

- I) V16-17 INTRO: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power
Paul just wrote that he is ready to preach the gospel to the citizens of Rome
This is because he desired people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus
- II) In V9 he spoke of how he served God with his spirit **in the gospel** of His Son
As a missionary, Paul took the message and preached it everywhere
This is because he was **called** and **separated** to the gospel of God
- III) He was aware of his calling, and was obedient to what Jesus had said
Mk 16:15 He said to them, Go **into all the world** and preach the gospel to **every creature**.
- IV) Being called and separated to the gospel inspired and fueled him to preach
It was like a fire that burned within his soul
1 Co. 9:16 Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. **Woe to me** if I do not preach the gospel!
- V) People were lost, and people needed God's salvation
This salvation comes by receiving the **message of salvation**, by faith
The message of salvation is found in the gospel
1 Pe 1:23 Being **born again**, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, **through the word of God** which lives and abides forever
- VI) Because it is the message of salvation Paul was **not ashamed** of the gospel
Ashamed: To shrink back; to be confounded
- VII) Paul knew that the gospel revealed God to man **but was seen as foolish**
1 Co 1:17-18 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
- VIII) Though knowing how it was viewed **he did not shrink back** from proclaiming it
It was his burden and desire to share it with all that he could
Ps 119:46 I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed
- I) Paul was willing to pay the price to deliver this message, even if harmed

He knew this to be part of his calling

Ac 9:15-16 Go your way: for he (Paul) is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things **he must suffer** for My name's sake.

- II) Today we can become ashamed because it seems that the world is winning
We can be intimidated or embarrassed to be associated with Christianity
- III) Much is done in the name of Jesus that causes us to be slow to speak
Screaming TV preachers and odd theatrics cause embarrassment
Movies can portray believers as ignorant backwoods bumpkins
- IV) These kinds of things can cause you to remain silent about your faith
Because of this some pastors have watered down the gospel
They are afraid of offending sensitive hearers, even in their own churches
- V) A call for **repentance**, **conversion** and a warning of **final judgment** is muted
God's holiness and man's sinfulness is not clearly proclaimed
- VI) The desire for a large church can tempt the pastor to water down the word
Instead of teaching the full counsel of God, the church becomes a theater
Quote by Spurgeon (1834-1892) The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them... The time will come when instead of shepherds feeding sheep, they will have clowns **entertaining the goats**... Jesus pitied sinners, sighed, and wept over them, but **never sought to amuse them**.
- VII) Teaching and encouraging believers the word of God equips them
If we reject doing so, we will end up with a crowd, but not a church
- VIII) Paul was not ashamed because it is the power of God that results in salvation
It is God revealing how He saves men and gives them eternal life
- IX) It is not within **our own power** to **change our own nature**
Good works **alone** is simply dressing up a **spiritually dead corpse**
- I) We can't change our own nature by good works, rituals, or any human means
Change comes through receiving the gospel and being born again

- II) V16 The gospel is the **power of God** to salvation for everyone who believes
Changed lives are what truly reveals the power of God: **transformation**

- III) This is why we remain teaching the scripture
1 Co 1:16-17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved **it is the power of God**

- IV) V16 To the Jew **first** and **also** to the Greek
Before the gospel went to the whole world, it was first taken to the Jews

- V) In obedience to this command, the apostles first went to Jews (Ac 1:8)
This was because the Jews had a special position, having a hope of Messiah

- VI) From the **beginning**, when Paul entered a city, he **first went to the synagogue**
Ac 9:20 Paul promptly began to proclaim Jesus **in the synagogues**, declaring He is the Son of God (Ac 13:14)
Ac 17:1-2 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As was **his custom**, Paul went **into the synagogue**, and on three Sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures

- VII) From there, the gospel was taken out to the whole world

- VIII) V17 For **in it** the righteousness of God **is revealed** from faith to faith as it is God's plan to make us righteous is revealed in Jesus and His work
2 Co 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- IX) V17 The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith
It is **by** faith that we receive the gospel, and **from** faith that **we grow** in faith
As it is written The just shall **live** by faith (Habakkuk 2:4)

- I) Faith in the Old Covenant led to faith in what was revealed in the New: Jesus
With this in mind, the gospel is the message that results in salvation

- II) It is the power of God **to salvation** to everyone **who believes**
This is what Martin Luther discovered as he studied Romans
- III) Barend Klaas Kuiper, Martin Luther: The Formative Years:
Luther: I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "the righteousness of God," because I took it to mean **that righteousness** whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous...Night and day I pondered until...I grasped the truth that **the righteousness of God** is **that** righteousness whereby, **through grace** and **sheer mercy**, He justifies us **by faith**. Thereupon I felt myself to be **reborn** and to have gone through open doors **into paradise**. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before "the righteousness of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet **in greater love**. This passage of Paul became to me **a gateway to heaven**.
- IV) V18 For **the wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and
In Rome the average person considered the gospel to be irrelevant
With this in mind, Paul begins to unfold the Gospel of God
- V) He begins first by speaking of God's **wrath**
The thought of an angry God for many is unacceptable
They say: If there **is** a God, He is loving and **not judgmental**
- VI) V18 For the **wrath of God** is revealed **from heaven** against all ungodliness
Wrath: Indignation; anger revealed in punishment; settled displeasure
God's wrath **is revealed** as being against **ungodliness** and **unrighteousness**
- VII) It is revealed (made known, visible) against **ungodliness** and **unrighteousness**
Ungodliness is a lack of reverence for God, **unrighteousness** is its result
- VIII) Scripture reveals that God will severely punish all sin
In the OT, God revealed His wrath on several occasions
- I) Gen 3 It is revealed it in the Garden when He evicted Adam and Eve
Gen 6-7 It is revealed when He destroyed the world through a flood
Gen 11:1-9 He scattered people and confounded languages
Gen 18-19 He destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Bela and Zeboiim

