

Romans Chapter 1D

In the first 15 verses of Romans Chapter 1, Paul introduced himself to the body of believers who lived in the capitol of the Roman Empire, the very center of the Gentile world.

In light of the fact that Paul had never met the believers in Rome, he takes a few extra verses, a little more time to introduce himself. He speaks of his calling as the Apostle to the Gentiles, and he explains his passion for what he calls, ‘The Gospel of God.’

- Within this letter to the Romans, Paul uses the word “Gospel” 11 times and 4 of those 11 are found right here in the opening verses.

1:1, Paul describes himself as being, “**Set apart for the Gospel of God.**”

1:9, Paul expresses his sincerity and commitment to the Roman Believers when he writes: **For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers,**

1:15 Paul said he was “**eager to preach the Gospel in Rome.**”

- Now, when we finally arrive at verses 16 and 17, we move from Paul’s personal introduction to what I believe is a summary of the entire book.

Listen to this quote by the Late James Montgomery Boyce (10th Pres)

“In the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of Romans 1, we come to sentences that are the most important in the letter and perhaps in all literature. (**stop and think about that statement**) They are the theme of this epistle and the essence of Christianity. They are the heart of biblical religion. The reason this is so, is that they tell how a man or woman may become right with God.”

In these two very simple yet profound verses, Paul states the theme of the book. While the value and weightiness of the doctrine communicated in these two verses is truly priceless, the flow of Paul’s thought is natural and surprisingly easy to follow.

- IN vs 13 Paul expressed his desire to visit Rome in order to reap a harvest 4 God
- IN vs 14 He explains his desire in light of the fact that God has appointed him to be the Apostle to the Gentiles.
- IN vs 15, It IS because of His divine appointment, and the unction of the Spirit that Paul expresses his eagerness to preach the Gospel in Rome.

Verse 16 opens with the word “**FOR,**” Paul is eager to preach the Gospel in Rome **FOR** or **BECAUSE** he is not ashamed of the Gospel. **AND** He is not ashamed of the Gospel **FOR / Because** the Gospel is the power of God bringing salvation to all who believe.

This morning I want to expound on Vs 16 by pointing to these 4 key words.

1. Boldness,
2. Power,
3. Salvation,
4. Faith

Boldness

Let's begin with the phrase, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel."

This is not a statement of Bravado; Paul is not bosting in his own strength or boldness.

Rather He is explaining His eagerness to preach the Gospel in Rome Follow the context from Vs 15 I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. (BECAUSE) I am not ashamed of the gospel, FOR the Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,

- Let's consider a simple ILLUSTRATION:

You are taking the cruse of a lifetime, on a brand new luxury cruise liner called the "Titanic." Well you know what happens, the ship begins to sink and someone runs up to you and with sincerity in his eyes and passion in his voice he says, "I am not ashamed to give you this life preserver because it is the means by which you will be delivered from certain death and escape the dark abyss of the Atlantic."

- Now let's consider a different scenario: What if someone tried to hand you a life preserver as soon as you walked on to the ship. (feeling secure) You would think this guy is crazy. After all, the designers and builders of this vessel advertised it as an unsinkable ship. It is filled with every luxury known to man and your heart is set on indulging yourself in every possible pleasure. No fear monger is going to ruin your vacation. SO you push the life preserver aside and mock the man who handed it to you. Should that man who tried to save your life feel ashamed?

Back in the book of Romans, In light of contemporary society Paul had every reason to be ashamed of the Gospel because it contradicted everything that was considered to be true and sacred within the surrounding culture.

- To the Jew the Gospel was the worst sort of blasphemy because it claimed that the Nazarene who died among the other criminals on Calvary was the Messiah, God in human flesh.
- The Greeks considered these Christians to be Atheists because they refused to worship the gods of the Pantheon. Some of them actually accused the Christians of Cannibalism because they misunderstood the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. "Eating Flesh and drinking blood!"
- Paul commented on the resistance of both the Jews and Greeks TO the Gospel in his letter to the church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 1: 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

- Certainly, the pressures from the surrounding society combine with the fear of physical harm brought a temptation in the church to be ashamed of the Gospel.

Today we live in an age of Pluralism, which is a belief system that rejects absolute truth by declaring EVERYTHING to be true, especially with regard to religion.

- When you think about it, our day is not all that different from Paul's day. Rome had its own pluralistic Pantheon of God's who were to be worshiped. As long as you didn't reject their gods you could worship yours.
- But, when we say that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father except through HIM, then we are considered to be elitist, prideful, arrogant, narrow minded, intolerant and unloving.
- IF Christianity would only move one small step toward a more tolerant ecumenicalism and exchange the definite article "The Way" for the indefinite article "A Way" (Jesus is A way but not The way) then the scandal would be over, and the world and Christianity could live at peace. (Kumbia)

In this culture of tolerance, creative churches have come up with different solutions to the problem. They have invented ways to make the Gospel more relevant to today's culture and less offensive.

