faith?

In what circumstances is it easy for you to share God's love with others? In what circumstances is it difficult?

Describe a time when you recall doing something specifically "for the sake of God's name." What was the experience like?

To date there are more than 3,800 unengaged, unreached people groups in the world that have no way to hear the gospel. This is in addition to the billions of people in evangelized countries around the world who are not believers. Reaching the world is one of the few commands that Jesus left the church, and our work is still unfinished. God has invited us to join Him in making His name known to others in and through the work of Jesus Christ. The question is, do you want to participate?

UNDERSTANDING

READ ROMANS 1:1-6

Paul begins by describing himself as a slave of Jesus Christ. What do you interpret that phrase to mean? In what ways do you identify with Paul's description of himself?

If a person is truly living as a slave of Jesus Christ, what would characterize their attitude and actions?

Paul introduced himself as a slave of Christ Jesus. Slavery was widespread in the first-century world, as it had been during the Old Testament period. It was this lifelong, freely accepted slavery that best describes Paul's use of the imagery. The Greek word rendered "slave" refers to a bond-servant, someone owned by another and to whom the slave owed total allegiance.

What truths about Jesus Christ does Paul proclaim in this passage?

In these verses, Paul describes the essential characteristics that proved Jesus is the unique Person who alone could accomplish God's plan of salvation. First, Paul affirmed that Jesus was God's Son. This description emphasizes Jesus' preexistent divine nature; He is fully God. Next, Paul pointed out that Jesus was a descendant of David, indicating that He is the Promised Messiah. Finally, Paul declared that Jesus' resurrection from the dead truly proves that this unique Person, the God-Man, the Messiah is indeed the powerful Son of God. Paul was contrasting the fleshly nature of Christ's humanity (His physical nature, not sinfulness) with His gloriously resurrected state and His being the central focus of the gospel.

How did Paul describe his purpose in life (v. 1)?

What do you see as God's role in Paul's fulfilling his purpose? What was Paul's role?

In these verses, Paul explained further the nature of his mission as an apostle. He had been commissioned to bring about the obedience of faith among all the nations. Of course, the work of salvation would be of God, but Paul would be the God-appointed messenger. God calls His people to participate in His redemptive work, a daunting task when we think about it. God's purposes are always grand and majestic, not small. Jesus commissioned His followers to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19), and Paul took the Lord's commission seriously.

What is the good news about the gospel that made Paul so eager to share it?

Paul was bold about his faith. When have you been in a situation where as a Christian you felt like you "stuck out"? Were you bold or embarrassed?

What role does God's grace play in helping Paul, and us, accept and fulfill this calling (v. 5)?

We are among those who are called to be a part of God's work. That is the great invitation God extends to us. The key is, how do we respond? The responses vary. Paul knew he had received grace, the unmerited favor of God, which would make

possible the seemingly impossible. Rather than balk and complain over the apparent impossibility of it, the apostle viewed his commission as a gracious act of God to a vile sinner who formerly had persecuted Christ's followers (see 1 Cor. 15:9-10). Some of Jesus' other followers were more hesitant. This leads us to John 6.

READ JOHN 6:2-14.

What's the difference between Jesus' response to the crowd and the disciples'? What does each response reveal about their character?

What was the test that Jesus was using on Philip (v. 5)? Why then did Jesus take over and tell the disciples what to do?

What obvious solution to the dilemma of hunger did the disciples miss? Why should it have been obvious? What did their proposed solution show about their level of understanding of who Jesus was?

With the attention of the disciples on the seemingly impossible challenge, Jesus showed them that He had the power to provide. As fast as the disciples lined up to receive food, Jesus doled it out. They served small group after small group. This helped them come to grips with their lack of faith that prohibited them from providing food. Jesus provided more than a snack. Everyone there had all they needed to satisfy their hunger.

Philip responded to Jesus' invitation by stating that the mission couldn't be accomplished (v. 7). Andrew, on the other hand, pointed out that there wasn't enough (v. 9). What excuse have you used recently to avoid accepting God's great invitation?

What does this story reveal about Christ's provision for those in need today? What does it reveal about the means Christ will use to meet those needs?

