

Romans 1:16-21 – Unashamed of the Gospel

Good Afternoon, City Life Church. My name is Ivan Valdez I am City Life's Church-planting resident and today we are going to be in Romans 1:16-21.

Before we get to Romans 1:16-21 Lets look at a few verses in the beginning of the chapter. In the very first verse we get to see a glimpse of what Paul's focus will be in the book of Romans. He says, "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God concerning His Son..." So right in the beginning Paul is declaring that he has been "set apart" for one reason and one reason only...for the Gospel of God concerning Jesus Christ.

Then in verse 5 Paul says that through Jesus Christ they received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations..." So, the mission that they received from the Lord is to bring about the obedience of faith to all the nations.

In verse 8 he thanks God for them (the church in Rome) because their faith is being proclaimed in all the world which means they are active in their area engaging the culture. Then he goes on saying that he longs to see them to be encourage by their faith and for him to encourage them by his faith. He says I long to see you guys, but I've been prevented, and I am under obligation both to the Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

There is so much more in these verses, but I just wanted to show the excitement and passion that Paul has for the Gospel. He said, I've been set apart for the gospel that is my purpose in life now. He said I've been charged to fulfill a mission by our Lord, to bring about the obedience of faith among all the nations. He said I'm obligated to share the gospel with everyone, wise, foolish, barbarians, Greeks and even you who are in Rome.

But Why? Why is Paul so eager to preach the Gospel? 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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."](#)

Have you ever felt ashamed of talking about your beliefs? Have you ever been around family, co-workers, or friends where everyone is talking about their beliefs and your hoping that they don't ask you? Have you ever avoided sharing the gospel with a close friend of yours because you didn't want to mess up the relationship? If you have, then I hope you're encouraged today to not be ashamed of the gospel.

What I want to do is show 3 reasons on why we shouldn't be ashamed of the Gospel.

- 1) The Gospel is the power of God for salvation
- 2) The Gospel reveals the righteousness of God

3) The truth of God is evident to all

But before we get started let's pray.

The Gospel is the power of God for Salvation –

This is one of the reasons why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because it has the power to save. The gospel is what the Holy Spirit uses to bring dead people to life. Because he knows the power of the gospel, he's not ashamed.

Before we get into how the gospel is the power of God for salvation, I want to talk about what it means to be ashamed. So, what does it mean to be ashamed? Well, in the garden we actually get a picture of shame. When Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from God because they were ashamed of what they did. They had done something bad, so they hid in their shame. They knew they were naked, and they were ashamed of their nakedness. So, when you're ashamed of something, you don't want to bring it up, you want to avoid it, and you want to hide.

I like to watch UFC and boxing and all these fights have a pre-conference before the fight where they let the media ask questions to the fighters, and there is always one guy that talks so much mess about the guy he's fighting. Usually talking bad about the champion that he's challenging. Saying stuff like I'm going to knock this guy out. He's never fought anybody like me. You guys are going to see tomorrow night this guy is going down.

Then the fight happens, and the champion knocks him out. And with social media these days you really have to be careful with what gets out there because what they end up doing is make memes about the guy. They put him in slow motion as he is getting knocked out. Then there is a post-conference after the fight. And it's always so sad to watch but when the fighter that got knocked out gets asked what happened in the ring and why he lost, you can see that he is so ashamed of what happened to him and doesn't want to talk about it. He wants to hide; he doesn't want to be there. He wants to avoid the questions.

That's what shame does - it makes you want to hide and avoid.

But Paul says I am not ashamed – I do not want to avoid the gospel – I do not want to have to hide myself because of the gospel – I do not want to avoid questions from others regarding the gospel because it's good news! Why would he be ashamed of good news?

By the way for those who don't know, gospel means good news – so why would we be ashamed of good news? It doesn't make sense to be ashamed. But I know that we are afraid to share the gospel in our conversations and we are afraid to share the gospel when asked. Why is that? Are we ashamed or do we have disbelief that the gospel is good news that we have not experienced? Our last series pointed to the idea of overflow. Our shame goes away when we are speaking from a place of experiencing the rich and full life in the love of Christ. And I'm not

saying all of us are afraid of sharing, but if you are feeling timid in sharing the gospel maybe a good question to ask yourself is, am I experiencing the good news in my life? Is the gospel filling me with the love of Christ in my life? Because when your cup overflows with God's love it will inevitably flow to others. So, are you personally immersing yourself in the gospel?

