

## **Unashamed of the Gospel** ***Romans 1:16 - 17***

*16I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 17For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

**We hear the word "gospel" all the time. But what does it really mean? "Gospel" means "good news." What is the good news? God loves us and offers us the free gift of forgiveness, grace and salvation through the work of Jesus on the cross. It is easy to be bold and brave toward the gospel in a church on a Sunday. But often God's people are timid, even shy and retiring, toward the gospel.**

**David Jeremiah has suggested four reasons why Christians are sometimes afraid of the gospel...**

- 1. Intellectual reasons...we can often think that people will look down upon us and our beliefs if we speak about the cross and salvation.**
- 2. Philosophical reasons...we often think that we cannot persuade others to see the truth of Scripture and the gospel. People often believe it is harsh and narrow to assert the truth of the gospel.**
- 3. Social reasons...we often fear the outcome, consequences and even repercussions if we speak openly about the gospel. To an unbelieving culture, the gospel can sound strange and ostracizing.**
- 4. Moral reasons...the message of the gospel involved the cross, blood, death and punishment. Such things are not always pleasant or easy conversations to have. People often feel uncomfortable talking about the violence and sacrificial qualities of the cross and the gospel.**

**But today's Bible lesson teaches us that Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. In fact, he was ready to preach and proclaim the gospel whenever he had a chance. There are three dimensions to the gospel or our salvation that we have to understand. The gospel is expressed as justification, sanctification and glorification.**

- 1. Justification...God declares us not guilty of our sins through our faith in Jesus and His work on the cross. The penalty has been paid and our sins have been forgiven through His grace. It is a one-time act.**

2. Sanctification...God works in us progressively and throughout our lives to make us more like Jesus. Through the work of His Holy Spirit, God seeks to change and transform us into the likeness of Christ.
3. Glorification...God completes our salvation after we die. He raises us to new life, gives us new bodies, gives us a new place to live and gives us a new and eternal existence.

It is right to say that we have been saved, we are being saved and we will be saved. God works in the past, the present and the future to accomplish our salvation. Righteousness is a key word in Romans. Righteousness appears over fifty times in various forms. We have no righteousness of our own to present to the Lord. But righteousness is imputed or credited to us through Jesus and His work at the cross. At the cross, an exchange took place. We gave our sins to Christ and He freely bore those sins. He gave us His righteousness and through faith we receive that righteousness.

#### Applications...

1. Ask God to give you the courage to tell someone about Jesus and/or your faith. Pray for God to place someone in your path.
2. Commit, in 2010, to speak about Jesus to at least one person per month for the entire year. That would be a total of twelve. Talking about Jesus is the best way to overcome any fears about the gospel.
3. Read *In The Grip of Grace* by Max Lucado. This book reads easily and is a commentary on the whole of Romans.
4. Memorize Romans 1:16.

*Geoffrey Wilson wrote, "The unpopularity of a crucified Christ has prompted many to present a message which is more palatable to the un-believer, but the removal of the offense of the cross always renders the message ineffective. An inoffensive Gospel is also an inoperative Gospel. Thus Christianity is wounded most in the house of its friends."*

*"The whole law was given to Moses in 613 precepts. David, in the fifteenth Psalm, brings them all within the compass of eleven precepts. Isaiah reduces them to six; Micah to three; Isaiah in a later passage to two. But Habakkuk condenses them all into one: the just shall live by faith." David Jeremiah, Romans*