

# Romans 1:1-7

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Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[ 0 : 00 ] Romans chapter 1, verses 1-7. To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's pray together. Father God, we love you and thank you for this morning. We love and thank you for your word. And I pray, God, that you will bless the listening to it this morning.

We pray this in Christ's precious name. Amen. You can be seated. This has been a bit of a difficult week for me.

The first reason, you may notice that I'm wearing a lapel mic. We've been doing that for a while now because we've been trying to master recording our sermons. They're actually available on our website.

Our hope is that that way you can keep up with us. Those of you who go home for the summer, you can keep up through Romans. And when you come back in the fall, you can pick right back up where we are. And so I had to listen to myself preach this week.

[ 1 : 43 ] Not a fun task at all. The silver lining in all of that is that I could hear kids in the background of the recording. And it made me smile every time I heard a little shriek, which I didn't hear at all when I was preaching because I'm focused.

There's a lot going on in my head. But it reminded me of how great a family we have here and having the children and what a blessing it is to have them in the meeting with us. The other reason it was a tough week is my intro this week was to kind of talk about bad news.

It's kind of the bad news of the world. And so I spent a lot of time looking at bad news in the world. And thankfully, the text I was studying is the silver lining to that bad news.

It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so this morning is about the good news of Jesus Christ found in these first seven verses.

Certainly, we live in a world of bad news, don't we? We get bad news all the time. Globally, there's a lot of global bad news going on right now.

[ 2 : 49 ] We've got the earthquake in Japan. I heard there was another. There was a 7.9 in Thailand. I don't know if you heard that news or not this past week. All the unrest that's going on in the Middle East.

The rioting in Libya right now. The rising food prices. The shortages of such. The chaos in the world. Locally, we have a lot of problems.

A couple of things, just in case you don't know, about the bad news of the world. It's estimated that 3,700 babies are aborted each day. That gives us a grand total of 1.35 million a year in America. In New York, I learned this this week, that 66% of African-American babies are aborted. That's two of every three African-American pregnancies in an abortion.

Shocking. It's a genocide going on in the States. In Atlanta, if you've ever heard on Friday, there was a person accused of killing a police officer that took hostage eight people.

[ 3 : 50 ] And there was a big standoff on Friday. And he finally released the hostages and turned himself in. Totally high on cocaine. Personally, we get bad news all the time, don't we?

News of illness, loss of loved ones, gallbladders that have to be taken out, shoulders that have to be operated on. People around us pass away. We have financial trouble.

I have a lot of pain. I'm actually not sitting this morning to be cool. Although I look kind of cool on the stool, don't I? But I'm sitting because I'm in a lot of pain. I've, for the past decade, dealt with lots of pain.

I've finally gotten a diagnosis that seemed like a non-diagnosis. And all I can do is take a medication, which I've been waiting a week and a half to get filled. And that's why I'm sitting this morning.

So the world is full of bad news. And all of that bad news is a result of sin. And when sin entered the world, it completely corrupted everything.

[ 4 : 51 ] This morning we get some good news, though, in the Gospel. So sin is the poison that's killing this world.

And Jesus Christ and the good news of Jesus Christ is the antidote to that sure death. Sin has ripped a wound in the flesh of this world that is festering.

Sin itself is the infection. But Christ is the salve that heals that wound. Sin is the hostage taker. Thinking about that hostage situation this week. But Christ is the bullet that liberates the captive. So we have good news. And the struggle, I think, in the Christian life is to believe in that good news in such a way that it overwhelms that bad news.

So as we deal with the difficulty of this life, do we so understand and believe the good news of Jesus Christ that all that stuff fades away? And that's been what my week has been about.

[ 5 : 56 ] Because the reality is that no amount of goodwill or kind intentions or education or philanthropy is going to solve the issues of the world.

No amount of it at all. But the gospel of Jesus Christ solves those issues. I promised John Overton I'd work a little story into the sermon this morning. John and I met last night on the Gainesville Square at a coffee shop.

And afterwards, we decided to go for a walk. And we were just walking around the square and going all over the place, places I've never been in downtown Gainesville. And we happened by a couple on the opposite side of the street.

