

# Jan Huss: The Fiery Forerunner

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## **INTRODUCTION**

- Today we are looking at a second Pre-Reformation Reformer
- His name is Jan Huss
- Huss lived after Wycliffe but before Luther in the 14th century
- He was from the Bohemian town of Husinec
- Husinec today is a small town of about 1500 people in the Czech Republic
- This is in central Europe
- It borders Austria, Germany, Poland, and Slovakia  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech\\_Republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Republic))
- Some believe Huss' name was derived from his home town of Husinec
- Huss was from a well-to-do farming family
- He was a graduate from the University of Prague
- He was a lecturer, dean, and an ordained priest
- He was a follower of John Wycliffe who became the link between Wycliffe and Luther
- Luther said of Huss after reading some of his works, "I was overwhelmed with astonishment,"  
I could not understand for what cause they had burnt so great a man, who explained the  
Scriptures with so much gravity and skill." (Factbook)
- Huss' name means "goose"
- He told his executioner before he was burned at the stake, "You are going to burn a goose but  
in a century you will have a swan which you can neither roast nor boil"  
([www.scionofzion.com/john\\_huss.htm](http://www.scionofzion.com/john_huss.htm)).
- Many believe the "swan" was Martin Luther, who 100 years later would nail his 95 thesis to  
the door of the church in Wittenberg.
- Today the people of the Czech Republic remember Huss with a public holiday on July 6 which  
is the anniversary of his death in 1415.
- Huss was very bold in speaking out against the Roman Catholic Church

- He “believed pastors should model godly lives and preach vivid, accessible sermons.
- [He believed] they should not make fortunes off their ministries but should think of themselves as servants” (“Accidental Radical,” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 68: Jan Hus: Incendiary Preacher of Prague* (2000).
- He also objected and [confronted] the archbishop saying, “How is it that fornicating and otherwise criminal priests walk about freely ... while humble priests ... are jailed as heretics and suffer exile for the very proclamation of the Gospel?” (Thomas A. Fudge, “To Build a Fire,” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 68: Jan Hus: Incendiary Preacher of Prague* (2000).
- Thomas Fudge says, “In 1405 he [also] denounced alleged appearances of Christ’s blood on communion wafers as an elaborate hoax. His sermons condemned the sins of the clergy. He ridiculed the power some priests claimed for themselves when they called their parishioners “knaves” [reprobates] and declared, “We can give you the Holy Ghost or send you to hell.”

Hus roared against such abuses. “These priests deserve hanging in hell,” he said, for they are “fornicators,” “parasites,” “money misers,” and “fat swine.” “They are drunks whose bellies growl with great drinking and are gluttons whose stomachs are overfilled until their double chins hang down.” The appalled clerics began to murmur against Hus.

Lashing out at widespread simony (the practice of buying spiritual office), Hus condemned Prague’s wealthiest clergy—“the Lord’s fat ones,” as he called them—for charging steep fees for administering sacraments and for taking multiple paid positions without faithfully serving any. While claiming apostolic succession, they bore no resemblance to the apostles” (Thomas A. Fudge, “To Build a Fire,” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 68: Jan Hus: Incendiary Preacher of Prague* (2000).

- This didn’t sit well with the Church or the Pope but Huss was committed to the Gospel none-the-less.
- It was seen in his preaching, in his life, and in his death
- He was a man of conviction and was willing to die for it
- He did eventually die for his beliefs in 1415
- As they tied him to a stake and stacked the wood around him, after they lit it, he began singing “Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, have mercy on me” (<https://christianhof.org/huss>)
- Before his death, he was ordered to appear in Constance to answer to these teachings.
- The Pope promised him safe conduct to appear but after his arrival he was arrested.
- He thought they were going to debate his teachings but instead it was a lie to get him to Constance so they could arrest him.
- He was given several opportunities to recant but he refused.
- As they marched him to the place of execution, they put a paper hat on his head with pictures of Satan and the words “heretic.”

