

ROMANS

Not Ashamed

ROMANS 1:16-17

October 29, 2016

Today

Martin Luther was in turmoil: "I do not know what will become of me," ... "More than a thousand times have I sworn to our holy God to live piously, and I have never kept my vows. Now I swear no longer, for I know that I cannot keep my solemn promises. If God will not be merciful towards me for the love of Christ and grant me a happy departure when I must quit this world, I shall never with the aid of all my vows and all my good works stand before him. I must perish."

The thought of divine justice terrified Luther, and he opened up his fears to the Vicar General.

Staupitz asked Luther, "Why do you torment yourself with all these speculations? . . . Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that he has shed for you; it is there that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer's arms. Trust in him—in the righteousness of his life—in the atonement of his death. Do not shrink back. God is not angry with you; it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God."

And so, it was that Luther, who had only first seen a Bible in his college days shortly before entering the monastery, began to study Scripture.

He eventually studied Romans, and as he pondered over the words the truth began to dawn on him. The righteousness that we need in order to stand before the holy God is not a righteousness we can attain by our own effort. In fact, it is not human righteousness at all. It is divine righteousness, and it becomes ours as a result of God's free grace. Our part is merely to receive it by faith, and to live by faith in God's promise.

In the preface to his commentary on Paul's letter to the Romans, Martin Luther wrote: "This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's time not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes."

The book of Romans is the heart of the reformation, but when it was written, it was just a letter to the Christian church in Roman.

Author - Paul

Audience - A mix of Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity – most likely from the lower classes.

When - Around 57-58 AD

Where - While Paul was in Corinth

Why -

- In 49 AD, Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome because of unrest and conflict. Gentile Christians took over leadership of the church. When Nero lifted the ban and the Jews came back to Rome there was division and fighting in the church. Paul desired to bring unity to the church.
- Paul did not establish to church in Rome (although, according to ch 15 – he knew some believers in Rome). It is in every sense a personal introduction of who Paul is and what he believes. He wanted there to be no misunderstandings. It is Paul's fullest and most complete statement on salvation, faith and the grace of God.

Paul begins with a typical greeting:

- His name and what he does:
 - Servant of Christ: Slave (bond-servant) To be owned by another person. Paul belongs to Jesus.
 - Called to be an Apostle – set apart by God to preach the Gospel. Jesus' life and mission were a demonstration of God's righteousness. It was an announcement of salvation. It was a proclamation of peace between God and man. It was a message of good news.
- The same Good News was promised through the Prophets (OT):
 - **Genesis 3:15** - And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

- **Isaiah 11:1-5** - A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD-- ³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.
- **Isa. 52:7** - 'How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good things,
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion:
Your God reigns!'
- **Zechariah 9:9** - Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- Through Jesus we receive grace and apostleship to preach the truth about God to people who don't know Him.
- You (those reading the letter) are also called to belong to Jesus.
- Grace and peace to you from God and our Lord Jesus.

All of that is Paul's introduction and Greeting – Today we just say "Hi".

Your faith has been reported all over the world

You are in my prayers all the time

I long to see you

I have planned many times to come visits – but something always gets in the way

I am obligated (because he is a servant of Christ) to preach to everyone, which is why I am so eager to preach to you.

Paul was passionate for lost people – because he had personally experienced the saving power of God and could not rest until he had shared it with everyone.

Therefore:

- **Romans 1:16** - I 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.

Why Paul was not ashamed of Christ:

- **Who he had been –**

- **Acts 8:1** - And Saul was there, giving approval to his (Stephen) death.
- **Acts 8:3** - But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.
- **Philippians 3:4-6** - though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

- **His conversion –**

- **Acts 9:3-16** - As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. ¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. ¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying..... "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

- **What it cost him –**

- **2 Corinthians 11:22-28** - Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with

rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

- o **Philippians 3:7-9** - But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Paul understood what God's grace looked like. He had personal experience. He knew who he had been. He knew to what lengths God had gone to get a hold of his life. As a result, he was ready to proclaim the Gospel any place and any time.

Paul felt no need to be apologetic for the message or for himself. For he knew the Gospel's worth transcended the value of all they had and all they knew and all they believed.

Maybe you're thinking just now that you don't have the kind of boldness Paul had. And maybe you're thinking "Phew, off the hook" But before you get too comfortable notice:

- **2 Timothy 1:8-12** - So do **not be ashamed** to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us to a holy life-- not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹² That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

If you are saved by grace.... If you know what you were before your conversion experience.... If you know what God has done for you personally.....

Then Paul is telling you that you must not be ashamed to tell people about it. The greatest evangelist is the one with a personal story – a personal "Jesus" experience.

There are a lot of things to be ashamed of on this planet, but the one thing we should never be ashamed of is Jesus and His power to save.

Could you experience rejection? Yes

Could experience persecution? Yes

Might you be misunderstood? Yes

But, according to Paul all of it is worth the price you might pay compared with the awesomeness of knowing Jesus.

"For it is the power of God unto salvation."

- Two things are asserted about the Gospel: that it has power to save and that its power is derived from God.
- The gospel can bring complete and everlasting deliverance. It rescues men from sin's guilt, slavery, and punishment. The Gospel brings men into the state of righteousness, holiness, freedom, fellowship, and everlasting life.

"For all those who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile."

- The Gospel has the power to save any and every human being – all we have to do is believe.
- To believe is to receive Jesus. Such belief will bring a life-changing experience with Him.

1:17 - For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed,

- What is right in a biblical sense is determined by the standard of God. The Bible reveals the truth about us - we are not righteous on our own. However, God is able to make us righteous through Jesus.
- Justification (pronounce one as righteous- free from the penalty of sin) means that God treats the sinner as if he is not a sinner at all.
- To be justified is to enter into a new relationship with God based on love, trust and friendship.

verse 17 continues - a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,

- If a man could earn his righteousness on his own, he would not need God. The righteousness of God is something we must receive by faith.

And then Paul quotes Habakkuk: just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (2:4)

- Once a person is saved and through righteous by faith in God, that person begins living a life of faith.
- A person of faith has quiet confidence in God.

Martin Luther wrote: "God our Father has made all things depend on faith so that whoever has faith will have everything, and whoever does not have faith will have nothing."

Take Aways

Salvation comes from establishing a relationship with the Living Lord of the universe. When we trust Him as Lord, He saves us from the penalty and power of sin, and makes us righteous before Him through the perfect life, atoning death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Through faith in Him He will transform your life!

The good news is that no matter how mired you are in your own sin, there's a way to gain a right standing before God. How could we be ashamed of such a Gospel?

- **Romans 1:16-17** - I 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. ¹⁷ For 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."

These two verses set the tone for the rest of the letter. They are the theme and the foundation on which everything else stands.