Ex 14 It was revealed when He destroyed Pharaoh's armies in the Red Sea

II) The NT also refers to and reveals the wrath of God

Jn 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for **God's wrath remains on him.**

Col 3:5-6 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, **the wrath of God is coming.**

III) The seven-year tribulation is a time when God's wrath is poured out

Rev 6:16-17 (they) said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from **the wrath of the Lamb! For the **great day of His wrath** has come, and who is able to stand?"**

IV) **God's wrath has divine origin, and is poured out on those **who deserve it**
What are they doing that makes them deserve His wrath?**

V) V18 They are **suppressing (holding back, restraining) **the truth****

They hold back the truth through their wicked efforts and rejection of it

Jn 3:19-20 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but **men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and **will not come** into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.**

VI) This remains true to this day

There are those who have wealth and influence, and try to stifle truth

There are also those who resist scripture and refuse to see value in them

VII) Just last weekend an ad was aired encouraging people to investigate Jesus

So much controversy arose over it: it cost around \$20 million to air

I didn't hear any uproar over Jeff Bezos's \$500 million superyacht

Paul says that they make every effort to restrain the truth from being heard

I) In these verses, Paul makes it clear **that all people deserve to be judged**

He begins by making a case against Gentiles, who are separated from God

This is something that Paul wrote of in Ephesians

Eph 2:12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

- II) From Ch 2 to Ch. 3:8 he reveals the **Jewish nation** to also be under sin
Then from Ch 3:9-20 he states that both Jew and Gentile deserve judgment
- III) V19 Because that may be **known of God is manifest in them** for God has
Paul made it clear that God has revealed Himself in the gospel
- IV) The **gospel** communicates clearly what God intends us to know
This is what is called **special revelation**
The fact is: some have not heard the complete revelation of God
- V) Even if they have not heard, they have an **innate knowledge** of His existence
They have **reason**, **moral law** and **conscience** that awakens them
- VI) We are created with an innate knowledge that there is something greater: God
This awareness has been given to us by God and doesn't originate within us
He gives us what is called **general revelation**
- V) V19 He has given us a **moral compass** called a **conscience**
He says what may be known of God **is manifest in them**
This has been called natural religion
- VII) Eccl 3:11 He has also **set eternity** in the hearts of men
This is an awareness of the infinite, and what fuels our lives to seek purpose
This awareness is what fuels social rules and morals and is our conscience
- VIII) A conscience alone cannot save you
It is formed over a lifetime and reflects the values taught and caught
When you violate your conscience, you can feel guilty but not convicted
It can accuse you, and it can even **excuse** you
- I) Some people have **blunted** their conscience and cease feeling any guilt
1 Ti 4:2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with
a hot iron

- II) You can do something that doesn't violate your conscience **but is wrong**
Your conscience isn't the Spirit and you may still do wrong without guilt
Pr 6:30 People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving
1 Co 4:4 I know nothing **against myself**, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.
- III) V20 For since **the creation** of the world His **invisible attributes** are clearly seen
Second: He has also revealed His **divine nature** through creation
Creation reveals the invisible attributes of His eternal power and Godhead
- IV) **Nature** reveals God's incredible power and faithfulness
Ps 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork.
Ps 104:19 He made the moon to mark the months, and the sun sets according to a regular schedule
Heb 3:4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.
- V) V21 Because although they **knew God**, they did not glorify Him as God
They had a **natural awareness** of that which is greater: God
They have conscience (internal) and nature (external), yet they reject God
- VI) Man demonstrates rejection by doing four things
First: By dishonoring Him and **proudly rejecting** Him
Mal 1:6 A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence?
- VII) Second: By being thankless, that reject Him and do not give Him thanks
Job 21:15 Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him, and what would we gain if we entreat (pray to) Him?
- I) Third: Futile in their thoughts concerning Him
This is Paul's explanation concerning the creation of other religions
Man's search for meaning outside of God results in confusion and vanity
Eph 4:17-19 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in

their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

- II) Fourth: Their foolish hearts **were darkened**
They refuse His Light (spiritual illumination) and now live in moral darkness
The heart is the core of our being, producing thoughts words and actions
Darkened means we do whatever we feel like doing, regardless
- III) V22-23 Professing to be wise they became fools and changed the glory of the
When man rejected God's revelation, they became foolish idol worshipers
- IV) Instead of giving God the glory due His name, they gave honor to His creation
Jer 2:11-13 Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; Be very desolate," says the LORD. For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water.
- V) In spite of this God revealed Himself to us in mercy through His Son Jesus
Though many of us at one time did not honor Him, we do now!