And I heard her squeal. And it caused me to stop. And then I heard her say, stop, you're hurting me. At which time, I immediately marched across the street, John quick on my heels, to see what was going to happen.

And the last thing I heard her say was, I'm going to count to five and then I'm calling the police. And at which point I said, ma'am, can you use some help? And she said, yes. And he turned around. He was incredibly intoxicated.

[ 6 : 58 ] And I can't even remember the details of everything that happened. She marched off down the sidewalk. And I had an altercation with him in which he put his hands on my chest. And I thought, oh, gosh, I'm about to get killed in the streets of Gainesville.

So I hope John is really tough. And we ended up, I kind of disarmed him a little bit, just with some humor.

It was his birthday. So I said, happy birthday. And he said, thank you. And it ended up kind of diffusing the situation. And he went on.

But I told John afterwards, I said, you know, I'm tough enough to march across the street without thinking about it. But I'm not tough enough for that not to totally shake me up. So I'm kind of freaking out right now about that whole situation.

But I've been thinking about it since. And certainly what was needed in that time was somebody to intervene. She needed somebody to step across the street and say, hey, hold on a second, buddy.

[ 7 : 56 ] But ultimately, what both of them need is Christ. We intervened and solved a bit of a problem. But it was a symptom. The sickness still exists in both of their lives.

And so ultimately, they need the gospel. Charles Spurgeon once said, see what vitality the gospel has. Plunge her under the wave and she rises.

Dipure for her washing. Thrust her in the fire and she comes out the more bright for her burning. Cut her in sunder or in half and each piece shall make another church.

Behead her and like the hydra of old, she shall have a hundred heads for everyone you cut away. She cannot die. She must live for she has the power of God within her. And that's the good news that we have.

If you don't know this Christ, that's the good news for you this morning. If you know this Christ, the good news for us. So Paul starts out his letter.

[ 8 : 54 ] I love the way he starts Romans because he doesn't start it with this typical greeting, but he jumps right in. And I believe that's because Paul was urgent later in his life to communicate this good news to the Roman people.

He wanted them to know the foundation on which he was going to build the rest of his letter to them. And he wanted to get right to it. All right. So he jumps right in.

Paul was formerly a bearer of bad news as a devout Pharisee. All right. He was so sold out to following the law of God because he thought that he could achieve that on his own.

So ultimately, he was the bearer of bad news as he went around telling people the way to God is for you to do good stuff. For you to follow his law blamelessly. And in that encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, he came to learn that his way was not the way and that Christ was the only way. So formerly, he was a bearer of bad news. And I think that he now has an urgency to share the good news. So the first point, there's seven. If you have the notes, there's seven Ps.

[ 9 : 59 ] I stole these from John MacArthur, and I don't want to take any credit for them. They're way too clever for me to come up with. But the first one is the preacher of the good news. And we find that in verse one.

And Paul writes, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God. And he gives three descriptions of himself in this text.

And the first one we have is a servant of Christ Jesus. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus. And the Greek word he's using for servant is often translated bond servant, *doulos*.

It's the Hebrew equivalent of the word *ebed*. And it simply means bond servant. And the Mosaic law provided for an indentured servant to permanently become a bond servant of a master that he loved and respected.

So someone who was enslaved because of a debt they owed, once that debt was paid off, they were set free. But the Mosaic law allowed for someone who was in that situation but loved their master to remain permanently underneath their master.

[ 11 : 00 ] And in Exodus 21, 5 and 6, I'm just going to read to you the provision for that. It says, but if the slave plainly says, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free.

Then his master shall bring him to God and he shall bring him to the door or the doorposts. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl and he shall be his slave forever. And so the bond servant carried a sign in a piercing that he was, belonged to the master and belonged to the master forever.

So in the same way, Paul saw his ministry as that, as a, as bond servement. I'm just making up words now. I'm right. Bond slavery to Christ.

That he was to serve him wholeheartedly because he loved his master. Second description, he says that he is called to be an apostle. So, Paul was called to be an apostle.

