

# THE BUSINESS OF PREACHING

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ROMANS 1:1-6 • TV172A

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By

**HENRY T. MAHAN**

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## **Romans 1:1-6**

*“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.”*

I want you to take your Bible and open it with me to the **Book of Romans**. I will be reading from **Romans the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter** and the Lord willing, the first six verses will serve as a text for this message.

Here is the subject: **“THIS BUSINESS CALLED PREACHING.”** That is what I am going to be speaking about today: **“THIS BUSINESS CALLED PREACHING; WHAT IS THIS BUSINESS CALLED PREACHING?”** I have preaching for a long time for about 35 years and I am interested in **“THIS BUSINESS CALLED PREACHING.”**

**BUSINESS CALLED PREACHING?”** I have preaching for a long time (for about 35 years) and I am interested in **“THIS BUSINESS CALLED PREACHING.”**

## THE BUSINESS OF PREACHING

ROMANS 1:1-16 • HENRY T. MAHAN

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I think that many people have a wrong idea of preaching and of preachers, and I hope to help you to understand “**THIS BUSINESS CALLED PREACHING.**”

Now, Gospel preaching is more than a religious ceremony. In most churches we sing awhile and we pray a prayer and then we take up an offering and have a choir special, then someone called a “preacher” stands up, someone with a strong voice. He stands up and delivers a sermon.

Now, he is expected to deliver a sermon in a strong enough voice to drown out all the crying babies. He is expected to preach loud and long. He is expected to keep the attention of people who are really not interested and sometimes he is expected to preach without even breathing, but only hollering.

Now, in some places, preaching has taken second place to other activities. They have very little preaching, but they still continue with their ceremonies.

Gospel preaching is also more than the opposite of that (a dry, dead, doctrinal lecture, designed for Sunday morning).

Gospel preaching is more than a rehearsal of the rules of morality and an exhortation to live a good, moral life.

What is Gospel preaching? What is this business called, “preaching?”

I believe the average person has the wrong concept of preaching altogether. Let me say this and listen carefully; this business called preaching, Gospel preaching; do you know what it is, what it is supposed to be? It is God speaking to people through His servant. That is what preaching is; it is God speaking to people.

It is declaring; it is a man declaring the Word of God and the message of God, God Almighty, for that day. The true preacher is not speaking for himself. He is not speaking for his denomination; I’m talking about the true preacher.

He is not preaching or teaching or speaking for a social cause. If he is God’s preacher, if he is preaching God’s Word, then that man at that time is speaking for God Almighty. Now, that is true Gospel preaching.

Listen to the Scripture: In **Matthew 3:1 and 2**, it says; “*There was a man sent from God whose name was John.*” God sent this man with his message to the people of his day. In that day came John the Baptist preaching. This man was sent from God to preach.

Listen to this Scripture: In **Matthew 28**; this is our Lord speaking to His disciples, he says; “*all authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and preach the gospel to every creature and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the earth.*”

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Listen to Paul in **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5**: “*We are ambassadors of Jesus Christ; (now listen), as though God himself did beseech you by us.*” “We come to you and speak to you, (he said), in the stead of Christ.”

That does not mean that we are vicars of Christ at all. That does not mean that we are substitutes for Christ. It means just what he is saying, “*we are ambassadors for Christ; be ye reconciled to God.*”

Here is what I am saying; preaching is not just hollering; it is not just delivering a sermon on Sunday morning. It’s not just delivering a dry, dead, lecture, to a group of uninterested people.

It’s not just taking up time on Sunday morning, going through a ritual or a ceremony but true preaching; (every man that is sent to preach); he is sent from God to deliver God’s message at that time to those people.

Now, the true preacher of the Word of God is to be heard. That’s my responsibility and now here is your responsibility: The Bible is full of warnings to those who will not hear. “*Take heed how you hear; take heed what you hear. He that hath ears to hear; let him hear,*” Christ said.

