

## Son of David, Son of God

*Romans 1:1-6*

### Introduction

This is the fourth Sunday of Advent. This morning we remember God's faithfulness, but how can we be sure that we can trust God?

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Romans 1:1-6

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— <sup>2</sup> the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures <sup>3</sup> regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, <sup>4</sup> and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. <sup>5</sup> Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. <sup>6</sup> And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

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### Exposition

#### **I. The Gospel is God's Good News for the world (Vv. 1, 5-6)**

The word "gospel" means "good news." And in verse 1, we find that it is God's good news. Who is this good news for? It is for the world, as noted by the reference to the "gentiles" in verses 5-6. It is the message that hope has come for us. The free gift of God's grace has appeared for all who would receive it.

#### **II. The Gospel reveals God's faithfulness to His promises (Vv. 2-4)**

*"the gospel he promised before through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures"*

God makes a promise to David - 2 Samuel 7:1-17 (11<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.)

Isaiah repeats the promise - Isaiah 11:10 (8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.)

Jeremiah repeats the promise - Jeremiah 23:5 (7<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.)

The Promise is Fulfilled in the Birth of Jesus (9 B.C. – 4 B.C.)

The promise was given a thousand years before it was fulfilled. Let that sink in for a moment. A thousand years passed from the time of the initial promise given to David to the time of its fulfillment in Bethlehem. A thousand years. We think we comprehend how long that is, but we have no idea. Yet, the hopeful expectation of the fulfillment of the promise continued among the people of Israel. They knew that God was faithful, but they also knew that God works on his own timeline. God is not accountable to anyone. That's part of what it means to be God. He has no supervisor. He answers to no one. He is in himself the highest authority, and he works out his purposes according to his plans, and he is never late.

What this means, among many other things, is that we dare not question the faithfulness of God because he doesn't conform to our timeline. You or I may say, "But I've been waiting for decades," but what is a decade to the author of time? Does not 2 Peter 3:8-9 warn us regarding such thinking?

It states,

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

God's timing is perfect according to his plan, even when he chooses to take 1000 years to fulfill his promise. For what is a thousand years to the Lord? But you say, "Yes, well, pastor, I need help right now. I don't have a thousand years to wait." And I hear this. And, more importantly, your heavenly Father hears this. He is not indifferent to your suffering or your circumstances; He is simply working on a more permanent, eternal solution. Note what the apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18,

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

The Lord is not slow. He is always on time. Just as with the birth of Jesus, fulfilling promises from a thousand years before. He is faithful! You can trust him, even when his faithfulness does not fit your timeline.

*"regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Not only have we seen that God is faithful according to his own timeline, but we also now see that God's faithfulness may sometimes not conform to our perception of what we need. There are two parts to this verse: Jesus' earthly life of humility and obedience as the descendant of David and Jesus' exalted life of glory and power as the resurrected Lord overall. While many of us are familiar with the story, the first-century Jews and God-fearing Gentiles did not have a category for suffering Messiah, the promised descendant of David.

The expectations of the people was that when the descendant of David came, when the promise was fulfilled, he was reign as a king over his people, and that he would overthrow all the other nations that oppressed and harassed his people. The people of Israel were looking for a military savior, but Jesus came in humility and meekness. He described himself as "gentle and lowly." This was not the military savior that the people were looking for, that they were certain that they needed in order to be saved. And furthermore, with Jesus' death, the people believed that there was no way that this man could be the chosen one, the anointed one, the Messiah, the Son of David who would reign forever.

While Christ came in humility, for, humility was necessary for the fulfillment of his work, He did not remain in that humiliated state, which is the point of the second part of this verse. He died, but he was raised to life. Having been raised as a vindication for the fulfillment of his work and as an inauguration of the new creation into the old, he now possesses the name above every name, and all authority belongs to Him. He is LORD!

What this means for us, among so many other things, is that when we think of God's faithfulness, we need to remember that God conforms to his own timeline, but God knows what we need far better than we ever could know it.