- Some churches decided to remove certain words from their sermons, words that might be considered offensive, like sin and repentance. Instead, they will say we all make mistakes & need a restart and Jesus may be able to help us with that.
- Some teach that the Bible is nothing more than a collection of good moral stories that show us how to live a better life. (That my friends is an impotent Gospel)
- Others say that if you give your life to Jesus, he will solve all of your problems and meet all of your needs. You will find joy and peace, healing and prosperity. And while that may be true, that's not the Gospel.
- This so-called health and wealth Gospel is not offensive to the unbelieving world because it promises to provide the very things that sinful men desire.
- BUT my friends these are all corruptions of the true Gospel and none of them has the power to save anyone.
- As it was in Paul's day so it is in ours:

Those who hold firmly to Biblical truth and refuse to compromise the Gospel will be put to shame by the surrounding society. Believers are intimidated, by a culture that tolerates every other belief. But they say Our morals are antiquated and Victorian. They publically malign Believers saying that we are the ones who are holding back the progress of society.

- In reality, they are rejecting the power of God that He has graciously provided for the salvation of their souls.

The reason WHY Paul says He is NOT ashamed of the Gospel is because the Gospel is the power of God that "results in" salvation. With that we move on to our 2nd point.

POWER:

Donald Grey Barnhouse Writes: *“The Word which Paul ministered and which WE minister today is the power – the explosive power, the disruptive power of God.”*

- The original word that is translated “power” here in Romans 1:16 is “dunamis.” This word finds its way into the English language in terms like Dynamo or Dynamic and even Dynamite.
- Paul was not ashamed, He was not afraid to walk into the Pagan Capitol of the world because he knew that he was carrying the Power of God in the Gospel.

The notion of power in the Roman Empire was swords, shields, military might and yokes of Iron around the necks of those who resist. BUT Paul was entrusted with the unlimited power of God which was resident in the Gospel.

- Think about this for a moment. One of the most powerful forces ever released was the Word of God that brought the whole material creation into existence every galaxy in all of the universe was brought into being by the Word of God.
- The Apostle Paul compares the power of God in creation to the creative act of God that takes place through the proclamation of the Gospel.

2 Corinthians 4: 5 *For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.* 6 *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

- That same creative power that brought light and life to the material world brings spiritual light and eternal life to the souls of God’s people.

Now lets try to understand Paul’s statement. *the gospel, is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,*

- Paul is not saying that the Gospel contains the power of God. He is not saying that the Gospel points to the power of God; rather he IS saying the Gospel itself, IS the power of God unto salvation.
- And just to be clear, the Gospel is the Good News of Jesus Christ’s perfect life, his atoning death and glorious resurrection.

ALL three of those points are necessary in order to understand the great salvation that God has wrought in Christ.

- His perfect life of obedience to the Law of God enabled Christ to die in our place as our substitute. If he had sinned at any point in his life, he would be required to endure the wrath of God for His Own Sin. Because he was sinless, He could serve as the spotless Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- It was necessary for Jesus to suffer the wrath of God on the cross and die in our place in order for the perfect justice of God to be satisfied.

1 Peter 3:18 **For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,**

- How can we know that the sacrifice of Christ was accepted by the Father? How can we be sure that the payment for our sins has resulted in our justification? (Being made right with God)
- WE know because Jesus rose from the dead.

In chapter 4 of this book of Romans Paul will say: (4:25) **(Christ) was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.**

- Because He bore the full and complete penalty for our sins and rose from the dead, Now we who believe will also be resurrected to eternal life
- Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 15:20 **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.**

- As we obediently go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ some people will mock us and our message, some will say that the Gospel is a fairy tale promoted by dreamers.
- BUT for those who believe, the Gospel is the power through which sinners are justified before God AND It is the power whereby believers are transformed into the image of Christ.

Friends, we have just come through the time of year when people all around us are all making New Year's resolutions. **THIS YEAR:**

- They're going to go get more exercise, eat healthy, lose weight, stop smoking.
- They resolve to read more books. Spend more time at home and less time at work.

Lots of people wish they could change things that are on the **INSIDE** of them.

- They desire to be set free from plaguing addictions. They would like to be free from the fears that constantly grip them.
- Some wish they could be free from the weight of guilt that suffocates them.
- And there are a whole host of programs and therapies that are designed to help people deal with their problems. But listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah 13:23, **Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.**

- Friends the Bible teaches that Man is powerless, He is impotent to changing his essential nature. He may become more disciplined but His core motivations are invariably corrupt. Only God can truly transform the heart of man.

- And He ordained that the Gospel alone would be the power of God for salvation. That brings us to our third point, Salvation.

SALVATION

Romans 1: 16 **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.**

- Our declaration of the Gospel doesn't merely make salvation possible it powerfully effects salvation in the lives of those who believe.

When we proclaim the Gospel, we are calling people to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. We call this the EXTERNAL CALL of the Gospel.