The Bible is full of warnings for those who will not hear, who will not believe, and who will not listen. Listen to **Luke chapter 10:16** (carefully listen to this): Our Lord Jesus is speaking and He is saying to His preachers, to His disciple; “*he that heareth you heareth me and he that despiseth you despiseth me and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.*”

Listen to this: “*Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.*” Now wait a minute! Woe is unto you if I preach the Gospel and you do not hear. It works both ways doesn’t it? God pronounces a solemn woe upon the preacher who does not preach his Gospel.

You might say, “Well; that man ought to preach the Gospel. That man ought to be true to his God. He ought to be true to the Word of God.” Well, that is so; “*If we speak not according to the Word it is because there is no light in us, (no morning or no dawn in us).*” That is what the amplified Bible says.

Now wait a minute! Equally so, our God pronounces a woe upon those who will not hear His Word and will not believe it. Listen to **Hebrews 4:2**: “*The gospel was preached to them but the word preached to them did not profit them, being not received by faith, of them that heard it.*”

So, what is preaching? It is God speaking at that time to you through His servant. You are under obligation to hear what the Lord saith.

Now, turn to that passage in **Romans** that I mentioned to you in the beginning of the message. **Romans Chapter 1: verses 1 through 6**: Now, Paul’s epistle to the Romans is preaching at its best; it is preaching at its very best.

The **first six verses** give us, what I call the introduction to Gospel preaching. If there are preachers listening to this program today, it is good for preachers. It is good for every one of us that we might be good hearers.

I want to be a good preacher of the Word and you ought to want to be a good hearer. If God is speaking through me, then you ought to want to hear what God says. If God is speaking somewhere, through someone, and He is; *“he has not left himself without a witness;”* you ought to seek with all your heart to hear what God has to say to you from His Word in this day.

Now, I want you to watch this:

First of all: The apostle Paul in the **first six verses of Romans 1** identifies God’s preacher.

Secondly: He defines God’s Gospel.

Thirdly: He describes his Master.

Fourthly: He describes those who are in his congregation, or the hearer.

First, he describes the preacher, and then he describes the preacher’s message. Then he identifies the preacher’s Lord and Master and then he describes the people who hear the message, the congregation, this business called preaching; that is what we are talking about.

I tried to show you what it is not; it’s not just hollering; it’s not just a dry lecture; it’s not just a lecture on morality (being a good person and all that). It is God speaking, it is God speaking; true preaching is God speaking in this day through His Word.

Now, listen to Paul: Paul identifies the preacher in **verse 1**; do you see it there? He calls himself *“Paul.”* He says, *“Paul, a servant (a bond-slave), of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel.”*

Let’s look at the first word: Here, Paul identifies God’s preacher. He says, *“Paul.”* The true servants of Christ were never fond of titles and worldly honor. You will never find God’s true preacher seeking to be known by titles or to be called by titles or seeking the fame, the honor, and the applause of this world; they just never do.

They never call themselves, “Pope,” nowhere in the Bible. They never called themselves “Cardinals,” nowhere in the Word of God. They never called themselves “Doctors.” They never called themselves “Reverend,” just Peter, James, John, and Paul. This is the first thing that you run into in this verse, *“Paul.”*

Now watch the second thing: He is identifying God’s preacher, the one who brings God’s message in this day. He says, *“I am a servant.”*

Now, the word “*servant*” comes from the word bond-slave, in the Old Testament, when a person had gained his freedom after serving for seven years and he was allowed to go free, but if he didn’t want to go free, he could stay and serve out of love.

He would say, “I’m content; I love my Master; I love my Master’s house; I love my work and I want to stay with my master as a willing, loving, bond-servant. The only freedom I want is to serve my master.” That was a bond-servant. That is what Paul called himself, “a bond-slave of Jesus Christ.”

There is a sense in which the preacher is a servant of men; yes there is. Even our Master said, “*He came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give himself a ransom.*” There is a sense in which God’s preacher is a servant of all men.

