

4/18/10

Nothing But The Pure Gospel
Rom. 1:16-17

Augustine of Hippo was a brilliant man. a professor and profound philosopher, but was living an immoral life. He sat in a garden one afternoon when he heard the voice off a child saying, “‘Tolle, lege.’ ‘Take up and read, take up and read.’ So he got up, went into his lodging and opened the book, and this is what he read in the 13th chapter of Romans: ‘Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provisions for the flesh’. And there the truth convicted him and he was converted and saved, becoming a great influence to the Reformers.

On November 1515 Martin Luther, Augustine monk and professor of Sacred theology in the University of Wittenburg expounded the book of Romans till next September. As he read the expression "the righteousness of God" it baffled him, till one day he realized after meditating and pondering, that the truth, the righteousness is that of God through grace and mercy, justifying us by faith.

* Luther called the book of Romans the “Purest Gospel”, and the Puritan Thomas Draxe, called

Romans, “The quintessence and perfection of saving doctrine”.

This was the exact sentiment of the apostle Paul, as he declared that he was a debtor both to the Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise, therefore he was ready to preach the gospel to them at Rome also. Rom. 1:14-15

Having stated this to the Romans, Paul declared his full confidence and dependency on the gospel alone for the salvation of sinful man. Rom. 1:16-17
* These are the key verses to Romans, the heart and theme of justification, the Gospel in a nut shell!

Paul’s declaration about the gospel of Christ is characterized by three things: Rom. 1:16-17

- I. The proclamation about the gospel. vs. 16a
 - II. The definition of the gospel. vs. 16b-c
 - III. The explanation of the gospel. vs. 17
- I. The proclamation about the Gospel. vs. 16a**
* “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”

- A. The apostle Paul declared his personal commitment to the gospel.
 - 1. Paul told the Romans he was not ashamed of the gospel.

- a. The word ashamed “epaischunomai” basically means having feelings of fear or embarrassment for what one has done, said, who you are or what a person is affiliated with, hindering them from doing or being what they would be with a clear conscience.
 - 1) The tense is the indicative present.
 - 2) Some see what is called a litotes, an word implying the opposite, that Paul was saying he was proud of the gospel.
 - 3) Though I think, Paul was, I think he is just saying plainly saying He was not ashamed of the gospel.
- b. The word appears 11 times in the New Testament, 2 times to Timothy.
 - 1) Paul told Timothy, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.” 2Tim. 1:8
 - 2) Paul again stated, “The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me.” 2Tim. 1:16-17

- 2. Paul was not embarrassed or felt any shame identifying himself with the gospel or proclaiming, knowing what it was and what it power to save lost man.
 - a. He did not think the gospel was inferior to the knowledge of the day.
 - b. Pagans called the Christians atheist.
 - c. The Philosophers at Athens mocked the resurrection. Acts 17
 - d. The Jews thought Christianity subverted the law and encouraged licentiousness being a stumbling block. 1Cor.1:23
 - e. The Greeks prided themselves in their human intellect and considered the gospel foolishness. 1Cor. 1:23
 - f. Roman became hostile and persecuted them to death, especially Nero.
 - g. Paul was very aware that the name “Christians” was given to the believers in mockery and ridicule, not honor, yet the Christians embraced it in honor of their Lord for the first time at Antioch. Acts 11:26
 - * The name Christian means “like Christ”.
- B. The apostle Paul declared the gospel not religion.
 - 1. Paul understood that religion is mans attempt to reach God.

- a. Through rules that are set out by men to bring about behavioral changes.
 - 1) Often in addition to the gospel.
 - 2) Always exalting them above the gospel.
 - b. Through regulations to conform to a standard.
 - 1) Often contradicting the gospel.
 - 2) Usually abasing some men and exalting others.
 - c. Through ceremony and rituals to give an appearance of spiritual godliness.
 - 1) To be seen of men.
 - 2) To afflict their bodies with pain and suffering.
 - 3) To attempt to merit a relationship with God.
2. The Gospel was and is the revelation of God about Himself to lost man, about his perilous condition and the remedy to reconcile him to God.
- a. The word Gospel “uangelion” means good news or glad tidings of salvation.
 - b. The word appears 77 times in the New Testament in its noun form and 55 times in the verb, 14 in Romans.
 - c. The message from heaven is the only good news that man has received, everything else related to God that is humanly based is deception and error.

