

I'm Not Ashamed

Pastor James Richards

04 August 2024

Romans, chapter one. A little break from one. Thessalonians. Romans, chapter one. And I'm going to start with verse 15 and read a few verses.

I'll be reading out of the English Standard Version. And Paul says so I'm eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. 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. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

As it is written, the righteous will live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. We'll stop there. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for the gospel, for the good news that Jesus Christ saves through his sacrifice on the cross, through his resurrection, through his coming into the lives of those who put their faith in him. And just pray, as we look at this gospel, God, that you would open our eyes, our ears, our heart to receive it fully, to understand what a great salvation we have, Lord, to be able to share that with other people, just as Paul shared it with the Romans and with us. And so we're thankful. We pray you'd open our hearts to receive it. We thank you for the prayer answered prayer.

Lift up Kayla as she's finishing up her program. And I just pray that not only would she stay clean, but I pray that she would come to Christ, that you would reveal yourself to her and that she would open her heart to receive him and then live for him. Thank you

ShepherdsStream.com

for good news from Cheryl, and thank you for continued health. And we pray that you would continue to bring healing in her life. We pray for her daughter as she's struggling and just help her to see that Christ is the answer, that he alone can bring her peace in her heart.

And we lift up Obi as he's down in Honduras today. And God, just be with him, be working in his life, call him to a deeper relationship, prepare him for serving you in some way. Thank you, Lord, that had this desire to go and to serve. And so, Lord, we pray as our Lord and savior Jesus taught us to pray. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. You may be seated.

Six years ago, I rode my motorcycle to eastern Montana to visit a friend. Great trip. There weren't too many bugs getting in my teeth as I rode on the freeway east. On the way home, I stopped to visit a friend from high school named Mike. Got a beautiful log lodge on the continental divide near Butte, Montana, and I pulled into the driveway.

He met me there, and after exchanging greetings, I said, if we get an opportunity later, I would like to share the gospel with you. Mike was not a believer, and he said, okay. So we visited. We had dinner together. His wife was gone.

He had to record a tv program for her. So we watched that, and it finished. And he turned to me and said, you said you were going to share the gospel with me. Oh, I forgot. And so I did the best I could, spontaneously sharing the gospel with my friend Mike.

He was polite. He asked a couple questions, but got done, and that was it. I thought, well, that didn't work. Got on my motorcycle the next day, July 5, in Montana. It was 36 degrees.

As I continued my trip back home later, Christmas over Christmas holidays, I got a call from Mike, and he says, you know, I want you to know I'm a believer, and I would like to get baptized on my birthday in Coeur d'Alene this coming August. So, five years ago, several of us, classmates, we met in Coeur d'Alene. Mike professed his faith in Jesus Christ, and we baptized him in the lake. And it was a great day. And so some of us are going to get together next week to celebrate his baptism.

About four or five classmates in Coeur d'Alene gonna do an outdoor service near the lake. And just I wanted to remind people of the gospel. Concerning the gospel, Paul told the Romans, so I'm eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. And on the surface, that seems a little surprising, because they are believers. They have heard the gospel.

They put their faith in the gospel. Why does he want to preach the gospel to them, since they already believe? Why do they need to hear it again? Well, I can think of a couple reasons. First of all, we need to be reminded of the gospel, because the gospel alone saves.

Nothing else saves other than the gospel of Jesus Christ. It saves us from the penalty of sin when we believe. It saves us from the power of sin when we follow Christ with all of our heart. And it will save us from the presence of sin. When we see Jesus, only the gospel saves in those three different tenses.

Second of all, Paul wants to encourage the Romans and you and I to understand the gospel well enough that we can share it with other people. We are called to share the good news that Jesus saves with those around us. And so he basically uses the rest of Romans, probably the deepest book that has ever been written, to explain the gospel in all of its fullness. We won't go into the whole book, but we will look at four fours that were in this passage. Four fours.

And the word for, not the number four. The word for f o r is a preposition that is used to introduce or provide more information to explain something that has just been said. Paul has said, I'm eager to preach the gospel. And the immediate question is, well,

why? And so he gives us these first fours, the first four.

He tells us why he wants to preach the gospel. He wants to preach the gospel because he is not ashamed of it. For I am not ashamed of the gospel. When he says that in English, that's called a la totus, and it means that you are expressing a positive. Bye.

Saying a negative. When I say I'm not ashamed of something, essentially, you're saying, I'm proud of it. Okay, everyone understand that essentially saying, I glory in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul needed to say this because everywhere he went, people opposed the gospel and mocked him. When he was in Athens, they called him a babbler.

Somebody just babbling words. What is he saying? What's this about a dead guy that came alive? When he was in Corinth, the gentiles called him a fool. Everywhere else he went, the Jews persecuted him because he was sharing the gospel about Jesus Christ.

Paul doesn't care what other people think about him sharing the gospel because he is proud of it, and he wants to preach it to as many people as possible. In the same way you and I, if we really understood the gospel, if we've experienced the gospel, we should glory in it. It should be our pride, not in what we've done, but what in Christ done. So that leads to the second four, he says for it, referring to the gospel. For it is the power of God for salvation, to everyone who believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Paul wants to share the gospel with everyone he can, because it is the power of God for salvation. Whether you realize it or not, there are only two powers in this life, in this world, two powers. The first power is sin. Sin is powerful. When Adam sinned.

By breaking God's law, he unleashed the power of sin on mankind. Romans 5:12 tells us, therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned the moment that every one of us was born, we were born into the realm of sin. That was our nature. We inherited that from our forefather, Adam. And Paul says, it reigns in life.