Do you remember that Paul said this? “*We preach not ourselves but Jesus Christ the Lord and ourselves your servants, your servants for Christ’s sake.*”

There is a sense in which we are the servants of men, in that we serve, in that we minister. We seek only to please Him who is our Master. Paul said on one occasion: “*If I please men I am not the servant of Christ.*” So, we don’t get our message to please our congregation or to satisfy the whims and will of the flesh.

You know; one of the signs of the last days is that people will “*heap to themselves teachers having itching ears and turn their ears away from the truth.*” We are His servants, His bond-slaves. We do His duty, His commandments. We carry on His work and we serve you in doing so.

Thirdly: The preacher is to be heard and respected for the sake of his Master and for the sake of His Gospel, but he is not to be exalted. He is not to be revered, because he is only a man.

Peter said in **Acts 10:26**; “*I myself am a man.*” Paul said in **Acts 14:16**; “*We also are of men of like passions with you.*” Our Lord said in **Matthew 23**; “*Call no man your father upon the earth. One is your father which is in heaven, neither be ye called master, for one is your master, even Christ and he that is greatest among you, let him be your servant.*”

Richard Baxter, I believe, summed it up when he said; “I preach as a dying man to dying men. I preach as one who may never preach again.”

We are but frail flesh, but wait a minute! Paul says; he calls himself “*Paul*,” not Cardinal Paul or Bishop Paul, just Paul; he called himself “a bond-slave of Jesus Christ.” But, he did call himself “*an apostle of Jesus Christ.*”

Though Paul was a humble man, though he was a servant of Christ, he did not deny his office. He still owned the fact that he was called of God, called to be an apostle. He was not made an apostle by men, not even made an apostle by his own will but called to be an apostle, sent of God, with God’s message.

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He knew it! He knew he was God's servant. He knew God's hand was upon him. He knew he was ordained of God. He knew he was sent of God. Now, that is God's preacher!

Notice in the next verse; he defines his Gospel: He said, "*I am separated unto the Gospel of God.*" It is the Gospel of God.

Someone awarded Pastor John Gill with a "D.D." That's an honorary Doctor of Divinity, a degree upon Dr. John Gill; they called him "Dr. John Gill."

They awarded him that degree and this is what he had to say; "I neither thought it, I neither sought it, nor bought it." My friends, that is true of the Gospel. "*It is the gift of God;*" I never thought it, I never sought it, I never bought it; it is God's Gospel.

That is what Paul is saying here; the Gospel to which I am separated, the Gospel which I preach, the Gospel which I have been called to proclaim is not my Gospel. It is not a denominational Gospel. It did not come out of the councils of Rome or the councils of men; it is God's Gospel.

God Almighty purposed it; He purposed it from the foundation of the world to save a people. God Almighty planned it in His eternal councils of grace. God Almighty purchased it in that He sent His Son into this world "*in the fullness of time.*" God sent his Son into the world, "*made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.*"

God vested all glory in Christ, all grace in Christ, all mercy in Christ, all the gifts of grace in Christ, and all redemption in Christ. "*In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in him.*"

God sent Him to the cross. "*It pleased the Father to bruise him.*" God Almighty applies the work by the power of His Spirit, which His dear, beloved Son, purchased: For Paul said, "*God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace was pleased to reveal his Son in me.*"

It is God's Gospel. I wish I could emphasize that. I wish there was some way that I had the ability and the power to impress upon you the fact that this Gospel that I am trying to preach is not something that I invented or some man invented or something that came out of the councils of Trent, or Rome, or anywhere else. This Gospel is God's Gospel. It is the heaven-planned Gospel. It is the heaven-sent Gospel. It's the Gospel of God.

Not only that, but listen to the next verse: It's the ancient Gospel. There are not two Gospel's or three Gospels; there is only one Gospel. He said, "*I am separated to the Gospel of God which he promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.*"

The Gospel is no new message of hope. Now listen to me; it is not even a New Testament message. Somebody said, "We have a New Testament Church or we preach a New Testament message." Now wait a minute!

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The Gospel is no New Testament Gospel; it is the everlasting Gospel. It is the eternal Gospel. The Gospel is as old as God because it was born of God's mercy and God's grace and it is a Gospel that is in tune with and according with God's justice and righteousness.