In both scenarios I gave, one for Adam and Eve and the fighter who got knocked out, there was reason for them to be ashamed. We share because we want people to be saved. There is no reason to be ashamed of that. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. So, my goal today is to give you a few reasons on why we ought to not be ashamed of the gospel.

The first reason being because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. To everyone who believes in the good news it is the power of God for salvation. You must be able to see and understand the good news and that's when you know - when you can see and understand the good news that's how you know the Holy Spirit has opened your eyes to the truth of the gospel. You have been born again. Can you see the beauty of the good news? Do you understand the gospel? If you do, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that raised you from the dead. How can we be ashamed of that?

Here are a few questions to consider:

Are we ashamed to share the gospel out of fear of rejection? Well, we share the gospel out of LOVE for the person to whom we are sharing. We share out of relationship and care for the world who desperately needs the hope and life of the gospel.

Are we ashamed to share the gospel for how we will be thought of? We share the saving, life-giving, joy that we have experienced. We are Free and free indeed from the bondage of sin and hopelessness of the fallen world. Why would we be afraid of what they'll say?

Are we timid to share because we think it's on us for someone to be saved? The Spirit does the work! We are participating in the work of the Spirit by sharing the good news of the gospel. It's his power that saves, not our words to convince. The gospel is the power of God for salvation not our power, not our intellect, not our reasoning skills, But God's power.

The power that's needed is power that can bring dead people to life. That's what you call a miracle.

When someone asks me if I believe in miracles, I tell them of course I do. The greatest miracle that you will ever witness in our time is when someone comes to faith in Christ. That miracle is greater than the gift of prophecy, tongues, healing, teaching, etc. It's something that can only be done by the power of the Holy Spirit. Life has to be breathed in you for you to come to life. It is an act of God where God gets all the glory. You were dead but now you are alive in Christ. Am I saying you were dead dead? Like if you were laying down dead in the street unable to respond dead? Yes, that's what I'm saying. Ephesians 2:1 says ["And you were dead in the trespasses and](#)

sins in which you once walked” ... “and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.” You were spiritually dead unable to respond to God because dead people don’t respond. It will take the power that raised Jesus from the dead to raise us to life. This is the only way all glory goes to God for our salvation. Which is why he says in Ephesians 2:4, “But God,” you were dead but God “being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved.” Salvation has taken place by the mighty power of God. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. Amen and Amen.

This is why we shouldn’t be ashamed of the gospel. And it takes the pressure off of us because God’s the one that saves. We are just messengers of this good news. It’s a spiritual reality. So even if you can’t see what’s going on in the individual’s heart, when you share you can be sure that God is moving in the heart of whoever you share the gospel with. For better or for worst something is happening in the heart. And when someone believes in their heart and confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord they shall be saved. Salvation belongs to the Lord! By the power of the Holy Spirit you have been born again.

The Gospel reveals the righteousness of God –

The second reason why we shouldn’t be ashamed of the gospel is because it reveals the righteousness of God. What does that mean? When I was studying this passage, I was wrestling with it because I was trying to find out in what way is the righteousness of God revealed. In God’s righteous character? or the righteousness that we receive by faith in Christ? And after reading some commentaries and listening to a lot of solid biblical teachers I came to the conclusion that it is talking about the righteousness that we receive by faith in Christ. So, what does it mean that we receive the righteousness of Christ by faith? And how does it happen? Well let’s read it one more time.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” Rom. 1:17

This is the verse that really impacted Martin Luther. If you guys don’t know who Martin Luther is, you should get to know him. Not to be confused with Martin Luther King Jr. Martin Luther the one who God used to start the reformation. He is one of the greatest men that God used to proclaim the teaching of Justification by faith alone. And this is the verse God used to open his eyes to the truth of the gospel.