It rains in life. To everyone who's in Adam, that word rain means absolute authority and control. And I don't care who you are and how hard you try, if you are still in Adam, sin reigns in your life, and the end result of that will be death, a separation from goddess hell for all eternity. It will eventually kill you and send you to hell, and there's nothing we can do because it reigns absolutely with all power. And if you've struggled with sin, you understand how powerful it is in your life.

And so that's one power. But thank God, there's another power. That other power is the grace of God. God's grace. Going back to Romans 5:21, it says that grace also might reign, same word, reign, absolute authority and control.

Romans 5:17 tells us, for if because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one Man, much more, much more, will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ? Yes, sin is powerful, but when someone puts their faith in Jesus Christ, grace is more powerful, much more. And it overcomes the power of sin. When anyone puts their faith in Jesus Christ and is born again, grace reigns in that person's life because it's more powerful than sin. Praise God for that.

That leads to the third four, he says. Okay, if that's true, what comes out of that? He says, for in it going back to the gospel. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As is written, the righteous shall live by faith.

The word righteousness here has the same greek root as the word justification. When someone believes in the gospel, they become right with God. Before, they were separated from God because of their sin, but by faith, they become righteous. It's important to understand that that doesn't mean you are righteous. It's a declaration he declares judicially.

You are now righteous in my sight, that something happens at the moment when someone puts their faith in Jesus Christ. It's not their own righteousness. It's the righteousness of Jesus Christ, given to them as a free gift because of their faith. At that moment, God will start the work of sanctification, making you more and more

righteous in practice. And that's a long work and it's a hard work.

And sometimes we go really well and sometimes we go backwards. But because grace reigns, God will accomplish his purpose of making you righteous in your life. I don't know about you, but that is true in my life. And I look back to when I received Christ into my life almost 70 years ago. A little Bible camp outside of Shelton, Panhandle Lake, four h camp today.

And the speaker was a man named Art Beals. He later went on to start world concern and the ministry inter Christo, and he was our speaker on Wednesday night. He shared the gospel. And there was something in my heart that believed and wanted to experience that salvation. And I believe at that moment I was born again, that God was reigning my life.

There were times that I didn't do well. There were times I backslid. But I could feel, I could know that God was working in my life and bringing me to a place where I would worship and serve him. And I thank God that that man, art beals, he didn't give, give a nice little message for us, little elementary schools. He shared the gospel with us, and the Holy Spirit took that and brought me to a place of faith.

As a result, I have eternal life through Jesus Christ. A little side note to that. When I was in Bible school in 1980 in chapel, I looked up and our speaker was art beals. And that was 24 years later. And after he finished, I walked up to the front and I said, you don't know me, which he didn't.

But 24 years ago, you shared the gospel in a little Bible camp outside of Shelton. And I believed in Jesus, and he had been working in my life. And what a joy that was to be able to tell him that because of his faithfulness, I was a believer. As a result of that, I'm righteous in God's eyes, not because of anything I've done, but because of my faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is by faith alone, by the grace of God.

Thank God for that righteousness that leads to the last four in verse 18, because many would think, well, why do I need to have the righteousness of God? Why can't I just have a self righteousness? Do my best, try my hardest, be a good person? Well, he

tells us there, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. If someone has not come to faith in Jesus Christ.

They have suppressed the truth through their unrighteousness. They would rather live in their sin on their own. And hopefully things will work out. He says it will not work out. The wrath of God is revealed, and that's present tense is happening in life.

It will culminate in separation from God for all eternity when he pours out his wrath on those who have rejected his son, who have treated as an unholy thing, the blood of Jesus Christ. And so the reason that we need the gospel, if we don't accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, then we will experience the wrath of God. And he shares that as a motivation for you and I. If we love God, then we're going to love others. And the only hope they have is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And how can they believe if they don't hear? And how can they hear if someone doesn't share it? And just like my friend Mike, which I rejoice that I had the opportunity to share the gospel and that he believed it. And on the basis of that, he knows the Lord. If we reject that, it's because we would rather live in our sin instead of the righteousness that God wants to provide for each one of us.

And the point is here, Paul is explaining the gospel, because only the gospel of Jesus Christ can save. He shares what the gospel is. In one corinthians 15, Christ died on the cross for you and I, taking our sins upon himself. He was buried in the ground, in the tomb for three days. On the third day, he rose again to life.

He overcame death, showing that he had the power to save. He appeared to the disciples and then to 500 men, and then he ascended into heaven, where he's waiting to come again. He's coming again for those who have received the gospel and will be saved. And he's coming again for those who have not received the gospel, and his wrath will be poured out on them. And so, more than anything else in life, the gospel of Jesus Christ is important.

Again, the rest of the book of Romans is basically explaining that gospel, the problems that people have, the misunderstandings. He wants them to know the gospel. And so no wonder Paul wanted to preach the gospel, because only it saves. Can we do any less? Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that he alone says, God, we live in a dangerous world. We live in a world that's under the power of sin. We're seeing that manifested so much more clearly and stronger in our existence. Help us to realize our need of the gospel, not just for salvation, but for sanctification, to live in a way that honors you no matter what we face in life. Thank you for the promise of Jesus coming again, that we'll be with him and we won't have to deal with sin any longer.

It will be completely defeated. We wait for that time. We long for that time. We'll see Christ face to face. Thank you again that we have the opportunity, the freedom in our land to be able to share that gospel.

We're aware that only your spirit can make it a reality in someone's life to see their need of a savior, Jesus Christ, and to put their faith in him, believing that they have eternal life through him. We thank you for this in Christ's name, amen.