

Why Should You Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel?

Romans 1:15-17

4/20/2012

¹ Why should you not be ashamed of the gospel?

² Why do you suppose so few of us witness like we should? ³ Is it because you feel you would be stereotyped as a religious fanatic? ⁴ Maybe it's because you are afraid that your witness wouldn't be received – that it might be rejected. After all, you spent a considerable amount of emotional energy working up the courage to do this.

Many of us feel like Peter who boldly says to himself and to the Lord ⁵, *Even if all fall away, I will not . . .* ¹ Then what happens? You end up denying the Lord time and time again as witnessing opportunities make themselves available and then fade away. Are you so ashamed of the Lord that you are reluctant to share Him with those you know?

¹ Mark 14:29.

In Romans, Chapter 1, verses 15 through 17, ⁶ there are four good reasons why you don't have to be ashamed of the gospel!

That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

I. Because It is the Gospel of Righteousness – v17 ² 7

The first reason you should not be ashamed of the gospel is because it is the gospel of righteousness. The word “gospel” means ⁸ “the good news” ³. It comes from the Persian practice, during ancient times, of using a courier to bring the announcement of victory to the king from the front lines during battle. This courier was called the “evangelist”, and his victory message was called “the gospel”.

Paul defines what the Christian gospel is in First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 1 through 4 ⁹, **Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are**

² Romans 1:17 - For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

³ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον = gospel, good news.

saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures . . .

The Christian gospel message to a lost and dying world is the announcement that Lord Jesus ¹⁰ died, was buried, but arose victoriously from the grave! Romans, chapter 5, verse 21, ¹¹ tells us that eternal life comes through Jesus Christ ⁴ because only He is ¹² the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. ⁵

Righteousness ¹³ means justification, to be considered not guilty in a court of law, to cause to be in a right relationship ⁶.

⁴ Romans 5:21 - just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

⁵ John 14:6 - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

⁶ Δικαιοσύνη = justification, to be considered not guilty, to cause to be in a right relationship.

People related to the gods of ancient times the same way they did to their masters, lords and kings – the ones who had absolute authority over them. Human life had little to no value back then, so their gods were cold, indifferent and impersonal. In order to win their favor you had to appease them. Justification was determined by how good you lived. If you goofed, you had to make a sacrifice to be put back into good standing. Righteousness meant you had to live good enough to have a relationship with the gods. You had to prove you were good enough or make certain arrangements to fill in the sin gaps.

Biblical righteousness is very different from this because the real God, our God, is very different from the false gods worshipped then. ¹⁴ Righteousness doesn't mean God makes you a good person! Righteousness, here, ¹⁵ means God treats you as though you were never a sinner! You can have a righteous relationship with God, not because you are so good, but because Lord Jesus loved you enough to

suffer and die on a cross for you! Because of what He did, you have the opportunity to be considered by God as His child. Biblical righteousness means you can have a loving father-child relationship with the God who created and sustains your life!

II. Because It is the Power of God – v16 ⁷

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Another reason you need not be ashamed of the gospel is that it is the power of God.

I had a pastor friend once who was a good preacher and very personable. His church was growing, and it appeared that he was faithfully proclaiming God's word. He had become involved in the Pentecostal Holiness movement along with some of his church members. One afternoon he was officiating at a funeral. The urge must have been overwhelming because in an impulsive moment he reached into the open casket and cried out in a loud voice, "In the

⁷ Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God .

mighty name of Jesus, arise!” Nothing happened. Imagine the emotional devastation this caused that grieving family as well as everyone else who was present. This event got into the local newspapers, his church was adversely affected, and he quickly disappeared. ¹⁷

Have you ever dreamed of what it must have been like to be an apostle during the first century; to perform miraculous things? What would it be like to touch a person’s eyes and have them miraculously see again; or to pull a lame person to his feet and have him instantly walk; or touch a person’s ears to bring back hearing. Imagine having the incredible power to raise the dead! I’ve dreamed about those things, haven’t you?