It is the Gospel that is born of the heart of God through the Son of God. It is the eternal Gospel, the ancient Gospel.

It is the Gospel which God preached to Adam and Eve. The Gospel that God preached to Adam and Eve was not a Gospel of works, it was a Gospel of blood, a Gospel of grace. It is the Gospel of the virgin-born Son. That is the Gospel that God preached to Adam and Eve.

Go back to the Garden when man first fell. God slew an animal; He shed blood of an innocent victim, to cover the nakedness of this fallen couple. You see, that is sacrifice; that is a sacrifice and it is the shedding of blood and that is a covering with righteousness that covers our sins.

God said to Eve; "You will have a son." He said to the serpent; "*The seed of woman will bruise your head,*" as he was talking to the father of evil, Satan. Who is the seed of woman? The virgin-born Son of God, the Christ of God is "*the seed of woman.*"

You are not the seed of woman; I'm not the seed of woman, I am the seed of man. Christ is the seed of woman. That's an ancient Gospel.

The Gospel that I am preaching right here in 1982 was a Gospel that Almighty God presented to our fallen mother and father in the Garden of Eden.

This was the Gospel that Abraham believed and saw and rejoiced in. Christ said, "*Abraham saw my day. He saw it and rejoiced; (it made his heart glad).*"

Do you know what Abraham said to his son Isaac? "*God will provide himself a lamb. Christ is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.*" Christ is the Lamb slain in the Old Testament types and shadows and symbols.

Christ is the Lamb slain on Calvary's cross and Christ is the Lamb in the **Book of Revelation**, "*a lamb in the midst of the throne as if it had been slain.*"

This is no new Gospel. Christ said, "*Moses wrote of me.*" The whole Old Testament is Christ Jesus in His sacrifice, in His death, burial, and resurrection in picture, type, and symbol.

That tabernacle; that is a picture of Christ, the priesthood, the sacrifices, and the Passover are types of Christ. That rock that gave forth water is a symbol of Christ. The Brazen Serpent lifted up is Jesus Christ lifted up on the cross.

**Luke 24:44:** Our Lord said, *“These are the words I spake unto you when I was yet with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, in the Psalms, concerning me. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”*

Paul is defining his Gospel. He introduced us to God’s preacher and now he is identifying God’s Gospel, it is the Gospel of God; it is the old Gospel, the ancient Gospel, the everlasting Gospel, and every new Gospel.

It’s the Gospel of Christ; watch that next line; *“concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Do you see that? Paul, just plain Paul, that’s all, a man of like passion, a man just like you, and a sinner saved by grace, *“but called to be an apostle, (a bond-servant) of Jesus Christ.”*

*“But, I am separated, (consecrated, dedicated, to preach this Gospel, whatever it costs, whoever it wounds, whoever God is pleased to save by it), separated to the gospel of God, (not man’s Gospel or a denominational Gospel, but the Gospel of God), which he promised before in the holy scriptures (Old Testament, in the prophets, in the Psalms), concerning his Son.”*

That is what the Gospel is; it is not a plan. Somebody said, “I want to talk about the plan of salvation.” Salvation is not a plan, it is a person. You will miss salvation resting in a plan or a proposition, or a decision. Salvation is a person.

The Gospel is a person; it is concerning His Son. It is concerning everything about His Son from eternity past to eternity future. Christ has always been our Saviour, our Substitute.

Whatever He is or whatever He did or whatever office He occupies from the time He was our Surety in the everlasting covenant until the time that He will come again and open the graves and change our vile bodies into the likeness of His glorious body; that is all part of His redemptive work.

It’s not just the cross that saves but it is the life of Christ that saves. It is the intercession of Christ that saves. He is our eternal Surety; He is our representative; *“by his obedience we are made righteous.”*

He is our atonement, He is our sin-offering, He is our risen justifier, He is our ascended King, He is our interceding Mediator, he is our Great High Priest, and He is our coming King and Lord of Lords, Christ Jesus.