- d. This good news and glad tidings was what the angels proclaimed to the shepherds at the birth of the birth of the Messiah, bringing peace on earth and good will to men. Lk. 2:10-14
- C. The apostle Paul declared the person of Christ.
- 1. Some manuscripts omit the title “Christ”, but it is throughout the epistle.
 - a. The title Christ is the word for Messiah, the anointed of God.
 - b. Jesus declared that He was the Messiah of God. Is. 61:1, Lk. 4:16-19
 - 1) Jesus is the author of the Gospel.
 - 2) Jesus is the subject of the Gospel.
 - 2. Paul identified the gospel in his opening salutation.
 - a. He called the “gospel of God the Father”. Rom. 1:1d
 - b. Paul said it was promised by the prophets in the Old Testament Scriptures. Rom. 1:2
 - c. He said it concern God’s Son Jesus Christ our Lord, the God-Man, who rose from the dead. Rom. 1:3-4
 - d. He said it is through Christ that grace is received to be saved, this includes all nations. Rom. 1:5

Illustration

Pig and chicken had a conversation about commitment to help out the farmer for breakfast. The chicken said I'll provide the eggs and you can provide the bacon. The pig hesitated, you see the chicken would be involved but the pig would be committed.

Application

1. Do you and other people know you are committed to the gospel?
 - a. When your neighbors ask you why you go to church so much, do you get embarrassed?
 - b. Do you feel inferior before those who believe in "evolution" because you believe the Creation record in the Bible?
 - c. How do you respond to ridicule and mockery?
 - * Jesus said, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." Matt. 10:32-33
2. Are you committed to giving out the gospel, rather than allowing people to remain in their ignorant and lost condition?
 - a. Seeing them as lost and under God's wrath.
 - b. Seeing them as able to be saved, regardless of their condition or situation.
 - * "Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called

Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:11-13

3. How committed are you to the fact that Christ is the only way to God.
 - a. Are you tolerant and open minded to included other ways and names that people declare can get them to heaven?
 - b. Do you believe that Mary, Buddha, Krishna and others can save and give access to God?
 - c. Do you believe in the goodness of man and that all of us will be in heaven?
 - * The Scriptures are clear that there is but one way, one name and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Jn. 14:6, Acts 4:12, 2Tim. 2:5

The proclamation about the Gospel is, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ"!

II. The definition of the gospel. vs. 16b-c

- A. The apostle Paul confidently declared the Gospel is the power of God for salvation. vs. 16b

* “for it is the power of God to salvation.”

1. The word power “dynamis”, means dynamic with the idea of inherent power residing by virtue of one's nature.
 - a. The word appears 120 times in the New Testament, eight times in Romans. Rom. 1:4, 16, 20, 8:38, 9:17, 15:13, 19(2x's)
 - 1) The word is used for the mighty works of Jesus and Second Coming. Math. 11:23, 24:30
 - 2) The word is used for Jesus as He returned in the power of the Holy Spirit from the wilderness, after the temptation. Lk. 4:14
 - 3) The word is used for the miracles in Acts. Acts 2:22, 3:12
 - b. The word is identified as divine power, God's, which is unlimited in contrast to limited human power.
 - 1) The power of the gospel was in direct contrast to the awesome power of Rome.
 - 2) The power of the gospel was superior to the power of Rome.
 - 3) The power of Rome was feared and the city of Rome was the imperial city, which all desired to make at least on trip to before their death.

