

Romans 1:16–17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

The Righteousness of God **Romans 1:16-17**

INTRO:

On October 31, 1517, an Augustinian monk named Martin Luther brought the church back to the Bible. He did something radical, he began to read the Bible again. In the Bible he studied Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and ran into the two verses we are going to explore today. These two verses changed Luther’s life and our lives also.

These two verses are summarized in the first of the two verses. **Verse 16** reads, ***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”*** Paul then stated two reasons why he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I. I am not ashamed because it is the power of God (verse 16).

II. I am not ashamed because in the gospel the righteousness of God is made clear (verse 17).

I. I am not ashamed because it is the power of God (verse 16).

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

A. Some questions rush into our minds when we read this verse. First, what is this Gospel?

1. The word means good news. With Paul, however, this term has a technical meaning. The long definition is **chapters 1-11** of the Epistle to the Romans. The short answer is **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**.

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

2. Paul introduced this Roman Epistle with a description of the Gospel. **Romans 1:1-4** reads,

“Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.”

The Apostle introduced himself in terms of the Gospel.

“Which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.”

Second, this Gospel was predicted in the Old Testament and is connected with the Son of God.

“Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

B. Second, what is this *“power?”* The power in the Gospel is not dynamite. The power in the Gospel moves us into salvation. Many pictures of this power dot the New Testament.

1. For example, Gospel power transfers us from death to life. **John 5:24**

“Truly, truly 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.”

2. The power God displays in the Gospel changes our lives. **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.”

3. Paul also wrote how the power in the Gospel is similar to the power which raised Christ up from the dead. **Ephesians 1:19-20**

“And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.”

C. Who is this Gospel for? This Gospel is for all who believe, both Jews and Gentiles.

II. I am not ashamed because in the gospel the righteousness of God is made clear (verse 17).

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” (Romans 1:17)

A. This is the verse which completely changed Luther’s life. *“At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, ‘In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’” There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.”*

B. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel because it revealed God’s righteousness from faith to faith. What is this righteousness? **Romans 3:19-28** answers the question.

“Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”

C. The Apostle Paul declared this righteousness is through faith and apart from the Law over and over again in this epistle. This is not an earned righteousness through works we do. We are right before God because He declared us righteous through our faith in Christ and His sacrifice for us. **Romans 5:1**

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Let me add another example from another epistle Paul wrote. **Philippians 3:9** says, *“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.”*

Why Is This Important?

1. This is the only way we can ever be saved for all eternity. This is not an intellectual exercise. This is a reality which we either have or we have no hope. Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:8-9**, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

2. In the reality described in these two verses, Martin Luther finally found salvation and his deliverance from sin.

3. Have we found our salvation in our faith in Christ and the righteousness declared to our account by faith?

Hymn #26 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God