He said at first, he thought the righteousness of God meant “that righteousness whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous.” But after much grappling, “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."

He said, before the righteousness of God had filled him with hate because he thought it was talking about God dealing righteously with the unrighteous and punishing sinners. And he was a Roman Catholic when he thought that. Catholicism is a work-based religion to achieve salvation. Which means you have to continue to do good works. You have to earn your salvation. It's all on you to please this God. He was constantly trying to please this righteous God who punished those who weren't righteous. His faith was in himself. But the reason why he was filled with hate towards this righteous God is because he knew he would never measure up to God's standards. He knew he was a sinner.

So when he understood what this verse actually meant everything changed. He realized that it was a righteousness that he couldn't attain by his good works, but a righteousness that was his by faith in Christ. Justified by faith alone.

My first mentor Brother James French used to say, "Just as if I'd never sinned." When you put your faith in Christ God looks at you as if you've never sinned. It's a free gift. You don't have to earn this righteousness by doing a bunch of good works it is given to you by faith alone. It is just as if you'd never sinned. Past, Present, or Future sins gone. God is going to treat you as if you never sinned because of your faith in Christ.

But what happens to your sin? Does God just overlook it? Does God just forgive and forget? Let's just imagine that there is a criminal who murdered a group of people. Let's say that when he's in front of the judge the judge says to him "You know since I'm a loving forgiving judge I'm just going to set you free without any payment, any sentence, you are free to go." What would you say about that judge? Is that a just judge or an unjust judge? The answer should be obvious he would be considered an unjust judge. A just judge would have to serve justice on the criminal. And God is a Just God more Just than any judge on earth. He's a righteous God full of Justice. And Because He is just, He can't just overlook your sin. Your sin has to be dealt with. Someone has to take the penalty for your sin. And that someone was Christ!

The good news is that Jesus came to die for our sins. And it all started with Adam and Eve. They sinned against God and sin entered the world and spread to all. [Romans 3:10](#) says "None is righteous no not one." And to make it to heaven you have to be perfectly righteous. But Paul just said that none is righteous because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

You see the dilemma? You have to be sinless to be able to stand in the presence of God. Our problem is sin. Man's greatest problem is sin. Not inflation. Not covid. But sin. Sin separates us from God. Sin has broken the relationship that we should've had with our God. Sin steals. Sin destroys. Sin kills.

So, what is the solution to humanities greatest dilemma? The Gospel. You see when you realize that you need a savior then it all makes sense. Someone needs to save us from our sins. And

that someone has to be perfect with a perfect righteousness. Sinless in his life. So, God sends his son Jesus Christ. John 3:16 [“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”](#) Jesus lived a perfect life on earth as a man, never sinned, was betrayed by his people, crucified on the cross for our sins so our sin was nailed to the cross, and he rose again on the third day defeating death. **God knows that we are not perfect! He knew that Adam and Eve were going to sin! He knows that we have sinned, and he knows we are going to continue to sin! And Jesus still chose to die for us! Because he loves his sheep unconditionally! He loves his people and is willing to die for them.** “The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith as it is written the righteous shall live by faith.” You see when you put your faith in Christ when you admit that you need a savior, and trust that Jesus died for all of your sins, past, present, and future sins, and trust in his works not yours, then you attain his righteousness. We assume Christ’s righteousness as we are hidden in him. When the Father sees us, he sees Christ’s righteousness as we are hidden in him. The divine exchange happens. God treats Jesus like he committed all your sins and Jesus gets crucified for your sins. And God treats you as if you lived a perfect righteous life without sin. He looks at you and says you are perfect. Christ’s righteousness is now your righteousness. That’s good news! The righteousness of God is revealed. You have been justified by faith in Jesus. How can we be ashamed of that good news?

The Truth of God is evident to all -

The last reason we shouldn’t be ashamed of the gospel is because the truth of God is evident to all. So, I want to take more of a missional approach on why we shouldn’t be ashamed of proclaiming the gospel.

