

A Study of Romans 1:16-17

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

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I. Review

A. Paul was called to reveal God's gospel concerning God's Son

Rom 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle...

B. The same Jesus Christ also called you from among the nations to eternal life

Rom 1:6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

C. You who are beloved of God are also called to be saints

Rom 1:7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints...

1Pe 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

D. They already had legendary world renowned faith

Rom 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

E. Yet their famous faith needed to be established and needed to be comforted

Rom 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Rom 1:12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Rom 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

1Th 3:2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

Col 1:3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Col 1:4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

Col 1:5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the gospel;

Col 1:6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

Col 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Col 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

F. So that their legendary and further established faith might be lived

Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

II. Romans 1:16-17

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

A. These verses cannot be describing the means to eternal salvation

1. They already believed—Even to the point of having legendary faith

2. Other teachings in Romans about God’s plan of eternal salvation

Rom 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Rom 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Rom 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Rom 5:19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Rom 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Rom 9:22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

Rom 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Rom 9:24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

3. The Old Testament reference is not how you get life—But how you live life

Hab 1:13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

Hab 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Hab 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Hab 2:20 But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

Hab 3:17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

Hab 3:18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

B. One possible meaning of: “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation”

The power of God unto salvation could be restating/defining the gospel (good news)

In grammar this is called a predicate nominative

As with the statement: *The man is my brother*

Brother simply restates and defines *the man*

Even so with the statement: *The good news is God’s power unto salvation*

God’s power unto salvation simply restates and defines *the good news*

This statement is true considering our eternal salvation from this world

Think of a wagon train going to California in the 1800’s

The good news is the power of the mule to get grandma to California

The good news is not what has the power to get grandma to California

The power to get grandma to California lies solely in the mule

But it sure is good news that grandma can get there with the rest of us

In like manner the good news is not what has the power to eternal salvation

The power unto eternal salvation lies solely in God
But it sure is good news that God has the power to get us to heaven
It would be bad news if we had to supply the power to get us to heaven
The good news for the helpless sinner is the power of God unto salvation

C. Another possible meaning of: “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation”

The good news is what has the power of God unto salvation
As with the statement: *The generator is the power unto lights*
Even so with the statement: *The good news is the power of God unto salvation*
This statement is true considering our deliverance while still in this world
Though the gospel is not the power that eternally saves
It is nonetheless a powerful message to a sinner who believes the message
The good news of the Son of God dying on a cross to save hell-bound sinners
Has the power to motivate those sinners to turn to this Savior of sinners
There is power in the message to cause believers to change how they live
The gospel can truly motivate children of God to live their lives by faith
Faith is not for getting things—Faith is for facing things
Faith is not for getting life—Faith is for living life
The more your faith in Christ is established
The less the getting of things matters—Even the less things matter
The less you will follow after things—the more you will follow Christ

III. Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

A. Not ashamed of the gospel

2Ti 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;
2Ti 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,
2Ti 1:10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:
2Ti 1:11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.
2Ti 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

B. The gospel

Rom 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
Rom 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

C. A gospel with power to save those who believe it

A spiritual life lived by faith in Jesus Christ even now delivers the one who is living it
A life lived by faith in Jesus is a life filled with peace that passes understanding
A life lived by faith in Jesus experiences joy unspeakable
A life lived by faith comes to Jesus and finds rest for the soul
A life lived by faith in Jesus has certain hope of a future eternal life

D. To everyone that believeth

The truth of the gospel is good news only to those who believe it
Eternal salvation by the power of God is the revealed truth of the scriptures
Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins
Jesus came with a purpose—Jesus came for His people
Jesus knows who those people are—Jesus shall save His people
This statement by the angel is unalterable truth
This truth is truth—Whether you believe it or not
But it is good news only to those who believe it
Unbelief in the mind of an individual does not nullify God’s eternal reality
Our belief is not needed to assure the reality of God’s eternal reality
Belief or unbelief can and does affect the believer’s state of mind—
But has no effect on the unchangeable eternal truth of God’s plan of salvation
The power of God unto salvation is truth—yes, eternal unchangeable truth
The power of God unto salvation is reality whether anybody ever believes it or not
The power of God unto salvation is perhaps nonsense to one who does not believe it
The power of God unto salvation is good news to every one that believeth

E. To the Jew first; and also to the Greek

The Jews were chronologically the first to hear the message
Yet the good news of the power of God unto salvation is the same for all nations

The good news is that God's power saves a Jew and a Greek by the same plan

IV. Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

A. The righteousness of God

For in the good news is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith

What is this *righteousness of God*?

Just as the sinner had no power for his salvation in the previous verse

The sinner has no righteousness to present in this verse

There is none righteous, no, not one. (Rom 3:10)

But the good news speaks of a righteousness that is of God

For in the good news is the righteousness of God revealed

This *righteousness of God* can be none other than the Savior Jesus Christ

*But now the **righteousness of God** without the law is manifested,*

being witnessed by the law and the prophets. (Rom 3:21)

This idea of Jesus as the righteousness of God is the centerpiece of scripture

Jesus is the one witnessed to by the law—the prophets—and the gospel

Jesus is the gospel—Jesus is the good news

Jesus is the power of God unto salvation

Jesus is the righteousness of God by which we have salvation

B. Revealed from faith to faith

How does a person come to know and believe the good news?

