

Romans 1:1–6 | “It’s All About Jesus”
Preached on Christmas Eve’ 2024 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles this evening to Romans 1—yes, you heard that right, Romans 1 for Christmas.

And you don’t have to flip too far into Romans 1, for we will be covering Romans 1:1–6 today.
[pauseeee]

When you think about Christmas in our day, it has become about a lot of different things. *[pause]*

It has become about good times, presents, spending time with family, tree lightings, and so much more.

And many of those things are fun to do around this season. *[pause]*

We all have precious memories surrounding many of those things...

Maybe it’s that sweet yearly family gathering that you always have.

Maybe it’s an annual tree lighting that you go to.

Or maybe it’s your tradition of opening presents that just brings you so much joy. *[pauseeee]*

Every year Kate and I take the kids for a drive at night so that they can look at all of the Christmas lights that people have on the outside of their homes, and the kids just love that.
[pauseeee]

Now there’s nothing inherently wrong with these things, but if we let them, they can distract us from what Christmas is all about.

Because we can be very distractible, can’t we?

And this can happen at Christmastime because there is *so much* going on, and we seem busier than ever, running around here and there from present-buying to decoration-hanging to event-attending. *[pauseeee]*

Due to this, we can forget that really this is all about Jesus and because of Jesus, so sometimes we need moments that slow us down to reflect upon why we even celebrate this holiday.

And what a better time than right now on Christmas Eve, the night before Christmas morning?
[pauseeee]

You see, the meaning and message of Christmas is not primarily about us, but about Jesus...

It’s about who He is and what He has done for us, and here in Romans 1:1–6 we are reminded of that in great clarity. *[pause]*

I'll READ the passage for you. [*READ*]

Here is the beginning of the great letter of Romans that was written by the Apostle Paul. [*pause*]

He, of course, begins the letter by mentioning that he wrote it, and talks about what ministry that God has appointed him to, but he also emphasizes Jesus. [*pause*]

If we could say one thing about Paul it would be that he understood that it's all about Jesus and the good news of Jesus.

And as Paul begins this letter, he can't help but show us that truth. [*pauseeee*]

This reminds us that if you talk about Christianity or the faith, and you leave out Jesus, then you have completely missed the point.

Our faith is in Jesus, it is because of Jesus, and it is about Jesus! [*pause*]

So as we look at what Paul says here in the first 6 verses of Romans, we see some things about Christ.

First, we learn that...

I. Jesus was disclosed beforehand. (1–2)

A lot of people try to make predictions of a future event. [*pause*]

The weatherman always tries to predict the weather, but he's only *sometimes* right. [*pause*]

There have been people who have tried to predict the timing of the coming of Christ, and they are *always wrong*. [*pause*]

And then there are some people who try to predict what will happen in our country or what will happen with the economy...

And what they are trying to do is they are trying to say that something will happen in the future, yet they are not 100% right, so we can't always believe their word with certainty. [*pause*]

Well did you know that God predicted, prophesied, and promised something and it happened? [*pause*]

It's true! God promised the gospel beforehand and it happened! [*pauseeee*]

Now what exactly is the gospel?

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. [*pause*]

It is the news that though we were sinners against Him and unable to save ourselves, yet God sent His only Son to come to this earth, be born of a virgin, and then die and rise again for us, so that we could be saved from God's wrath against our sin.

What good news of great joy *that is!*¹ *[pause]*

It is the most important message that there is, it is the message that saves us, and it is the message that the world needs to hear.

It is that very good news that started to come true in the coming of Christ, which we celebrate today. *[pauseeee]*

Just look there at the end of verse 1, as Paul brings up the gospel of God, and then goes on to say in verses 2–3, “which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning his Son.” *[pauseeeee]*

Christmas is really a prophecy being fulfilled, and a promise being kept!

So when you think of Christmas, you can think, “God kept His Word!” *[pause]*

Christmas is a worldwide announcement that says that God is reliable, but that's not all for it's also a worldwide announcement that says that God is loving and salvation is here! *[pauseeeee]*

You see, the gospel that was promised beforehand is “concerning his Son”. *[pause]*

The gospel is about Jesus—it is the good news of Jesus.

God promised a Savior to save us, and that Savior is His Son. *[pauseeee]*

What love of God that He would not only tell us beforehand that there is salvation on the way, but the very One who would save would be His precious Son. *[pauseeee]*

Know and feel the love of God for you this evening!...

He loves you so much that He gave His only Son to come to this sin-cursed world and die for you on the Cross. *[pause]*

He gave His life so that you could be forgiven of your sins, for He took your sins upon Himself and paid the penalty for them. *[pause]*

He died, so that you can live, but have you trusted in Him? *[pauseeee]*

Jesus was promised beforehand through the prophecies about the gospel, and guess what? He came!