APPLICATION

In what ways is our church taking seriously Jesus' concern for others and reaching more people in His name? How can we (as individuals and as a group) join in what our church is doing? In what other areas can we serve?

Paul knew that at the end of his life he would stand before God and give an account of his days. Read Psalm 90:12. How does the truth in this psalm and Paul's testimony impact how you see your personal responsibility to take the gospel to the world?

PRAYER

Prayer Points:

- Lord, we pray for specific opportunities and resources for our group to be involved in missions this year.
- Lord please encourage us to spread Your message this week and in our daily lives at home.
- Praise God for sending His Son to die for us and that we now have a message of hope to share with the world.
- Thank God for His Spirit that empowers us to reach others. Ask for the Spirit to be active in your group members this week.

COMMENTARY

1:1. The apostle Paul began his letter with an expanded introduction. Because his future mission to Spain and beyond involved the church at Rome, and because the believers there had never met Paul, he made extra efforts to validate himself in their sight. He wanted them to know, as he wanted the Galatians to know several years prior (see Gal. 1:1,10-12), that what they were about to read in his letter was not his own invention. His letter to them was part of a divine mission, and what he wrote, he wrote for God.

1:2-4. Which gospel is Paul going to expand on to the Romans? He tells them clearly to make sure that they are receiving not another gospel or a new gospel or a different gospel, but the gospel gospel, the one promised beforehand through God's prophets in the Holy Scriptures. The gospel is serious business for Paul. It is the heart of the message about the kingdom of God and its impact, and he wanted to make sure that the Romans had confidence in what they were about to hear. Paul was preparing to tell them more about the gospel than they had ever heard, and he wanted their full attention (plus, he did not want to be cursed; see Gal. 1:8-9).

Paul's gospel is the gospel regarding God's Son, born of a physical mother, making Him fully human; conceived by the Spirit of holiness, making Him fully divine and sinless; and raised by a father who was a descendant of David, qualifying Him as well as part of the royal lineage in Israel. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul said, the Lord who by the power of God conquered death and the grave. What good news would there be in a gospel that is based on "bad news"—the news that the promised Messiah was killed, and His kingdom apparently with it? It is therefore the resurrection of Christ that puts the "good" in the good news. Be assured, Paul said—the gospel you are going to hear from me is the gospel that "I received" (1 Cor. 15:3).

1:5-6. Verse 5 is perhaps the most pregnant proposition in the entire letter, for it contains the seeds of Paul's entire spiritual life and ministry as a believer and apostle. For His name's sake reveals Paul's ultimate motivation in preaching the gospel. His further references to the name of God in Romans betray the depth of his concern that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ be vindicated: the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles (see Rom. 2:24; Isa. 52:5; Ezek. 36:22). God wanted His saving name proclaimed throughout the earth (see Rom. 9:17; Exod.

9:16) because “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13; Joel 2:32). The ultimate role of the name of God in the earth is to be the object of reverence and praise (see Rom. 15:9; 2 Sam. 22:50; Ps. 18:49).

Why, therefore, did Paul receive grace and apostleship from God? For His name’s sake ... to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. It is instructive, and perhaps convicting, to see how Paul turns to the Old Testament to explicate the gospel message. The average Christian today does admirably when he or she refers to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the benefits of which are appropriated by faith. But the understanding of God’s salvific intent for the world in the Old Testament is beyond the pale of most believers.

Remember: when Paul, and the Old Testament writers, refer to “the Gentiles” or “the nations,” they are referring to the whole world. As Jews, they were looking beyond themselves to everyone else. The Gentiles are “the world” which John 3:16 says, “God so loved” (including the Jews, of course). It is obvious at the very start of this letter that Paul has “the world” in his sights, and he wants the Roman believers to catch his vision.

Deftly, he weaves them into the universal scope of the gospel by saying that they are among the Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. Paul is building his case for going beyond Rome to Spain and the “ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Follow the reasoning: “I, Paul, am a voluntary bondservant of Christ, called by Christ to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. You Romans are an example of what I must do elsewhere, for you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. I belong to Christ as a slave, as do you. If we partner together in the extension of the gospel, I can be supported as I go on to Spain and you can continue to spread the gospel in Rome. A harvest is prepared among the nations and in Rome” (1:13).