2. The word salvation “soteria”, means to rescue or deliver, describing the efficiency of God through the Gospel.
 - a. The English word “salvation”, comes from the Latin word for health.
 - 1) At first, it described the health of the body, but later it came to be applied to the health of the soul and the spirit.
 - 2) The word used spiritually, conveys everything that brings about safety, health and true fulfillment of the soul and spirit.
 - 3) The word salvation “steria” is translated “deliver” and “health”, in the KJV. Acts 7:25, 27:34
 - b. The word salvation is used, due to the fallen condition of man.
 - 1) Man is separated from God, due to sin, but can be reconcile to God, through the gospel.
 - 2) Man can not hide his sins, but God can forgive sin, through the gospel.
 - 3) Man can not be free from his sin nature, but God can give him a divine nature, through the gospel.
 - 4) Man is a child of the devil, but God can make him a child of God, through the gospel.
 - 5) Man is under the wrath of God and condemned to eternal punishment,

but God can pardon him through grace and impart to him eternal life, through the gospel.

- 6) Man is self-centered, but God can make him God-centered, through the gospel.

B. The apostle Paul confidently declared the Gospel is for everyone who believes. vs. 16b
* “for everyone who believes.”

1. The need is for every person.
 - a. “for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Rom. 3:23
 - b. Paul also says, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Rom. 5:12
 - c. Paul again says, “And the gift *is* not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.” Rom. 5:16
2. The invitation is all inclusive, universal, whosoever will.
 - a. All who believer appears three times in Romans.
 - 1) “even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, **to all**

and on all who believe. For there is no difference.” Rom. 3:22

- 2) “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of **all those who believe**, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also.” Rom. 4:11
- 3) “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to **everyone who believes.**” Rom. 10:4
- b. The word “pas” appears 67 times in Romans, translated.
 - 1) “all”.
 - 2) “every”.
 - 3) “whosoever”.
 - 4) “every one”.
 - 5) “whatsoever”.
3. The condition is a personal belief, in the Gospel message, that God is able to save man through repentance.
 - a. The word believes “pisteuo”, means to think to be true, to be persuaded and have confidence in.
 - 1) In Romans it appears 22 times.
 - 2) It is a key word to the letter.

- b.** Believing is an action word, a verb and means I do certain things, in view of the Gospel.
- 1) An acknowledgment of my sin.
 - 2) A confession of my sin.
 - 3) An abandonment of my sin.
 - 4) An attempt to make restitution if possible.
 - * “And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” Rev. 22:17

- C.** The apostle Paul confidently declared the Gospel is for the Jew first and for the Greek second. vs. 16c
- * “for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
1. The priority of the Jew is in view of time not importance.
 - a.** The Jews were the people of God, chosen sovereignly. Deut. 7:7-8
 - * “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD

- has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”
- b.** Jesus preached first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and also sent His disciples to them.
 - 1) “These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matt. 10:5-6
 - 2) “Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.” Rom. 15:8-9
 - c.** Peter on the day of Pentecost preached to the Jew and proselytes. Acts 3:26
 - * “To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

- d. Paul always went first to the Jews in the synagogue.
- 1) “But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.” Acts 13:14
 - 2) “Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.” Acts 17:2-3
2. The proclamation to the Gentiles was in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham.
- a. God told Abraham that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Gen. 12:3c
 - b. God foresaw the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and embrace the Gentiles as the wild olive branch.
 - * “I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles,

how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.” Rom. 11:11-14

Illustration

Luther called John 3:16 “The heart of the Bible-the Gospel in miniature. It’s so simple a child can understand it; yet it condenses the deep and marvelous truths of redemption into these few pungent words:”

“God.”The greatest Lover.
 “So loved”The greatest degree.
 “The world”The greatest number.
 “That He gave” The greatest act.
 “His only begotten Son”.. The greatest gift.
 “That whosoever” The greatest invitation.
 “Believeth” The greatest simplicity.
 “In Him” The greatest person.
 “Should not perish” The greatest deliverance.
 “But” The greatest difference.
 “Have” The greatest certainty.
 “Everlasting life” The greatest possession.