He didn't volunteer for the position. He didn't sign up. He wasn't recruited. It was a divine appointment. And it's on this fact that Paul establishes the authority of his ministry. He's sharing that because he wants these people to know why he can speak to them with such authority.

[ 12 : 08 ] We can read in other places like Galatians 1, 1, as well as verse 11 and 12 of the same chapter. He writes, Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.

And then verse 11. For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel was not preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

So, the gospel that Paul had was given to him. He was called. He was set apart, called out of his Judaism, called into Christianity as an apostle.

And the term here, apostle, is referring to specifically the apostles. The original 12 with Matthias replacing Judas and then Paul.

And these were men in redemptive history that play a special part, that laid the foundation, the groundwork for the church to be built upon. We'll talk later about the apostle as used in general terms.

[ 13 : 10 ] We have an apostolic calling on our lives. But Paul here is referring to himself specifically as taking that title of apostle, a sent one. One that has been given a message and sent for a specific purpose.

Many ships in this day that were carrying messages from one team to another were said to be apostolic. They were given a specific mission to carry a specific message.

And that's how Paul is referring to himself in this case. Pretty fascinating. In the book, *The Reformed Pastor* by Richard Baxter, he dedicates over 100 pages of that book that's written to pastors to warn them to, first of all, be sure that they are, in fact, redeemed.

And secondly, that they've actually been given a calling to the ministry of the gospel. Not fascinating. 100 pages of that book, which I've read. It's a pretty phenomenal read. But 100 pages of that book is set apart to saying to the men who are reading it, you better be sure you're saved and that God has called you to this special gospel ministry because it is a high, high calling. And the last descriptor he uses is set apart for the gospel of God and plays off of that term apostle, specifically designed for this task of proclaiming the good news of God.

[14:30] Sam and I have a plate in our house, and it's a special plate. It says you are very special on the plate. And it's our birthday plate. I imagine, as Cade grows older and any other children we have, that when they have a great report card or something of excitement in our lives, we'll pull out the you are very special plate and let them eat off of that plate.

That plate is then set apart. We don't eat off that plate normally. I think I would get in big trouble if I made nachos on that plate and ate a snack off them.

That plate is for something specific, for something very special. And that's what Paul is getting at as he says that he's set apart for the gospel of God. So he establishes his authority to preach this good news.

And in verse 2, he goes on to talk about the promise of the good news. Verse 2 reads, Which he promised, being God beforehand, through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

Now, Paul here is referring to the writing of the prophets being the Old Testament, that canon that they knew as the Old Testament. And he does so by saying that and saying Holy Scriptures to distinguish between that and the rabbinical writings.

[15:44] Most Jews at this time followed the writing of the rabbis. It was the traditions that they followed. Didn't know their scriptures well at all. So he's referring in those two ways by saying the writings of the prophets and the Holy Scriptures to distinguish between the two.

And the important thing for us to see here is that this message, this gospel news, is consistent with the Old Testament. I grew up thinking that there was this old way.

And it was as if the old way hadn't accomplished what God had intended. And so he created a new way. And certainly there is a new covenant. There is a new testament of God's grace to us.

But we see it all throughout the Old Testament scriptures. There's nothing contrary. There's at least 332 prophecies about Christ in the Old Testament.

We know he was coming. Matthew 5, 17 and 18, Jesus says, Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

[16:46] I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass away from the law until all is accomplished.

So Christ himself even said, I'm not coming to change things. I'm just coming to fulfill those things which have been given to you already. And that was the fulfillment of the law. So understand that the Jews had the rule book by which to be righteous.

They just didn't have the ability to follow the rules. That's what the sacrificial system was all about. That was to teach them that we needed a righteous priest. We find that in Christ.

We're going to talk about the person of the good news next. We find that in Christ, the spotless lamb, the one who was able to take away the sins of his church.

So he came to fulfill that law, that ability to keep the law and be found righteous in him. Hebrews 1 and 2. The writer of Hebrews says, So in those days, he spoke to us by his prophets.

[17:52] But now he's spoken to us by his son.

A better way. He's given us his son to give us this final message of our redemption. Which takes us to the third. The person of the good news.

