

**Not Ashamed
(Week 3)
Romans 1:15-17
“The Good News”**

Introduction

“So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.” **Romans 1:15-16**

The Apostle Paul was completely consumed with preaching the gospel to any who would listen. He was willing to be abandoned, shipwrecked, persecuted, and even to lay down his life if necessary for the gospel of Christ. To him, it was all that really mattered. Paul saw the gospel for what it truly is, the only hope of mankind. Just consider that for a moment. Think about all the problems in this wretched world; the wars, the cruelty, the unquenchable thirst that man has to have more and more, the disregard for human suffering or even life itself. This world is being eaten alive with selfishness. We fool ourselves into thinking that if we can just elect the right politician, or if we can just pass the right laws, then everything will change, but I am here to tell you that it will not. The only hope for fallen man is the gospel of Christ.

I was talking to a fellow believer just this week about some friends of his that are headed toward a divorce. He told me their story, and honestly, with every detail that emerged, it seemed all the more hopeless, simply irreconcilable. My friend asked me if he should recommend his friends go ahead and separate. He asked me what I thought could help to heal their marriage. I answered him as honestly as I could. “The Gospel”, I replied. Only the Gospel can warm the heart of the cold-hearted. Only the Gospel can help the impossible to heal. The Gospel of Christ, according to Paul, is “the power of God”.

There are four key words that a person will find in the book of *Romans*. They are, if you will, the “four pillars” of Paul’s doctrine. The words are Power, Salvation, Righteousness, and Faith. God has graciously provided for us a means to do what we are powerless to do for ourselves. He demonstrated His power in the Gospel. It is this “power for salvation”, as Paul calls it, that can transform the most sinful life to become pleasing to God. There is nothing like the gospel in this world. No other “religion” can match it. No psychological counseling can compare to it, and no human mind can fully comprehend its power.

We, as the church of Jesus Christ, must be fully committed to the Gospel. Without it, we are just another organization, a club if you will, left powerless to make any real difference like all the rest. We, like Paul, must be completely sold out to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be eager to share its truth with every opportunity, if we are to bring any real light into the darkness that is so very prevalent in this world. In short, we must be unashamed of the Gospel. The Church doesn’t need any more “camouflaged, under-cover believers”. It needs those who will boldly proclaim the good news.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church at Rome, spelled out within his greeting, the very outline of his message. He told the fledgling church that the gospel could be explained in three easy to understand components. It is: The Power of God for Salvation, Proclaiming a Righteousness from God, that is Procured by Faith. Please allow me to explain.

Power for Salvation

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the Power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.” **Romans 1:16**

The word “salvation” in *The New Testament* is, I fear, often misunderstood. Many of us grew up in those churches in the south where we were continually subjected to sermons of the “hellfire and brimstone” variety. For years, I believed that the word “saved” had one and only one meaning, to be saved from hell. And while this is truly a part of the benefits of salvation, there is much more to salvation than simply being assured that you will never be found in hell’s flames.

The word that Paul uses here is “*Soteria*” (pronounced *so-tay-ree'-ah*), and it means “*deliverance*”. Just think about that for a moment if you will. What Paul is saying is that the gospel is the means for God’s power to deliver us from sin. You see, Jesus didn’t die upon the cross to make your sins “okay”. He died to deliver you from their power over you! There are so many people out there, who are convinced that if they “believe the right things about Jesus” or “pray the right words” or even get baptized, then they are “saved” from going to hell. Then they mistakenly believe that because they have believed a certain way, or prayed a certain prayer, that they can go on about their business without making any real changes in the way that they live. There is a Greek word for that... Baloney! Jesus didn’t die to give you a fire insurance policy, or a free pass to sin. He died... to DELIVER you.

What this means is that God, through the message of the Gospel, had empowered you to stop sinning and live in righteousness. Now, I’m not talking about sinless perfection here, that comes later, but the child of God, who has been adopted by God though Jesus Christ has been EMPOWERED by The Spirit of God to be free from the bondage of sin. That’s what “*salvation*” means, *to be delivered from sin*. Yes, we have been saved from hell, but there is so much more to our salvation than that. It is the power that leads us to repentance. God supernaturally leads us to turn from our sins, and He sets us free so that we can do so. There is a difference in worldly sorrow for sin, and the sorrow that The Spirit gives that leads us to turn away from them.

“For Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death.” **2 Corinthians 7:10**

You see, God’s Spirit convicts us of our sin, and then gives us the power to walk away from them! He fixes within us what we could never repair for ourselves. This is why the message of the gospel brings such hope to a fallen world. It is the only way that the power of God can be brought to bear upon our hopeless condition. It is God’s provision to “deliver us from evil”. It is the only hope for this fallen world. Therefore, we should never be **“ashamed of the gospel, for it is the Power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”**.

When Paul says “first to the Jew and then to the Greek”, he is not insinuating that somehow the Jewish person is superior to the Gentile. He is merely stating the order in which the Gospel was revealed. Remember, Jesus was a Jew, and so were all of his disciples, but the Gospel messages was intended to flow through them into all of the world.

“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 everything I have commanded you.” **Matthew 28:19-20a**

This has been called by many “the great commission”. It is the mandate of every child of God to go into the world and share the good news. We are NOT ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to EVERYONE who believes. It is our sacred charge to be fully committed to share it with any who would listen.

Proclaiming Righteousness

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.” **Romans 1:17a**

A better translation of this would read:

“For in it a righteousness from God is revealed from faith to faith.”