¹ A reference to Luke 2:10.

That's what Paul shows us next when He says that the Son of God "was descended from David according to the flesh".

And so it's here we have the all-important truth that...

II. Jesus was descended from David. (3)

It means a lot to us when someone promises to come to something very important to us. *[pause]*

When you were a child (or maybe you're a child now) didn't it mean so much that your parents or your grandparents promised to come to your sports game, recital, or play? *[pause]*

The promise in itself brings us joy, and shows that they love us.

But when they actually come through and come to the event, it's like the climax of joy, and the extent of their love is seen. *[pause]*

They promised, and in that there is love, but to actually come, now that really takes it over the edge. *[pauseeee]*

Well here we see that God has promised a Savior, *and* He actually came through on His promise through the coming of Jesus. *[pause]*

The one promised, came! *[pauseeee]*

We are told here that God's Son "descended from David according to the flesh". *[pause]*

He is the Son of God, eternally existing forever before time, and yet He stepped into time, took on flesh, and was born as a descendent of David. *[pause]*

This points to the Incarnation, which we celebrate this season...

He humbly came to be born as a human, never losing His divinity, but taking onto Himself a human nature, and that means that He became like one of us. *[pause]*

He took on flesh, so as to be our perfect representative, in order to deal with our sin problem. *[pauseeee]*

Just think of how much humility that would take to do so!

He eternally existed in perfection in Heaven, and yet He chose out of love to come and live in a sin-cursed world in a frail human body. *[pause]*

He felt pain, He felt sorrow, He felt all of what it means to be human, yet without sin. *[pause]*

He knows what it's like to be like one of us, for He is one of us in His humanity! *[pauseeee]*

What humility! What love!

Christmas is a reminder of the gift of Jesus, who came not in a box, wrapped with wrapping paper, but in human flesh, wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.² *[pause]*

What a marvelous gift!

If you have trusted in Jesus Christ, it's like you have not only opened the gift of Jesus, but received it through faith. *[pauseeee]*

Now why was it important for Paul to note that Jesus descended from David?

Because of the promise of God to David back in 2 Samuel 7. *[pause]*

There, God promised to David that the throne of one his descendents would be established forever.³

There would be a Davidic king with an eternal throne, and now Jesus arrives on the scene, descended from David's line. *[pause]*

He is that king, that descendent, that promised One. *[pause]*

You see, it was important that Jesus was born of the line of David, for it shows once again God fulfilling His promises.

And it also shows the amazing control of God that He worked it all out, and it all went according to His plan. *[pauseeee]*

When we celebrate Christmas it's a celebration of God's plan and mission unfolding in Jesus.

He didn't sit back and do nothing, His plan wasn't thwarted, but He moved towards us in loving, sovereign action. *[pauseeeee]*

Aren't you so thankful for such a loving, sovereign Lord? *[pause]*

If He would do all of this through Jesus, why wouldn't He use His love, sovereignty, care, and faithfulness for us even now? *[pause]*

If He could and would do something so amazing and intricate, do you really think that He can't help you today? *[pause]*

He can! Just look at what He has done through Jesus! *[pauseeee]*

I don't know what you are going through right now, but just remember the truth behind Christmas and know that the Lord can help you through whatever you are going through.

Look to Him, trust Him, and follow Him. *[pauseeeee]*

² A reference to Luke 2:12.

³ See 2 Samuel 7:12–16.

So far we have seen that Jesus was disclosed beforehand, descended from David, and now thirdly...

III. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God. (4)

There in verse 4, Paul says that Jesus “was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.” *[pause]*

Now this doesn't mean that the resurrection somehow *made* Jesus to be the Son of God, as if He wasn't before.

No, for we were just told that the gospel promised beforehand was concerning God's Son. *[pause]*

So then what does it mean here to say that Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God in power”? *[pause]*

It means that Jesus *is* the Son of God, but it was His resurrection that *declared it publicly* for all to see.

That's why He is said to be “declared to be the Son of God *in power*.” *[pause]*

The resurrection is a powerful declaration of Jesus' divinity. *[pauseeee]*

Think of it this way—let's say that someone talked about their friend, and they said, “You've got to meet my friend sometime, they are the kindest person you will ever meet.”

And the person even goes on to explain some of the radical kindness that their friend has shown them. *[pauseee]*

Now you have never met their friend, and so you are thinking, “Yeah, they are probably kind, but are they really *that* kind? Are they really the kindest person I will ever meet?” *[pause]*

You have your doubts about their kindness, but then one day you finally meet this person, and you are just staggered at their kindness...