I was reviewing my notes this morning. I'm kind of thinking over this and praying over it. And we had another sweep of a thunderstorm this morning. I don't think that there was anything magnificently spiritual happening.

But it was incredibly cool that as I was thinking about the person of the good news, I was thinking about Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father and commands the universe by the power of his word. There's this awesome thunderstorm going on outside.

And about the time I got done looking over this section of notes and done praying through it, the thunderstorm stopped. And it just reminded me of the amazing power that Christ has.

[18:59] Very cool. 2 Corinthians 5.21 says, For our sake, let me back up. Let's read verses 3 and 4 real quick in Romans. It reads, Concerning his son, who was descended from David according to

the flesh, and was declared to be the son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Corinthians 5.21. Paul writes, Now understand that us standing before God as righteous is absolutely necessary for us not to be destroyed.

Get that. God is a just God. We have turned God into this touchy-feely dude that wants to hang out in our house and give us hugs.

Certainly he is loving. But God is full of wrath and vengeance towards sin. We learn that in the Old Testament, don't we? We see the people building a golden calf and God's fury is kindled toward them.

Moses pleads with him, For your glory, please don't go kill your people, all of them. God concedes, says, okay, go down. But then they wipe out something like 30,000 of the people for doing so.

[ 20 : 29 ] He destroys Sodom and Gomorrah. We see that God hates sin. Rebellion against him. We are enemies of God's if we're not found righteous in Christ. Understand that.

If you don't know Christ this morning, you're an enemy of God. And that is not a battle you're going to win. So God must punish sin because he's just.

It's not that he just gets to pardon it. When we're found righteous in Christ, it's not that God says, Yeah, it's okay. Certain of you I will dismiss from this sin.

It's not the case at all. He had to punish it. Well, he punished it in Christ. Christ bore the wrath for his church's sin. Those of us who are found righteous in Christ, he took our punishment.

God is still fully just in condemning and punishing sin because he poured out his wrath for us on Christ. The doctrine of the substitutionary atonement is phenomenal.

[ 21 : 30 ] It blows my mind. When I begin to think that Christ hung on the cross and bore the punishment of my sin, the eternal wrath that was due to me for my sin, Jesus Christ bore that from me.

It blows my mind. It's why I can't wander off into a universal atonement. I can't do it. It kind of loses its specialness, doesn't it? Christ hung on that cross with me in mind.

No warrant of my own. Nothing I did to deserve that. Certainly, the wrath due me was totally deserved. But Christ had me in mind.

That's good news, isn't it? That's the kind of news that causes all the bad news to fade. Christ had you in mind. If you have placed your faith in him, he bore the wrath of your sin on the cross.

It's incredible. And he could do that because he was perfect, because he was a man. The beginning of verse 3, concerning his son, who was descended from David.

[ 22 : 35 ] He's establishing that, I would imagine, for the Jewish audience in Rome. It was the fulfillment of a prophecy that both Mary and Joseph were descendants of David. He was a descendant of David according to the flesh, and he was declared to be the son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.

So he had both his resurrection and the sign that when he was baptized that the spirit descended like a dove from heaven. And there were plenty of witnesses to that. And God said from heaven, this is my son, my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.

So he had these signs, these seals set upon him that he was, in fact, the son of God. And, of course, he was either a lunatic or he was the son of God. He made some audacious claims if he wasn't, in fact, the son of God.

And he lived this perfect life so that him who knew no sin became sin on our behalf. Martin Luther called that the great exchange, that he took all of our sin and placed it on himself and bore our wrath, and we got the righteousness of God in return.

Incredible. Incredible. So there's no good news apart from Christ. John Piper, in his book, God is the Gospel, wrote this. Christ did not die to forgive sinners who go on treasuring anything above seeing and savoring God.

[ 23 : 59 ] And people who would be happy in heaven if Christ were not there will not be there. I'll do that to you again. And people who would be happy in heaven if Christ were not there will not be there.

The Gospel is not a way to get people to heaven. It is a way to get people to God. It's a way of overcoming every obstacle to everlasting joy in God.

