

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Romans 1:16-17

Introduction

On this day 504 years ago, an Augustinian monk by the name of Martin Luther nailed 95 theses of protest to the door of the church in Wittenberg, asking for an opportunity to debate certain practices within the Roman Catholic Church. Luther took great exception with the practice of selling indulgences. In Luther's day, a person who was living could pay money to grant relief or release from a soul of someone who was in purgatory. In fact, there was even a little marketing jingle that some preachers used to get people to pay the indulgences: *Sobald der Pfennig im Kasten klingt, die Seele aus dem Fegfeuer springt*. In English, this translates into something like, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul out of purgatory springs."

What was it that compelled this Augustinian monk to challenge the established church of his day? What emboldened him to call for a debate with church authorities?

Read Romans 1:16-17

Exposition

I. The Gospel is not a message to be ashamed of in our world (Vs. 16a)

Why do you think that Paul felt the need to say that he was "not ashamed of the Gospel?" Kids, what about you? Why would someone say that they were not ashamed?

To answer this question, we need to consider two things: The Content of the Gospel and The Context of the Gospel.

Let's look at the content of the gospel, by asking "What IS the gospel about?" In brief, the gospel is about God's supernatural work to save sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul mentions this in Romans 1:1-4 and in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. The gospel is about God's work to save sinners. **But why would Paul possible be ashamed of this message? Kids, have you ever been embarrassed? What embarrassed you? Now, think about this, what was it about the good news about Jesus that could have potentially embarrassed Paul?**

Well, to answer these questions, we must consider the context that Paul was preaching this message?

Jewish Context - They were looking for an earthly king to deliver them from physical oppression. Instead, Jesus came as a humble servant.

Greek Context - They were concerned with the study of philosophy, the arts, and all sorts of different gods. Yet Jesus came proclaiming to be "the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE."

Having considered these things, it should clear as to why Paul felt the need to say that he was not ashamed of the gospel. Paul was surrounded by a culture and society that was completely opposed to his message about Jesus. (Sound familiar?)

Yet, Paul responds with absolute confidence and shameless proclamation of this message.

TS – So Paul has clearly stated that he is not ashamed of the Gospel, and we should now understand why he felt the need to make such a declaration, but **WHY** was Paul not ashamed of this message?

II. The Gospel is a message of God's power to save us (Vs. 16b)

To speak of the gospel as a message of God's power to save us means that the message of the gospel is the instrument (or means) that God uses to save sinners by revealing to them the forgiveness of sins and eternal life that is provided for all that trust in Jesus Christ. Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians 1:18-19, where he wrote, "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

The Gospel message is the message that comes with the authority, power, and promise of God to save anyone and everyone that would believe in Jesus Christ. The GOSPEL message is the ONLY message that has the power to save sinners.

Illustration – A Message from the Weatherman vs. A Message from the Judge ("The temperature last night was 83 degrees" vs. "You are acquitted of the charges against you")

TS – But why is this the case? How is this possible? How is one saved by virtue of this gospel message?

III. The Gospel is a message about how the righteousness that we need is provided to us by faith in Christ alone (Vs. 17)

What God requires of us, God provides to us through Jesus Christ. All we must do is place our trust fully in Christ alone! **Illustration** – Tight Rope Walker over Niagara Falls (Get in the Bucket)

The faith spoken of in this passage is more than mental assent; it is a faith that fully trusts and flings itself upon the mercy of God, trusting in Christ alone to save.

The point of verse 17 is this: the righteousness that God demands, God provides **through faith** in Jesus Christ, who lived a perfect life of obedience to the God's law and yet He died that death that we deserve for our sins that His perfect righteousness might be counted as our own through faith in Him, which makes us acceptable to God. In other words, the gospel tells us that those who trust in Christ have been forgiven and accepted before God based on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Consider how **Romans 3:21-26** speaks of this reality...

The point that Paul is making here is that God has provided what we, as sinners, so desperately need in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

In Romans 1:16-17, Paul is teaching us that regardless of what others think or say, we must not be ashamed of this gospel, because it is only through this gospel that anyone can or will be saved. No matter what comes our way, we cannot abandon or assume this powerful message of salvation in Jesus Christ. The gospel is STILL the power of God unto salvation for the one that believes!

We cannot save ourselves through our good works or religious efforts. We cannot pay to be pardoned of our guilt and sin. Christ alone has paid the price of our redemption and He calls us now to place our trust fully in Him.

Kids, only Jesus can save you. Parents, only Jesus can save your kids. Everyone, our only hope is in Jesus. Only the good news regarding what God has done in Jesus can bring salvation to our world. Have you trusted in Him completely? You can today!