[“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”](#) Rom 1:18-21

The main thing I want to focus on in these verses is that Paul teaches us that everyone knows God. And he is not just talking about a god. He’s talking about the God of the bible. That’s the only way he can say that they are without excuse. He says they suppress the truth. The only way someone can suppress the truth is if they know the truth. How can they suppress something they don’t know? It makes no sense. The truth of God is evident to all. And this is another reason why we shouldn’t be ashamed of sharing the gospel. We shouldn’t be ashamed of sharing the good news of the God they know.

Here is the thing, everyone has a relationship with God. Either you have a good relationship with him or a bad one. Everyone knows God. We have a good relationship with God because we are in Christ, so we are at peace with God. Those who are not in Christ are at enmity with God. That's a bad relationship, but nevertheless they know him. They might not know him intimately as Father son relationship or Father daughter relationship, but they know him intellectually and they hate him. And since we know that they know the truth our job is to share the truth of God, the truth of the gospel, because we want them to know him intimately not just intellectually.

The analogy that I've heard the most from various teachers is the analogy of a ball trying to be suppressed under water. If you've ever tried to suppress a ball underwater in a swimming pool, there is a few things that you will notice. First you have to have a ball, it has to be in your possession. Then you have to use both your hands to suppress it. And if someone hits your arm and you let go of the ball the ball will come to the surface. So, in the same way when we share the gospel our job is to poke at the unbeliever's arms. Knowing that they know the truth of God and that they are suppressing it, in hope that they let go and the beauty of the gospel surfaces in their heart by the power of the Holy Spirit.

With the knowledge we have of the people we are sharing with we should not be ashamed of sharing the gospel with them. When they say I don't know if God exists, I don't believe in your God, we can know for certain that they do. Because either God is lying here in Romans 1 or they are lying. God says they know the truth, but they have suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. They've convinced themselves that God doesn't exist. That's called being self-deceived. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie. And they are without excuse. So who is lying here? When someone tells you I don't believe in your God, who is lying? We know it can't be God because he never lies. The truth of God is evident to all. So, when judgement day comes those who didn't come to Christ will be without excuse. Because they knew all along. I have **Three C's** for you. **Creation, Conscience, Christians**. They have Creation shouting that God exists. They have their God given Conscience telling them what's right or wrong. And they have Christians who are unashamed of the gospel proclaiming it to every creature on earth. There is no excuse.

So, in conclusion, we should not be ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation. If you want your family member to be saved, if you want your neighbor to be saved or city to be saved go share the gospel. Someone that reminds me of this is Sophia. Sophia loves to do art. And when she has her art display, she uses her art as an opportunity to share with others about God through her art. The reason Sophia does it is because she loves God and she loves those around her. You see, if you love them, you will not keep this beautiful news to yourself. So be shameless, punch shame right in the face and share the gospel. Long for them to ask you questions about your faith in Christ. And the truth is our true enemy is the Kingdom of darkness. Satan wants you to be ashamed of the gospel. He wants you to not share with your family, friends, co-workers. In 2 Cor. 4:3,4 he says, **"But if indeed our gospel is veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they would not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the**

image of God.” He is actively blinding their minds so that they won’t see the light of the gospel. But Satan doesn’t stand a chance against the power of the Holy Spirit, against the power of the gospel so go proclaim the gospel trusting that the results are up to God. We are just called to be faithful. Faithful messengers of the Lord.

Number two, we shouldn’t be ashamed of the gospel because the gospel teaches us that we have attained the righteousness of Christ. Which means God sees you perfectly righteous, without sin, Christ’s righteousness is now yours by faith. You are forever in now. Nothing can separate you from God’s love anymore not even your greatest sin because your sin has been nailed to the cross. That’s news we shouldn’t be ashamed of!

And lastly, we shouldn’t be ashamed of sharing the gospel because it’s good news and the truth of God is evident to all. It’s like we have secret knowledge of mankind. We know our greatest problem and we know the One who dealt with the greatest problem, we know the message to share, and we know that they know the truth of the Creator.

So, I hope you were encouraged by this message today and ultimately, I hope you were encouraged to not be ashamed of who you are in Christ. You are a Christian who should walk unashamed of the gospel. Let’s pray.