If we don't want God above all things, we have not been converted by the Gospel. Isn't that phenomenal? Christ himself is the treasure. We are saved from God, by God, to God.

That's the simplest Gospel presentation I can give. From God's wrath, by God's mercy, in Jesus Christ, to everlasting joy in God. Incredible.

Incredible. Jesus Christ, our Lord, that's how he ends verse 4 there. Jesus means Savior.

[ 25 : 02 ] It's the simplicity of that word. Jesus means Savior. Christ means anointed one. Lord means sovereign ruler. He is Jesus because he saves his people from their sins.

He is Christ because he has been anointed by God as our priest and king. And he is Lord because he is God and rules the universe sovereignly by the power of his word.

Phenomenal. The person of the good news. Jesus Christ. Next, in the beginning of verse 5, the provision of the good news.

Look in verse 5. Paul writes, through whom, through Christ, we have received grace and apostleship. We have received grace and apostleship.

Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, Paul writes, for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

[ 26 : 08 ] So we've received grace through Christ, which we just talked about, and that had nothing to do with us. It's totally the act of God on our lives. He worked in us the faith to believe in him that he might save us.

Alright? So that none of us can boast. None of us. I have no room to boast in anything I've ever done because in the same way, I'm sustained by his grace. I don't do any good thing apart from God.

If God were to remove his hand from me and leave me alone, I would be a wretch all over again. It's the grace of God that has saved us. It's the grace of God which sustains us.

And we've been given a mission, haven't we? We've been given apostleship, an apostolic calling on all of our lives because we're all sent into this world to share light in dark places.

We're all sent to share the gospel. And so we've been commissioned to do so. Out of MacArthur's commentary, I wanted to read you a quote from Donald Barnhouse who wrote a commentary.

[ 27 : 13 ] And MacArthur quotes him here in his book. Donald Barnhouse was a Presbyterian preacher in the early 20th century. And I want to just read this little paragraph to you.

This is him reflecting on his ordination. He writes, The moderator of the Presbytery asked me questions and I answered them. They told me to kneel down. Men came toward me and one man was asked to make the prayer.

I felt his hands come on my head and then the hands of others, touching my head and pressing down on his and the other hands. The ring of men closed in and one man began to pray. It was a nice little prayer and had one pat little phrase in it.

Father, guard him with thy love, guide him with thine eye, and gird him with thy power. I kept thinking about these three verbs, guard, guide, gird. It seemed as foolish as performing a marriage ceremony upon two people who had been living together for a quarter of a century and who had a family of children together.

I knew that I had been ordained long since and that the hands that had been upon my head were hands that had been pierced and nailed to a cross. Years later, the man that made the prayer that day signed a paper saying that he was opposed to the doctrine of the virgin birth, the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, the doctrine of the miracles of Christ, and the doctrine of the inspiration of the scriptures as test for ordination or a man's good standing in the ministry.

[ 28 : 40 ] When I read his name on the list, I put my hand on the top of my head and smiled to myself, wondering how many dozens times I had my hair cut since his unholy hands had touched me. And I had the profound consolation of knowing that the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, wounded and torn because of my sins, had touched me and given me an apostleship which was from God and which was more important than any that men could approve by their little ceremonies.

Isn't that awesome? Not that we shouldn't have ordinations, but our ordination comes from Christ. Because of what he's done for us, because he's bought us.

That's the high cost of grace, everybody. You've received the grace of God, now your life is devoted to him. You are a bondservant. You've been set apart for the gospel, ordained to gospel ministry.

So there's the provision of that good news. We've been given both a mission to the world, but we're also provided the grace necessary to fulfill that mission. The middle part of verse 5, the proclamation of the good news.

So we've been given the mission. What is that message? To bring about the obedience of faith or of the faith. Proclamation.

[ 30 : 00 ] To bring about obedience of the faith. So not just conversions, but to create disciples. to grow people in the grace of God. To grow people to the maturity of Christ.

We're not in the business of elevating men and putting underneath them a hierarchy of men. We're trying to grow people up consistently, together, to be like us, to duplicate us.