- One author writes, “After the performance of high mass and liturgy, Hus was led into the church.
- The bishop of Lodi delivered an oration on the duty of eradicating heresy; then some theses of Hus and Wycliffe and a report of his trial were read.
- He protested loudly several times, and when his appeal to Christ was rejected as a condemnable heresy, he exclaimed, “*O God and Lord, now the council condemns even thine own act and thine own law as heresy, since thou thyself didst lay thy cause before thy Father as the just judge, as an example for us, whenever we are sorely oppressed.*”
- An Italian prelate [a bishop or other ecclesiastical dignitary] pronounced the sentence of condemnation upon Hus and his writings.
- Again he protested loudly, saying that even at this hour he did not wish anything but to be convinced from Holy Scripture.
- He fell upon his knees and asked God with a low voice to forgive all his enemies.
- Then followed his degradation— he was enrobed in priestly vestments and again asked to recant; again he refused.
- With curses his ornaments were taken from him, his priestly tonsure was destroyed, and the sentence was pronounced that the Church had deprived him of all rights and delivered him to the secular powers.
- Then a high paper hat was put upon his head, with the [Latin] inscription Haeresiarcha (her-esi-arch) [which means “arch-heretic, an originator of heretical doctrine, or the founder of a sect that sustains such doctrine” - Wikipedia]
- Thus Hus was led away to the stake under a strong guard of armed men.
- At the place of execution he knelt down, spread out his hands, and prayed aloud.
- Some of the people asked that a confessor should be given him, but a bigoted priest exclaimed, a heretic should neither be heard nor given a confessor.
- The executioners undressed Hus and tied his hands behind his back with ropes, and his neck with a chain to a stake around which wood and straw had been piled up so that it covered him to the neck.
- Still at the last moment, the imperial marshal, Von Pappenheim, in the presence of the Count Palatine, asked him to save his life by a recantation, but Hus declined with the words “*God is my witness that I have never taught that of which I have been accused by false witnesses. In the truth of the Gospel which I have written, taught, and preached I will die to-day with gladness.*”
- There upon the fire was kindled with John Wycliffe’s own manuscripts used as kindling for the fire.
- With uplifted voice Hus sang, “*Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me.*”

- Among his dying words he proclaimed, “*In 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed.*”
- His ashes were gathered and cast into the nearby Rhine River” (<https://greatsite.com/john-hus>).
- \*When we see His boldness and conviction, we can’t help to see that it mimics that of the apostle Paul.
- Paul said in [Philippians 1:21](#), “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”
- Death is gain to a believer in Christ.
- It is instant heaven in the presence of Christ.
- Paul said in [2 Corinthians 5:8](#), “we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”
- Jesus said to the thief on the cross who believed in Him, “Today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).
- There are many verses by Paul that reveals his conviction but two in particular that I want us to look at this morning.
- They are found in Romans chapter 1.
- Paul said in verses 16-17, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.””

For Huss and Paul...

## **LESSON**

### **I. The Gospel was Personal (v.16a)**

Paul said, “For *I* am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”

- He went from being a persecutor of the church to being a proclaimer of the Gospel
  - This is because the gospel had an impact on his life
  - The same was true for Huss
  - The Gospel impacted his life in a personal way:
    - He said, “Seeing that I am always ready to give an answer to the satisfaction of every man who asks concerning the faith I hold, I declare with a sincere heart that the Lord Jesus Christ is very God and very man; and that His whole gospel is established so firmly in the truth that “not a jot nor tittle” of it can fail; and finally that His Holy Church has been so firmly founded on a firm rock that “the gates of hell cannot in any wise prevail against it.” I am ready in hope of the Lord Jesus

Christ, Himself the Head, to bear the punishment of a dreadful death rather than to state ... anything else than His truth” (300 Quotations for Preachers from the Medieval Church).

- The Gospel totally transformed his life
- The same was true for Paul
  - [Acts 9:1-9](#) records his conversion
  - What do you do when Christ saves you? You tell others
  - After he received his sight and was baptized, [Acts 9:20](#) says, “...immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”
- There are 136 references to Paul’s preaching in the NT
- He told the believers at Rome in [Romans 1:15](#) that he was “ready to preach the gospel” to them
- His passion was to “proclaim Him (Christ), admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”
- He demonstrated in his life that he was not ashamed of the gospel
- Jesus had said in [Matthew 10:32-33](#), “32 “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. 33 “But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”
- Paul confessed Jesus before men and paid for it with his life:
  - He was imprisoned at Philippi - [Acts 16:23-24](#), “23 When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; 24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”
  - He was chased out of Thessalonica - [Acts 17:10](#), “The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.”
  - He was smuggled out of Berea - [Acts 17:14](#), “Then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there.”
  - He was laughed at in Athens - [Acts 17:32](#), “Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, “We shall hear you again concerning this.””
  - He was regarded as a fool at Corinth - [1 Corinthians 1:18](#), “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the

power of God.”

- He was stoned in Galatia - [Acts 14:19](#), “19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.”
- Paul summed up his commitment in [2 Corinthians 11:23-28](#), “23 Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.”
- [John MacArthur](#) says Paul “was never deterred by opposition, never disheartened by criticism, and never ashamed, for any reason, of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” (John MacArthur, Romans).
- [Martin Luther](#) said, “To this day it remains true that whoever does not believe, will be ashamed of the Gospel and contradict it, at least in his heart and conduct; for he who finds pleasure in that which is of the flesh and of the world, cannot find pleasure in that which is spiritual and of God. So he is not only ashamed of preaching the Gospel, but also personally fights against it and refuses to let it convert him, since he hates the light and loves the darkness. It thus becomes foolishness to him; indeed it appears to him as downright stupidity, according to [1 Corinthians 2:14](#): ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are spiritually discerned’; or [Romans 8:7](#): ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’” (Commentary on Romans, p.40).
- **This is the call of the Gospel**
  - to not be ashamed
  - to deny yourself ([Luke 9:23](#))
  - to deny your family - [Matthew 10:37-39](#), “37 “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 “He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”
  - To publically confess it