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Application

1. Do you agree with Paul’s definition of the gospel and have confidence that the gospel is the

power of God for salvation, alone, or do you mix in humanistic disciplines and beliefs?

- a. Such as psychology, sociology or anthropology?
 - 1) All these disciplines make good observations at time, but their conclusions are wrong because their view of man is that he is good, not depraved.
 - 2) Behavioral modification is quite inferior to biblical transformation!
 - 3) You can not add anything to the gospel or integrate it with anything else, you will diluting the gospel.

- b. If you are a Christian, do you say, “I am a recovering alcoholic” or do you say, “I use to be an alcoholic, but Jesus set me free!”
 - 1) Have you ever heard someone say I am a recovering adulterer, fornicator or liar?
 - 2) I am not denying medical attention, if in fact you have a verified chemical imbalance, stay on your medication, but feed off the word of God not psychology!
 - * You need to believe God’s word, filled with His Spirit reckoning the old man dead? Rom. 6:6, 11, Eph. 5:18

2. Are you confident that the gospel is the power of God for salvation or do you allow it to be watered-down?

- a. There are so many running after the gospel of health and wealth, “seed faith”.

- b. There are others into the gospel of professional “Christian Councilors”.
- c. Then there are the “Seeker Friendly church” that often don’t talk about sin, repentance, as the heart of the gospel, but rather on doing good works and being positive.
- d. Then you have the EMC, that professes to be leading a “New Reformation”, while not believing that you can understand, or learn anything in the Bible.
 - 1) They profess anyone and everyone can have a encounter with God, apart from Jesus Christ, through “contemplative prayer”, a practice of yoga and New Age.
 - 2) Donald Grey Barnhouse in his commentary on Romans in 1959 said, “I feel more strongly than I can say that it is my duty to stand and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to warn people that much which is being preached from the pulpits is not the gospel. the whole of the effort is seeking to move the church leftward toward socialism is a Satanic counterfeit”. (Rom. Vol. I:161)
 - * “For **whoever** calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” Rom. 10:13

The definition of the gospel is, “for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek”!

III. The explanation of the gospel. vs. 17

A. The apostle Paul declared the Gospel reveals the righteousness of God. vs. 17a

* “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed.”

1. The word righteousness is an important word in the New Testament.
 - a. The word appearing 92 times in the New Testament.
 - b. The word appears 36 times in the letter to the Romans.
 - c. The phrase “righteousness of God” appears 8 times in Romans. Rom. 1:17, 3:5, 21, 22, 25, 26, 10:3 (2x’s)
2. The word righteousness “dikaiosune”, means to be in a right standing with God.
 - a. The concept of righteousness deals with the holy perfection of God’s character, He alone is righteous.
 - 1) Certainly righteousness is one of His attributes.
 - 2) Righteousness dictates His justice.
 - b. The context in Romans for the most part deals with the righteousness that God has provided for sinful man to be in a right standing before Him.
 - 1) Paul will speak of imputed righteousness for justification before God. Rom. 4

2) Paul will speak of imparted righteousness for sanctification before God. Rom. 6

3. The righteousness that God has provided is efficacious and He will honor for it is revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

a. The word reveal “apokalupto”, means to unveil or uncover.

1) It is the same root word but a different form of the unveiling of Christ in Revelation. Rev. 1:1

2) The tense is the indicative present passive, literally, being revealed, on ongoing process to the world, as the gospel is proclaimed.

b. The righteousness of God was the plan of God before the foundation of the world.

1) Prepared it from eternity. Eph. 1:4, 2Tim. 1:9

2) Promised it after the fall. Gen. 3:15

3) Prophesied it through the prophets. Is. , Jer. etc.