The word “*righteousness*” in the Greek is “*Dikaiosyne* (pronounced *dik-ah-yos-oo’nay*), and it simply means doing what is right in the eyes of The LORD. In our own human strength we were absolutely powerless to do this. But the gospel has given us the power to live a life that is pleasing to God. And, even when we make mistakes and fall short of His glory, He still has declared us as righteous through the blood of His Son! It is a righteousness that comes **from** God and not from our own good works, and it miraculously changes us so that each day we become more and more like our Savior.

Think about the implications of this truth for a moment. When I repent of my sins, because I have believed the truth of the gospel, God has first **proclaimed** me to be righteous, and then **empowered** me to live in righteousness. I have “put on” the righteousness of Christ, and He is now changing me from the inside out, so that I may become as righteous as He has already declared me to be!

The best example that I can offer to explain this is that we “put on Jesus” like a robe, and when God looks down at us, He sees Christ’s righteousness and not our own. This is why it is called the Gospel “*Euangelion*” (*yoo-ang-ghel’-ee-on*) in The Greek meaning “the good message”. Because God has made a way for filthy sinners to be proclaimed as righteous. And just how can this righteousness from God be obtained? BY **FAITH**, that’s how. I’ll explain more about this in the next point, but before I move on, look at what Paul says about how this righteousness from God is revealed over and again:

“... is revealed from faith to faith.”

Romans 1:17

I **LOVE** that! What he is saying is that we can see the righteousness from God every time someone believes in the message of the gospel. Just like it came first to the Jews, and then the Greeks, this righteousness goes from believer to believer, and lives are changed from sinfulness to righteousness over and again.

I once read a story about a man who was an alcoholic. Week after week, he spent his entire paycheck on his addiction rather than the care of his family. His house was in disrepair with no furniture or any of the normal comforts one might come to expect, and his children often went hungry. His wife felt that she was forever trapped in a life devoid of love and filled with quiet desperation. She dared not say a word to her husband for fear of his drunken temper. One day this man heard the gospel and repented of his sins. He stopped his drinking and began a new life in Christ. He started putting the needs of his family ahead of his own, and before long, everyone could see the change in his life.

One day some of his former drinking buddies were teasing him about his faith, and they said, “Do you really believe all that stuff in *The Bible*, like that story about Jesus turning water into wine?” The man replied, “I don’t really understand all of that, but I can tell you in my house He turned beer into furniture.”

And there you have it, the righteousness from God that is revealed from faith to faith. When God does His redemptive work in a person, they are forever changed. God’s righteousness is revealed in them. It is unmistakable and undeniable, and it is revealed over and over again in the lives of all who believe. And that is why I am not ashamed of the gospel my friends. And neither should you be.

Procured by Faith

“... just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.”

Romans 1:17b

This is one of the greatest verses in *The Bible*. Maybe that is why it is repeated so often in the scriptures. Its origin is in the book of *Habakkuk*. The prophet, who lived in Jeremiah’s time, was praying and asking God why He would use a people as wicked as the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to punish the nation of Israel for their sins. After all, these Babylonians were far worse sinners than the Israelites. The prophet was perplexed as to why God would allow them to ravage Israel, as Jeremiah the prophet had foretold was going to happen.

When God answered Habakkuk, He didn’t explain Himself, for it is not incumbent upon God to explain His actions to us, but rather, for us to accept His will. God simply instructed Habakkuk to “write down this vision so that one who reads it may run.” (**Habakkuk 2:2**). What God was saying is that His

judgment was indeed coming upon Israel, and that His warning of it should be given so that any who would read it could run with the news. And what was God's advise to those who would survive the coming judgment?

"But the righteous one will live by his faith."

Habakkuk 2:4b

This was the message that God instructed His heralds to "run with". Judgment was indeed coming, but those who had faith in God would be saved out of it. It is this verse that Paul uses to explain how we too can be saved from God's wrath that is yet to come. God's Word has warned us that we will be "declared righteous" by FAITH! It is these very words that compelled the Apostle Paul to be a "runner" of the gospel. It was these very same words that would later lead a Catholic Monk named Martin Luther to "run" with them and start the Protestant Reformation. We are not declared "righteous" by what we do, we are declared righteous by believing God!

When I was a young preacher, my favorite *Bible* verse was:

"Great peace have they that love Your Law and nothing shall make them stumble."

Psalms 119:165

To this day, it is still one of my very favorites. I truly believe that The Word of God gives us the answers for... everything, but the older I get, the more I realize that no matter how hard I try, I just cannot live up to the standards set forth in *The Bible*. I firmly believe that they are true, and I try really hard to live up to them... but I can't, which brings me to my new favorite verse:

"Abraham believed The LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness."

Genesis 15:6

Now, THAT my friends is a life-giving verse of scripture! Abraham wasn't perfect, but he put his faith in the promises that God had made to him, and God gave him "righteous credit" for it! And THAT is exactly how we are saved today. We believe the gospel of God. We surrender our lives over to it. We trust that God will do everything that He has promised, and we **shall be saved!** So, just how do we obtain God's proclamation of righteousness? By faith that's how. And when we truly believe the message of the Gospel, we are being transformed into the image of Christ. It is not just a belief. It is a belief that changes us. You see, because Abraham "believed The LORD", he followed Him wherever He would lead. That is the same kind of faith that leads us to follow Christ. For you cannot stay where you are... and go with God.

So there you have it. The message of the Gospel. It is the Power of God for Salvation, revealing the Proclamation of a Righteousness that comes from Him, Procured by Faith. It is gift that cannot be earned, only received. That is why it is such Good News. And we should never be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ! So, go and run with the message, God's judgment is coming, but the righteous shall **live... by FAITH!**

And let all of God's runners say... TRUTH!!!