If the Jews would have gotten their way, Jesus, as the Son of David, would have been given an army and overthrown Rome. They believed they needed political salvation. Yet Jesus knew that what they needed more than that was personal salvation. They needed to be transformed from the inside out. They needed salvation from above, but they did not realize it. I'm sure this is true of many who are watching or listening here today. If we had the ability to fashion Jesus into our own perception, what would he look like? I appreciate the way pastor Kevin Deyoung speaks of the different ways that we have altered Jesus' image to fit with our personal preference.

The greatness of God is most clearly displayed in his Son. And the glory of the gospel is only made evident in his Son. That's why Jesus' question to his disciples is so important: "Who do you say that I am?" The question is doubly crucial in our day because not every Jesus is the real Jesus. Almost no one is as popular in this country as Jesus. Hardly anyone would dare to say a bad word about him. Just look at what a super-fly friendly dude he is over there. But how many people know the real Jesus?

There's Republican Jesus who is against tax increases and activists judges, and for family values and owning firearms.

There's Democrat Jesus who is against Wall Street and Walmart, and for reducing our carbon footprint and spending other people's money.

There's Therapist Jesus who helps us cope with life's problems, heals our past, tells us how valuable we are and not to be so hard on ourselves.

There's Starbucks Jesus who drinks fair trade coffee, loves spiritual conversations, drives a hybrid and goes to film festivals.

There's Open-minded Jesus who loves everyone all the time no matter what, except for people who are not as open-minded as you.

There's Touchdown Jesus who helps athletes run faster and jump higher than non-Christians and determines the outcomes of Super Bowls.

There's Martyr Jesus, a good man who died a cruel death so we can feel sorry for him.

There's Gentle Jesus who was meek and mild, with high cheek bones, flowing hair, and walks around barefoot, wearing a sash and looks German.

There's Hippie Jesus who teaches everyone to give peace a chance, imagine a world without religion, and helps us remember all you need is love.

There's Yuppie Jesus who encourages us to reach our full potential, reach for the stars, and buy a boat.

There's Spirituality Jesus who hates religion, churches, pastors, priests, and doctrine; he wants us to find the god within and listening to ambiguously spiritual musical.

There's Platitude Jesus, good for Christmas specials, greeting cards, and bad sermons; he inspires people to believe in themselves, and lifts us up so we can walk on mountains.

There's Revolutionary Jesus who teaches us to rebel against the status quo, stick it to the man, and dream up impossible utopian schemes.

There's Guru Jesus, a wise, inspirational teacher who believes in you and helps you find your center.

There's Boyfriend Jesus who wraps his arms around us as we sing about his intoxicating love in our secret place.

There's Good Example Jesus who shows you how to help people, change the planet, and become a better you.

And then there's Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. Not just another prophet. Not just another Rabbi. Not just another wonder-worker. He was the one they had been waiting for: the Son of David and Abraham's chosen seed, the one to deliver us from captivity, the goal of the Mosaic law, Yahweh in the flesh, the one to establish God's reign and rule, the one to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, freedom to the prisoners and proclaim good news to the poor, the lamb of God come to take away the sins of the world.

This Jesus was the Creator come to earth and the beginning of a new creation. He embodied the covenant, fulfilled the commandments, and reversed the curse. This Jesus is the Christ that God spoke of to the serpent, the Christ prefigured to Noah in the flood, the Christ promised to Abraham, the Christ prophesied through Balaam before the Moabites, the Christ guaranteed to Moses before he died, the Christ promised to David when he was king, the Christ revealed to Isaiah as a suffering servant, the Christ predicted through the prophets and prepared for through John the Baptist.

This Christ is not a reflection of the current mood or the projection of our own desires. He is our Lord and God. He is the Father's Son, Savior of the world, and substitute for our sins-more loving, more holy, and more wonderfully terrifying than we ever thought possible.

When we reflect on not only the timing of God's faithfulness but the nature of it, we have to stand in awe and confess that his ways are not our ways, and his thoughts are not our thoughts, but nonetheless, he is faithful. He keeps his word, even if it confounds our own wisdom.

## **Conclusion**

How can we be sure that we can trust God? If he has kept His promises in the past, will He not keep His promises in the future? God is faithful. He has demonstrated this faithfulness in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of God. And he invites us, he calls us to place our trust in him.