I'm to be like Christ and I'm to teach you to be like Christ. That's the idea of discipleship. If you've ever seen the Christ Family Church logo, I hope you have because you drove in here on our sign. You'll see it's a series of trees. And the idea is that we want to be a mighty forest of trees. Not one tree and a bunch of little saplings that get destroyed by the stomping of the world.

We want to be mighty trees. We want to be a forest that produces much fruit because we're all growing in the grace of God together. I read to you the Great Commission.

[ 30 : 58 ] Matthew chapter 28, verse 19 and 20. Christ says, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

There's that obedience of the faith and behold, I'm with you always to the end of the age. And there's that grace, that provision of that good news. I said before, we all need the good news. It's not for a select few. It's not for southern Americans. Although we probably need it more than any. It's for the world. And we're to be about our Father's work, sharing the gospel.

But to what end? This is the next point. The purpose of the good news. Why? It's about salvation of men's souls, absolutely. Should we weep for the lost? Sure.

We know what awaits them. We've been told about hell and it does exist. Eternal damnation awaits those who don't place their faith in Christ. We ought to desperately be sharing the gospel for that reason.

[ 32 : 05 ] What does Paul tell us? What is the point? Very end of verse five and six. For the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

It's for the glory of God. That's why we do it. For the glory of God. Isaiah 43, 25. God says, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake and I will not remember your sins.

So the gospel ultimately is God-centered. It's about his glory. It's about him making himself great. We're just the beneficiaries of that. In his message to the world and his whole master plan, we just get to be involved and be a process in it all.

We are not the end. We're the means to the end, which is the glory of God. And praise God that we're the means. Praise God that we have anything to do with the process at all. That is the purpose of the good news.

To elevate God, to lift him high. And as Christians, if we love him, if we love his gospel, then we'll desire to do that. I want to make my Savior known because he is a great Savior.

[ 33 : 21 ] And as beneficiaries of this great good news, Paul talks a bit about the privileges of the good news. And that's your last point there. The privileges of the good news. Verse 7, To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We get to be loved by God. Those of us who were once enemies of God are now loved by God. Isn't that good news? That was good news. Jeremiah 31.3 God says, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

Therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you. And as the loved ones of God, the saints set apart, we get to receive that grace and the peace that comes from God.

And so my week, I told you, has been a tough week. Beyond the things I told you, listening to myself preach and hearing all the bad news of the world, I've been in a lot of pain this week.

And it's the fact that I'm loved by God, it's the fact that I have this evidence in my life of the Spirit working in me. I know that I'm a recipient of this good news that allows me to bear up through those things.

[ 34 : 38 ] It allows me to believe in the promises of God. It says, Jeremiah 31, 3, I have continued my faithfulness to you. It allows me to believe things like, God does all things for my good.

For those who have been called according to His purpose, and I know I have been, He does all things for my good. And I don't understand that. I don't understand why I have terrible headaches. It seems like it would be better for me not.

It seems like it would be better for you guys if I didn't have terrible headaches. But somehow, it's working to my good and His glory. It allows me to believe that He'll withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly before Him.

And I know I walk uprightly before God because I'm found righteous in Christ. I know that because of this good news. Right? So I know He'll withhold no good thing from me, which means my pain is a good thing for me.

I believe that I won't be tested beyond what I can bear. that what's been given to me is a test for me in some way and that He's going to give me the grace to handle it.

[ 35 : 49 ] It helps me to deal with tragedy in the world. Thousands are killed. Because of the good news, I know why. It's a big question, isn't it?

Sin. They're receiving the just due for their sin. It doesn't make it any less sad for me. It doesn't make it any less sad. I'm just more thankful for our God and His good news.

I'm so happy that it's advancing across the world. We seem to live in one of the most spiritually depressed places and it's hard to see. I think the church is on the decline.

Statistics would show that in America, that the church is actually declining. But in other places in the world, it's not. It's growing like a wildfire and burning bright.

Praise God, the gospel is advancing across the world. That's what allows us to bear up under the bad news. This great good news that causes all that to fade and diminish in the light of God's glorious grace to us in Jesus Christ.

[ 36 : 58 ] Let's pray together.