- We are making a statement concerning the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to those within the hearing of our voice.
- And because the Gospel is the Power of God unto salvation, the Triune God works through our External Call to bring about His Internal or Effective call.

This effective call is the act of God the Father, whereby He uses the means of human proclamation to summon people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith. Jesus said:

John 6: 44 **No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.**

- Take note in this verse Jesus connected the call of God, the drawing of the Father to its ultimate end which IS, the resurrection on the last day.
- We will see this same connection made clear later on in this book of Romans;

Romans 8:29 **For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.**

30 **And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.**

- Those God foreknew, those he loved and chose before the foundation of the world to be adopted into his family he graciously and effectively called to himself through the Gospel.
- Those he called he also Justified (removed their guilt and placed them in a right relationship) and those he justified he also glorified. (gave them a new body and eternal life in his glorious presence.)

When God calls people in this powerful way, he calls them:

- **Out of darkness into his marvelous light**, 1 Peter 2:9
- He calls them **Into the fellowship of His Son** 1 Corinthians 1:9, Acts 2:39
- He calls them into his own kingdom and glory. 1 Thess. 2:12, 1 Peter 5:10

- Those who have been effectively called by God, “Belong to Jesus Christ.” Romans 1:6
- They are called to “be saints” Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:2

SO Paul can say with absolute certainty that the Gospel call IS sufficiently powerful to effect Eternal Salvation in the lives of those who believe.

- This great salvation that God has secured for us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is something that has already been accomplished, and yet the fullness of that salvation awaits a future day.
- Because we have been justified by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ we can say that we have already have been saved,

Ephesians 2: 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved

- However, there are places in the Scripture that speak of our salvation as an ongoing process that will continue to take place for the rest of our lives.

1Co 1:18 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.

- SO we are saved and yet throughout our lives we are continually being saved, But wait there’s more. There is also a future aspect to our salvation

Hebrews 9: 28 Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

- All those who believe, those who are the called of God will escape the final judgment of God and His impending wrath that awaits the final day.
- SO we can say that we are saved, we are being saved and we will ultimately be saved on that final day.

Finally, The sovereign power of God working through the gospel brings salvation to everyone who believes.

- And so the final word that we’re going to study this morning is “Faith” or “Belief.”

The original word (Believe – PISTEUO) which means to place confidence in to trust in or rely on someone or something.

- The word represents much more than mere mental acceptance of certain facts, it involves resting in and acting upon the revelation of God in His Word.

Multiple times throughout any given day we trust in and act on words that are spoken by people that we don’t even know, in some cases even imaginary people.

- We ask Siri or Alexa questions and we believe that she’s telling us the truth.

- We trust the automated voice that comes through our GPS to get us to our dinner reservation on time even though she has us driving in circles through center city Philadelphia.
- We trust the words of the Weathermen on the morning news to tell us how we should dress for the day.
- We believe the words of a doctor when they tell us what's going on inside of our body.
- Now, rejecting the words of your doctor may result in sickness and infirmity, Rejecting the Word of God will lead to death and eternal damnation because the Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

The reformers recognized that there are three essential components of saving faith, they are:

- Notitia, - Understanding the content of the Gospel
- Assensus – Giving assent to, agreeing with God's revealed Word
- Fiducia – Trusting in, relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior.

To believe in Jesus we must first know something about him, and this knowledge is what the Reformers called "Notitia." We come to understand our sinful condition and the saving work of Christ on the cross as we hear the Gospel.

But, knowing the facts about Jesus Christ is not enough for saving faith. We must affirm that the facts we've heard are TRUE. Millions of people have some form of knowledge about Jesus Christ but they're not saved.

- Assensus is a heartfelt affirmation of the truth of the Gospel. We must agree with, assent to the Biblical revelation of Christ.

Finally, knowing the facts and believing them to be true is still insufficient for salvation. James 2:19 **You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe — and shudder!**

- Fiducia is the act of entrusting our lives into the hands of Christ; resting our past, our present and our ultimate future in the unfailing hands of Almighty God.

Romans 1: 16 **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.**

Observing the trajectory of society over the past 25 years I feel it necessary to warn you that the growing intolerance of Biblical Christianity will most likely result in more frequent and more intense public shaming for those who believe.

How can we stay strong? How can we resist the shame that the world will seek to pile on us? We must follow the Example of the Master.

- We must daily, continually, repeatedly look to Jesus

Hebrews 12:2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

- I don't pretend to know the essence or the depth of the divine joy that sustained Our Lord as he hung on the cross.
- I can only surmise that his greatest joy in death would have been the same joy that sustained him throughout his life and that is: Love for and Obedience to the Father

John 15: 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

- Christ's JOY, the joy of abiding in the Father's love, the joy of obedience to the Father's will is the joy that He holds out to us.
- The Joy of anticipated reunion with the Father, the joy of unbroken fellowship with God in glory, the joy of hearing those wonderful words, Well Done!

Mt 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

- The promise of an eternal reward must sustain us through seasons of trial and increasing persecution.

Luke 6: 22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.