- [Romans 10:9-10](#), “9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”
- [Acts 2:37-41](#), “37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 “For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”
- [Psalm 40:9-10](#), “9 I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation; Behold, I will not restrain my lips, O Lord, You know. 10 I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation.”
- [Psalm 71:15-16](#), “15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness And of Your salvation all day long; For I do not know the sum of them. 16 I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, Yours alone.”
- [Psalm 119:46](#), “I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings And shall not be ashamed.”
- To even die if God wills it [all the disciples suffered for the gospel]

• The reason why Paul, Huss, and others are not ashamed of the gospel is because...

## II. The Gospel is Powerful (vv.16b-17)

Inherent in the gospel message is the power of an omnipotent God. That power alone is sufficient to save the vilest sinner and transform the hardest heart—apart from any human arguments, illustrations, or ingenuity” (John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, p129).

### • The Gospel is the Only Way of Salvation

- [Acts 4:12](#), “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.””
- [John 14:6](#), “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
- Biblical preaching means preaching Jesus Christ—His Person and work (MacArthur)

- That’s what Paul did.
- That is also what Jan Huss did too.
- “The most serious indictment of contemporary market-conscious preaching is the absence of Christ. His name or some fact about Him may be thrown in at the end, but our Lord is rarely central in the trendy preaching of today” (MacArthur).
- But the Gospel is about Him!!!

· Paul saw that...

- The Gospel is Impartial and Must Be Acted Upon

“For everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek”

- It is impartial
  - It is for Jews
    - [Acts 2:5](#), “5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.”
    - [Acts 2:9-11](#), “9 “Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.””
  - It is for Gentiles
    - [Acts 13:46-48](#), “46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 “For so the Lord has commanded us, ‘I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, That You may bring salvation to the end of the earth.’ ” 48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”
- It is for everyone
  - [Matthew 11:28-30](#), “28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.””
  - [Romans 10:13](#), “for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.””
  - [Revelation 22:17](#), “The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”



- It is to be acted upon
  - The word “believes” (pisteuo) occurs 250 times in the NT, “99 times” by the apostle John alone (Vine)
  - It means “to trust, to be firmly persuaded as to something” (Zodhiates). It is “to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance (Louw-Nida).
  - It is translated “commit” in [John 2:24](#).
  - Belief “is the principle of saving grace, and unbelief the chief damning sin” (A.W. Pink).
  - [John 3:36](#) defines it as obeying the Son when it says, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.””
  - [Romans 4:21](#) defines it as “being fully assured” when speaking of Abraham’s belief in the promises of God. He was “fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.”
    - “fully assured” is plerophoreo, which means to be “wholly certain” (Dunn).

### · Paul and Huss believed...

- **The Gospel Revealed God’s Righteousness**

Paul says, “for in it the righteousness of God is revealed”

- Faith activates the divine power that brings salvation.
- In that sovereign act the righteousness of God is revealed.
- The righteousness is from God (better rendering) which indicates that He imparts His own righteousness to those who believe. It is...“not only revealed but reckoned to those who believe in Christ” (MacArthur).

### · Paul says...

- **The Gospel Must be Responded to By Faith**

- “From faith to faith” seems to parallel “everyone who believes.”
- If this is the case Paul is singling out the faith of each individual believer (MacArthur).
- “As it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith” is a quote from [Hab.2:4](#).
- This is not a one-time act. It is a way of life.
- The true believer is made righteous and lives in faith all his life.
- This is called by theologians the perseverance of the saints.

## **CONCLUSION**

- Do share the same commitment to the Gospel as Paul and Jan Huss and other faithful believers?
- If so, you will be willing to proclaim the Gospel and you will be willing to die because of it
- Paul said in [2 Timothy 4:6-7](#), “6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;”
- Does that describe you?
- Charles Spurgeon said, “every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.”
- Which are you?
- Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ?
- You are only one heart beat away from hell or heaven
- Which is it for you?
- You say heaven
- Does your life manifest that?
- Are you preaching the gospel?
- On December 17, 1999, Pope John Paul II told an international symposium, “Today, on the eve of the Great Jubilee, I feel the need to express deep regret for the cruel death inflicted on Jan Hus.” He commended Hus’s “moral courage in the face of adversity and death” and proclaimed that through the scholars’ work, “Hus, who has been such a point of contention in the past, has now become a subject of dialogue, of comparison and shared investigation.” (“Accidental Radical,” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 68: Jan Hus: Incendiary Preacher of Prague* (2000),.
- That might be true but they have never repented even to this day.
- Let’s pray.