The modern charismatic movement, a little over a hundred years old now ⁸, has swept through our lost and dying world introducing thousands to the Lord of the cross. I certainly don’t want to be super critical or

⁸ Traced to the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California in April 1906.

limit the power of the Holy Spirit in my own mind or teaching. The age of the miraculous is certainly not dead. I have witnessed breathtaking ones that have dropped me to my knees in awe. But God has chosen not to perform these supernatural events routinely today like He did in the first century. It seems the rarity of these occurrences add to the dynamic indication they present of God's presence and power.

Has God, then, chosen not to allow us to experience His power today. Not according to verse 16! ¹⁸ The word "power" here, in the original language ⁹, is where we get our English word "dynamite"! It means mighty, an unconquerable force. ¹⁹ The gospel has the power, in and of itself, to persuade, to convict and to convert. The Holy Spirit uses, primarily, God's word, the gospel message, to bring a lost world to its knees before our awesome Savior. If you dare to proclaim it to your lost and dying family, friends and

⁹ Δύναμις = a mighty, unconquerable force.

acquaintances, you will reap the joy of using the power of God!

III. Because It is for Salvation – v16 ¹⁰ ²⁰

Another reason why you shouldn't be ashamed of the gospel is that it is for salvation. ²¹ The word “salvation” is the common term for deliverance from danger, to be rescued ¹¹.

What are you saved from? In the New Testament this word is used in several ways, all of which help us understand what salvation is.

In Matthew, Chapter 8 ¹², Lord Jesus and His disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee in a fishing boat. The Lord is sleeping when a sudden storm churns up the winds and the waves of the lake. As the boat is in danger of capsizing, the disciples awaken Him by desperately shouting, **Lord, save us (this word)! We're**

¹⁰ Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

¹¹ Σωτηρία = deliverance from danger, to be rescued.

¹² Matthew 8:23-27.

going to drown! In response, the Lord calms the sea with a brief command. ²² The disciples are saved from physical danger.

You are saved from this wicked world. ²³ Acts, Chapter 2, verse 40, states, **Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.** You save yourself by responding to the gospel message of salvation.

You are saved from being lost. ²⁴ The Lord said of Himself, **For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.** ¹³

You are saved from sin. ²⁵ When the angel came to Joseph to instruct him how to respond to Mary's pregnancy, he said, **She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.** ¹⁴

You are saved from the wrath of God. ²⁶ There is wrath for those who choose to remain separated from God. Second Thessalonians, Chapter 1, verses 7 and 8

¹³ Luke 19:10.

¹⁴ Matthew 1:21.

explains, . . . the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

IV. Because It is for Everyone Who Has Faith – v16-17 ¹⁵ ₂₇

The final reason in this passage for not being ashamed of the gospel is because it is for everyone who has faith. It's for everyone! Salvation is available to you regardless of your race, background, appearance or citizenship.

Who has faith? ₂₈ What is faith?

In ₂₉ Second Thessalonians, Chapter 1, verse 4, it means loyalty. ¹⁶

¹⁵ Romans 1:16-17 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

¹⁶ II Thessalonians 1:4 - Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

In ³⁰ First Corinthians, Chapter 15, verse 17, it is a conviction that something is true. ¹⁷

In ³¹ Second Corinthians, Chapter 13, verse 5, it is the Christian way. ¹⁸

In ³² Second Corinthians, Chapter 5, verse 7, it is an indestructible hope. ¹⁹

Real faith ³³ is absolute trust!

³⁴ Faith progresses for believers in stages or degrees. You can't expect someone who has just surrendered to the Lord's authority to have as mature a faith as one who has belonged to the Lord for years. ³⁵ Your faith may begin with simple receptivity, "I'm willing to listen to what you have to say." ³⁶ From there it might progress to mental assent, "I believe what you are saying is true." Mature faith ³⁷ is total surrender to the lordship of Christ. **You are not your own; you were**

¹⁷ I Corinthians 15:17 - And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

¹⁸ II Corinthians 13:5 - Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith . .

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¹⁹ II Corinthians 5:7 - We live by faith, not by sight.

bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. ²⁰ ₃₈

If you've been a bit cowardly with your witness lately, remember you're cheating yourself of using the power of God. People will respond to the wonderful message of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord!

<http://biblelifemessages.org/>

²⁰ I Corinthians 6:19-20.