

“Not Ashamed of the Gospel” Romans 1:16-17

INTRO:

Reformation Sunday is usually the Sunday before October 31, which is Reformation Day, the day when Martin Luther nailed his ninety five theses on the door of the Wittenberg Church. The ninety five theses were statements of truth for a proposed debate. But instead of sparking a debate they ignited the Protestant Reformation. The essence of the truth that ultimately sparked a revolution that would change the world was found in this text in Romans chapter one.

Paul wrote this epistle to a church that Paul did not plant. Churches without Pauline beginning were few and far between. He wanted to come to this church and use it as a launching point to reach Spain and the Western Mediterranean. So, Paul wrote this letter to systematically introduce the Gospel he preached. In this paragraph he underlines two reasons that he preaches this Gospel message to the world that he is trying to evangelize. He preaches it because it changes people. He also preaches it because it glorifies God.

I. The Gospel Changes People (v. 16)

II. The Gospel Glorifies God (v. 17)

I. The Gospel Changes People (v. 16)

A. Paul's argument is held together by beads of glue. That glue is the word: **“gar”**--which means **“for.”** In **verse 16** we find the word **“gar”** two times tying the text together.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for [eis] everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

This is one reason why Paul desired so much to visit and minister to the Roman believers. This statement begs a question. Paul, why are you not ashamed of the Gospel? The first answer is the next **“for.”**

“For it is the power of God unto salvation for all believing, both to the Jew and to the Greek.”

B. What did Paul mean that the Gospel is **“the power of God unto salvation?”** The Gospel is the means by which God saves us. **1 Corinthians 1:18**

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

1. How does God use the gospel to save us? The Apostle Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:21** to tell us how God saves us through the Gospel. God's methodology is.

“In the wisdom of God it pleased God to use the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe.”

God uses the message proclaimed to transform hearts!

2. **1 Peter 1:23** say the same thing again.

“Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”

C. This is not just some sterile intellectual assent to the precepts of God’s Word. This is a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself through the word that God uses to change our lives. This transformation is described several places in the New Testament.

1. **Colossians 1:12-13** ***“[We give] thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”***

When God saved us He removed us from the dominion of darkness and put us in the kingdom of His dear Son. When we got saved, we received a new master. Where once we obeyed Satan through the flesh, we now should obey the Lord Jesus Christ!

2. **John 5:24** ***“Verily, verily, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”***

There has been a dramatic change in our existence. We were dead in our trespasses and sin and now we are alive unto God! Before we had no desire to serve Him or please Him, but now we want nothing more!

3. **2 Corinthians 5:17** ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”***

He has washed away our sin and has made us brand new!

II. The Gospel Glorifies God (v. 17)

A. Not only does this Gospel transform people, it also brings glory to God because it reveals God's righteousness. What does the words ***“the righteousness of God”*** mean? There are three ways we can understand it.

1. It can indicate The Righteous Acts That God Does. This is the idea in **Genesis 18:25** when Abraham argued with God about the fate of Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah. He said, ***“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”*** The answer to Abraham's question is an unqualified, "Yes!"

2. The phrase, ***“the righteousness of God”*** can refer to An Attribute That God Possesses. The Psalmist in **Psalm 7:9** gives us an example of this idea.

“Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just; for the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.”

God always does righteously because in His essential nature, He is righteous!

3. Finally, the phrase, ***“the Righteousness of God”*** could mean The Righteousness That Comes From God. For example, consider **Philippians 3:8-9**

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”

B. It is all three aspects of the righteousness of God that Paul has in mind in this verse.

1. God Saves Us By Imputing Righteousness To Our Account. He does that because of a transaction that took place on Calvary described for us in **2 Corinthians 5:21**

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

This verse describes what God did for all of us who have put our trust in Christ alone for our salvation. He made Jesus take our sin and punished that sin on the cross, in order to make us His righteousness! He declared us righteous! ***“Because my sinless Savior died, / My sinful soul is counted free/ For God the Just is satisfied/ to look on Him and pardon me.”***

2. When God saves He also shows us His righteous nature, in that our salvation is not without cost. This is where the word ***“propitiation”*** comes in. ***Propitiation*** implies that God is angry with our sin! To settle whether or not this is true let us just jump down to **vs. 18**

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

Because God is angry at us and our sin, someone must take the righteous result of that wrath if we are to be delivered! That person was the Lord Jesus Christ.

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” 1 John 4:9.

Jesus took all of God's wrath that should have been directed against you and me and against your sin and mine. He took it all and so there is none left for each of us.

How is this righteousness and propitiation available to us? It is not through our efforts, but it is ours through our putting our faith in Christ alone to save us. That is what Martin Luther underlined to a church that forgot this precious truth. That is why Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? It is because the Gospel changes people! It is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe, and it glorifies God. In it the

Righteousness of God is revealed. Out of the faith of Justification and into the faith of sanctification.

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within
Upward I look and see Him there,
Who made an end of all my sin

Because the Sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God the Just is satisfied
to look on Him and Pardon me!