They truly *are* the kindest person you have ever met. *[pause]*

They were always a kind person, but it was when you *met them* that their kindness was proved to be true, for you saw it powerfully in person. *[pauseeee]*

Now that's not a perfect illustration, but it's a little like Jesus and His resurrection—it powerfully showed Him to be who He truly was. *[pause]*

He was always the Son of God, but the resurrection showed it for all to see.

And that's why the disciples have a radically expanded view of Jesus and a new emboldened mindset after the resurrection. *[pauseeeee]*

As we think about the truth behind Christmas, we must remember that the baby born in Bethlehem is the Son of God.

But not only that, for He is the Son of God, who went on to die for our sins, and then be raised powerfully on the third day. *[pause]*

The One who came, also died, but was also raised in power by the Spirit. *[pauseeee]*

In the manger, Jesus appeared weak, tiny, small, and vulnerable, and it would be easy to view Him *only* in that way...

But we must remember that He is truly the powerful Son of God—His resurrection is proof of that. *[pauseeee]*

And to think that the One who would be declared the Son of God in power, willingly came and was born as a baby is a wonder. *[pause]*

He could have thought, “You know, can I skip that baby part? Can I skip that weak segment of a human life? Can’t I just go do the ‘in power’ segment?”

Yet it was *necessary* for him to be born as a baby, so as to be a true, real, actual human and then die for us as our representative. *[pause]*

But although it was necessary, He also did it *voluntarily* for our salvation—He willingly became vulnerable, weak, and dependent as a baby. *[pauseeee]*

None of us likes being weak and vulnerable, yet Jesus did it out of love for us.

He humbly came and became vulnerable and weak, for us who were vulnerable and weak, and unable to save ourselves. *[pauseeee]*

Oh, the lengths that our Savior took for us! *[pause]*

The one declared to be the Son of God in power was the one declared to be the Savior in Mary’s womb. *[pause]*

Jesus’ birth and death were both in humility and weakness, but His resurrection was in power.

It was a big flashing sign to say, “That baby who was born in Bethlehem and that man who hung on the Cross is truly the powerful Son of God.” *[pauseeeee]*

At Christmas time, it’s easy to get all sentimental about a baby born in a manger, but we must never lose sight of who that baby was.

He wasn’t just another ordinary baby born, but He was the very Son of God, who took on flesh. *[pause]*

The promised, eternal Son of God was born as a human son and then declared to be the Son of God in power by His resurrection. *[pause]*

What a marvelous truth! What a mind-boggling reality!

If that doesn't amaze you, then maybe you have become too familiar with the story, and you need to go back to standing in wonder at it once again. *[pauseeee]*

Jesus was disclosed beforehand, a descendant of David, and declared to be the Son of God. *[pause]*

Knowing that, we are faced with the question: so now what? *[pause]*

Jesus' identity and work *always* demand a response.

The magnitude of who Jesus is and what He has done in the gospel means that we cannot just walk away without eternal consequences. *[pause]*

I mean He is the very Son of God, who was promised beforehand, came, died, and rose again for our sins.

You can't just ignore Him and what He did without eternal ramifications. *[pauseeee]*

The reason He came was because we sinned against God, and we were under condemnation and death, and we couldn't save ourselves. *[pause]*

Without God's intervention, we would all be eternally condemned forever due to our sin against the Holy God, but that's why Jesus came. *[pause]*

He came to save by taking our place and paying the penalty for our sins, so if you reject Him, there is no salvation for you.

But if you receive Him in faith, there is salvation, forgiveness, and life. *[pauseeee]*

You see, there are only two options when it comes to Jesus—either you receive and believe in Him, or you ignore and reject Him.

What is *your* response to Jesus? *[pauseeee]*

In verses 5–6, Paul explains that he and others “received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.” *[pause]*

Paul was sent to call people to respond in faith to Jesus among the nations, and the Romans are among those who responded to Jesus in faith.

Are you included along with them? *[pauseeee]*

A time like now when we are celebrating Christmas is not a time to ignore or pass over who Christ is.

Rather, we are led to look once again upon our Lord and Savior, and see who He is. *[pause]*

We are led to look at His humility and love, as we see Him lying in the manger.

But that look at Him with eyes of faith in the manger causes us to look further to His death on the Cross, and the salvation He secured for us there. *[pause]*

And then we look even further to His powerful resurrection and see who He truly is.

And then after all of those ‘looks’ upon Christ, we are led to look upon our own hearts, and ask ourselves, “What’s *my* response?” *[pause]*

Is it faith, wonder, and love? Or hardened unbelief? *[pause]*

May this Christmas be another time of renewed faith, hope, and love in the Son promised beforehand who came, and who died, and who rose again in power.