The message must be heard before it can be known

In the proclamation and the hearing of the gospel

The power of God unto salvation is revealed to the sinner

The righteousness of God—even Jesus Christ—is revealed to the sinner

Think of a sinner who senses the wrath of God against sinners

Somebody now reveals to that sinner the idea of the righteousness of God

Even the righteousness of God who is Jesus Christ

Somebody tells the sinner that God counts him to be righteous through Jesus

If that sinner hears the good news that he is righteous before God

That he stands in God's presence wearing Jesus' righteousness

Then that sinner truly has had good news revealed to him

So one person with faith tells the good news to another who has faith

Revealed from faith to faith

Thus the good news travels around the world and through history

Note that it says—*from faith to faith*

It does not say—*from person to person*

There is an essential prerequisite before the message can be believed

This prerequisite is the God-given gift of faith

Spiritual life must first come to the natural man—

Then comes faith, which is the fruit or result of that life (Gal 5:23)

Some who hear the message do not have the ability to believe it

All men have not faith. (2 Th 3:2)

The natural man—that is a man with natural life and no spiritual life—

Will not and cannot believe the good news of spiritual things

Such an idea is foolishness to him—he cannot know such things

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:

for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them,

because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Co 2:14)

Thus, the words, *from faith to faith,*

Exclude the idea that a person (void of spiritual life) can reveal the good news

Neither can the natural person (without spiritual life) receive the good news

Yet one with spiritual life and the resulting faith of having that life

Can reveal the good news to another with the same life and faith

From faith to faith

C. As it is written, the just shall live by faith

When Habakkuk penned these words he was at the end of self

His problem was not how to be born again

His problem was how to get through life
 God taught Habakkuk a new lifestyle—A new way of looking at things
 The lesson was to quit focusing on the hopeless situation—
 And to have faith in God and His promises
 Quit living by sight—and start living by faith
 The just (those who are right) will live their lives by faith
 The words, *the just shall live by faith*, do not describe how the just become alive
 They tell how the just live the spiritual life that they have been given
 Faith is neither the sinner's righteousness—nor his claim to righteousness
 Jesus is the sinner's righteousness—and the sinner's claim to righteousness
 Faith is not the one time event whereby eternal life is acquired
 Faith is a constant lifestyle that is necessary for the worship of God
 Faith is a continual realization of the need for Christ
 Bible-based faith incorporates the idea that nothing from self can help save self
 Bible faith is the exact opposite of man becoming righteous of self
 Scriptural faith denies any merit in man
 Faith in Jesus destroys the idea that man can contribute
 True faith in Jesus is totally self-eliminating—and in no way self-promoting
Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works?
Nay: but by the law of faith. (Rom 3:27)
 In other words, the law (principle) of Biblical faith—
 Demands absolute and total trust in Jesus as Savior—
 Demands complete elimination of trust and confidence in self
 By definition, faith in Jesus eliminates all boasting in self
 Bible faith is an unqualified looking to Christ
 As the all and only sufficient righteousness of God for us

V. Final thoughts on Romans 1:16-17

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

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So what is the purpose of knowing the good news?
 The answer is found in the statement, *the just shall live by faith*
 Faith is knowing the sufficiency of Christ for every situation we face
 True God-given faith passes through hopelessness to confidence
 From an eternal perspective
 The sinner realizes the hopelessness of salvation through his own righteousness
 He hears and understands through faith the righteousness that God has provided
 Upon understanding that God gave Jesus to be our righteousness
 The sinner's lifestyle, manner of thinking, manner of living changes
 He now lives with full realization of the insufficiency of self
 Yet he lives with confidence that his salvation is certain in Jesus
 To the faithful the thing hoped for—
 Even eternal salvation—has a present reality
 From a day to day perspective
 Anyone who truly understands the power of God unto salvation—
 And the righteousness of God provided through Jesus Christ—
 Will live the rest of his life differently
 If he is thinking in a right manner—
 He will never get over the reality of what God has done for him
 If he is just and right in the way he lives—
 He will live his life saying—
 “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”
 The just (right in their manner of living and thinking) shall live their lives by faith
 Not just believing in Christ as their Savior—
 But also believing in Jesus in their times of troubles—
 And even believing Jesus—as to the right way to live life
 Let those who have believed the good news of the power of God unto salvation
 —Live their lives looking to that powerful God
 Let those who have believed in the righteousness of God—even Jesus Christ
 —Always be looking to that righteous Jesus
 Let those who know eternal truths through the ‘faith to faith’ revelation

- Live by that faith through the remainder of their days
- Let that God-given faith abound to God's glory as we live out our lives