The Gospel is concerning His Son. Don’t miss the Gospel by getting wrapped up in a theology or a creed, or a plan, or a proposition; the Gospel is a person.

Abraham, who lived long before Calvary, was redeemed and had righteousness imputed to Him by believing God, *“that God was able to do all that he promised.”*

And here I am, 1982 years on this side of the cross, and I am saved the same way (by believing God, not by believing in a finished work, but believing in a person who finished the work). The work is not finished yet. His death is finished, the sacrifices are all finished, sin is put away, the debt is paid, but He is going to make me just like Himself, and that hasn't been done yet. *"My salvation is nearer than when I believed."*

Now, Paul describes his Lord; he describes this Lord who is the Gospel:

He says, *"The gospel concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."*

We are talking here about His human nature. You may say, "I get confused about Jesus Christ, preacher. When you talk about Jesus Christ, who is Jesus Christ?"

First of all: He is the Son of man. *"He is made of the seed of David,"* a Jew, an Israelite, born of Jewish parents, born of the seed of David; that's right, the house and lineage of David, and right on down the line.

**John 1:14** says, *"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."* **Galatians 4:4** says, *"He was made of a woman."* He who made woman was made of a woman. **Galatians 4:5** says, *"He was made under the law."* **Isaiah 9:6** says, *"A child is born."* Yes, he was the Son of man, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh.

Pilate said, *"Behold the man."* Jesus Christ is a man. You say, "Jesus Christ is only a man." Wait a minute! Take out the "only;" Jesus Christ is a man but not only a man; He is a man but He is also God.

Now watch the next line: *"It is concerning his son who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."* In the flesh He was a man from the house and lineage of David. He was the heir of David's throne. That's right!

But, it says in the next line: *"And declared to be the Son of God with power,"* not made the Son of God, not created the son of God, but *"declared to be the Son of God."* That's right; He always is and was and will be the Son of God.

The one who was born from the womb of Mary was a child, a human child, a little infant, born in flesh, bones and blood, just like us. He was the one who inhabited that body, who limited Himself, who came into this world and clothed Himself in that body is none other than the one who clothed this universe with stars, the one who made the universe, the one who reigns and rules over all things. That's right!

*"He was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were*

*made by him; without him was not anything made that was made and he was made flesh.*"  
That's right!

He is the Son of man, the perfect man. He is the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father. He is the exact image of the Father. Christ said, "*He that hath seen me, hath seen God.*" That is exactly right!

Notice in **verse 4**; "*Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*" God raised Him from the dead. The Father raised Him from the dead. The Father is saying that by His resurrection that all that Christ is and all that Christ did and all that Christ will do is accepted of the Father on behalf of those whom He represented.

Did He represent you? Did He represent me? He is our righteousness, our wisdom, our redemption, our sanctification, our sin-offering, and our Substitute. All things are in Christ. Whatever He did, or whomever He perfected and performed it and purchased it, the Father says; "I accept it. I accept Him and them in Him."

That's where you need to be, in Christ, because that is where God's mercy is and that is where God's blessings are, in Christ.

Watch the last thing: Paul describes the believer in **verses 5 and 6**:

First of all: "*By whom we have received grace.*"

"*It is by grace that we are saved,*" not by works, and not by merit, and not by earning, but by grace alone, "*it is a gift of God.*"

Now, we earn the wages of sin. We deserve the wages of sin. If anybody goes to hell it will be his own fault. If anybody goes to heaven it will be God's fault. He will praise God forever. He will sing:

**"Grace taught my heart to fear  
And grace did my fear's relieve  
How precious did that grace appear?  
The hour I first believed."**

Secondly: We receive grace; we receive faith. Do you see it there **in verse 5**? We receive faith; "*faith is the gift of God. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*" Do you want faith? Go to God; He is the source of faith. He is the fountain of all good things.

We have been called of God and we are beloved of God. We have received grace, faith, apostleship, and been called of God; we are His beloved! We are accepted in the Beloved, in Jesus Christ!

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