4) Proclaimed it through John the Baptist. Jn. 1:29

5) Personalized it in Jesus Christ. Jn. 1:1, 14

6) Proliferated it through the New Testament saints. Acts

- B.** The apostle Paul declared the Gospel is received by faith. vs. 17a
 * “from faith to faith.”
1. The phrase “from faith to faith”, has been interpreted in different ways.
 - a. Faith that began in the Old Testament and moved on to the New Testament.
 - b. Faith in degrees of measure.
 - c. Faith of Jews to the Gentiles.
 - d. Faith of preacher to hearer.
 - e. Faith that responds to God’s initiation and trust the revelation of the Gospel for salvation, as well as faith to continue in salvation.
 * I believe this is the correct one, divine initiation and human response, a mysterious blend and seeming contradiction!
 2. Faith is the means by which a person receives the righteousness of God at the hearing of the Gospel. Rom. 10:17
 - a. The word from “ek”, means out of .
 - b. The righteousness of God is unveiled out of faith, appropriated by faith that God has provided to be justified before Him by the Gospel message.
 * *God reveals the righteousness by His grace then awakens and produces faith!*
 - c. Faith simply believes and receives what God has done for him, knowing

- that he could not do it for himself, but God **does not force him to believe.**
- d. Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen...But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Heb. 11:1, 6
 - 1) Abraham is Paul's key witness to the faith principle! Rom. 4:3
 - 2) For faith to be Biblical, it must point me to the revelation of God, the Gospel!
- C.** The apostle Paul declared the Gospel of faith is nothing new. vs. 17b-c
 * “as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”
1. The phrase, “as it is written, the just shall live by faith” was a past historical reality.
 - a. The prophet Habakkuk was overwhelmed over the coming devastation of the nation of Israel by Babylon, so he sat in his tower to hear from God.
 - b. The Lord told him that “the just shall live by faith”, and promised a restoration in the future even though he wouldn’t see, yet he believed God. Hab. 2:4, 3:17-19

2. The phrase also points to a future prophetic fulfillment.
 - a. The apostle Paul applies the prophecy regarding faith in the righteousness of God through the provisions of Jesus Christ by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for salvation. Rom. 3:21-24
* “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”
 - b. The apostle Paul applies it to the life of the justified person who has believed the Gospel by faith and must continue to live in the sphere of faith not sight, emotions or feelings.

Illustration

410 From Her Fingertips to Lips

In France, there once lived a poor blind girl who obtained the Gospel of Mark in raised letters and learned to read it by the tips of her fingers. By constant reading, these became callous, and her

sense of touch diminished until she could not distinguish the characters. One day, she cut the skin from the ends of her fingers to increase their sensibility, only to destroy it. She felt that she must now give up her beloved Book, and weeping, pressed it to her lips, saying “Farewell, farewell sweet word of my Heavenly Father!” To her surprise her lips, more delicate than her fingers, discerned the form of the letters. all night she perused with her lips the Word of God and overflowed with joy at this new acquisition.

Application

1. b. Do you believe the commentary, that the only righteousness that God will accept, is that which He provided in the gospel and that your righteousness is insufficient?
 - a. Job declared, “How much less man, who is abominable and filthy, Who **drinks** iniquity like water!” Job 15:16
 - b. Isaiah says, “But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy **rags**; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.” Is. 64:6
 - c. Paul says, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2Cor. 5:21

2. Do you believe that faith is the only thing that can appropriate the power of the gospel to your life?
- a. We are save by grace through faith and that not of ourselves. Eph. 2:8-9
 - b. We grow in our faith by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17
3. Do you believe that you must continue to live by faith not sight, emotions, feelings, situations, circumstances or experiences, abiding in Christ?
- a. We have been saved. Eph. 2:8, 1Cor. 15:2
 - b. We are being saved. 1Cor. 1:18, 2Cor. 2:15
 - c. We shall be saved. Rom. 5:9, Heb. 9:28

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

Conclusion

On May 24, 1778 John Wesley heard Luther’s Preface to the Romans and he said, “while he was describing the changes which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken my sins away, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

Paul’s declaration about the gospel of Christ

- I. The proclamation about the gospel, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”
- II. The definition of the gospel, “for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
- III. The explanation of the gospel, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”!