

***Unashamed of the Power of God to Save
Sinners from Sin's Guilt and Corruption***

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Romans 1:16–17

¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, *“The just shall live by faith.”*

Main idea: If you're a believer in Christ, then you came into life through faith in Christ, rejoicing over God powerfully saving you. That life, faith, and joy is still the only way that you can make progress in righteousness. And, as you do so, you will be fortifying yourself against ever being ashamed of Christ or His gospel!

Introduction: Rome and the U.S.A. ... living in a place/time that thinks it's better than the rest of the world/history.

1. No Shame

- a. Others will attempt to shame you for the gospel
- b. What it is: gospel! Not good advice but good news. Legalistic tendencies fuel personal pride, but gospel shame.
- c. Whose it is: Christ!
- d. You, personally, must not be ashamed. Therefore, revel in what it is and Whose it is.

2. Real (Infinite) Power

- a. Real power's source: Someone infinitely greater than Rome!
- b. Real power's purpose: salvation. Justification. Adoption. Sanctification. All the benefits that accompany and flow from them. Perseverance and perfection of the soul. Resurrection and glorification of the body.
- c. Real power's scope: everyone
- d. Real power's mechanism: faith
- e. Real power's history: the Jew first and then the Greek

3. Real (Divine) Righteousness

- a. More than we “needed” or could have hoped
- b. Revealed (not achieved or discovered)
- c. Righteousness from faith (imputed, justification by grace)
- d. Righteousness to faith (imparted, sanctification by *grace*)
- e. The *only* way to live is the way we came into life in the first place.

Conclusion: If you're a believer in Christ, then you came into life through faith in Christ, rejoicing over God powerfully saving you. That life, faith, and joy is still the only way that you can make progress in righteousness. And, as you do so, you will be fortifying yourself against ever being ashamed of Christ or His gospel!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Romans 1 verses 16 through 17. These are God's words for. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God to salvation.

For everyone who believes for the Jew first. And also, for the Greek, for in it. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith. Two faith. As it is written that just shall live by faith so far, the reading of God's inspired and inerrant work.

There are many reasons why someone might be ashamed or feel ashamed of the gospel. There are many reasons why those in the world, shame, the Lord and his people, and his gospel. But one of the peculiar reasons, one of the particular reasons that belonged to the people to whom Paul was writing is they lived in Rome, Rome was a city on a hill.

Rome was the capital of a great empire that had displaced replaced. The Greek Empire Rome to many was considered all-powerful and certainly they looked down upon everyone else and I thought Rome would last forever. It seemed infinite and power. Well, there are many places that the gospel has been preached at many times in the last 2,000 years, but few with this in common quite, as much as the place and time where the Lord has given us to live.

We live in a country that acts and thinks as if all of world history was building up to us as if our nation is all-powerful and invincible. And will last forever. There are some cracks in that recently but the vast majority of people who live in our country and we too are tempted, aren't we to feel as if it were true They think and feel and live as if America will be forever.

And is all-powerful that, of course, is not true at all. America will end. It may end soon. It may end disastrously, It is not forever, and it has never been and nor will it ever be all powerful. So when the apostle comes and he says, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ and he's writing to Roman church and perhaps that church thought highly of itself.

But certainly they knew that they were in the midst of a city in particular and the capital of an empire that thought very highly of itself. What would Paul preach when he came here? The most influential the most intelligent? The most skilled? The most able would be concentrated very much in a city like Rome.

When he come with the same gospel that he had preached in those barbaric and foolish, sorts of places that we heard about, and the end of last week's portion, when he said, I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians both the wise and unwise would he come with the same gospel?

Seriously would he come with the same gospel to a church? That was full of believers and the full of faith in Jesus Christ that they'd already come to the faith? Why would they need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ? Would Paul not be ashamed to preach. The same simple message and he very forcefully.

Declares I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, So he comes to, he's writing to a church in a place, like the place in, which we are found where the Lord has put us, And he writes to a church. That understands the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in, which many most, perhaps have come to faith in Jesus Christ and are right with God, justified forgiven, not condemned, and what they need.

And what we need is the gospel. He is not ashamed to preach it and we should not be ashamed either to preach it or to tell it to one another and they ought not be ashamed or looked down upon hearing it. And we should not be ashamed at hearing it over and over again.

We do not need something new, although the Lord has continually giving us to understand it. Newly and enriching and expanding how we understand the gospel. What we need to hear? Preach is the same gospel and all of the fullness of its applications. And so that's the first thing we will think about tonight is just the idea of no shame for, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

We need to hear that as of in the first place, we'll hear about being not ashamed or no. Shame in the second place, we'll hear about real power or infinite power. The the power that puts Rome to shame. And then, in the third place, real righteousness, the righteousness of God, that puts the so-called righteousness of man, to shame, both that righteousness, that gives us our right standing in that righteousness, by which we are made to live rightly, or to walk rightly before God.

And so not ashamed in the first place. And then real power in the second place, Then real righteousness in the third place. And he says, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, This is for two reasons. Everything in the Bible, is there on purpose Often. We'll read something that he's warning us against and we hadn't realized that we were susceptible to it until he he tells us until he gives us that warning.

This is probably not the case for us. I think each of us have been in a situation where we knew that the person in front of us needed to hear the gospel and we felt that cringing inside that weakness in our bellies or our or our knees, and we needed to be reminded of what the Spirit announces to us in these two verses that we would not be ashamed.

And not only have we found ourselves in such situations but others will try to shame you for the gospel. They don't want to be told that they are needy And so they will look down their noses and talk about how religion is such a crutch for the week. They will be irritated at being told that they have nothing good in them.

That Christ has everything good in him. Now, even quote, the Bible to you as if they know what they're talking about and they'll say, judge, not bless you. Be not judged. Others will attempt to shame you for the gospel. And the great way to not be ashamed of the gospel is to know what it is and whose it is and what power it has and what it gives what it is.

It's gospel, who's it is? It's Christ. It's Christ's and the power that it has will get to in a second point and the righteousness that it gives will get to in the third point First. Then how not to be ashamed of the gospel In the first place to realize that it's gospel literally it's it's good news.

It's not good advice. It's an announcement of something good that God gives because God is good, It's an announcement, that God gives it to sinners. Like, you are, If we have legalistic tendencies, whether about our theology, we think we've figured out everything in, in Romans, In Romans tells us a lot of good, true things that correct a lot of errors that even are taught and believed in many churches.

And that's a great blessing But we can be legalistic about our theology thinking. That the gospel is a set of ideas that if we master them well enough will be right with God. If we understand them correctly and agree with them, and are convinced about them, will be right with God.

No, the gospel is not good advice. Not even good theological advice. It is good news about God himself. Exerting His power to save sinners by his righteousness. It is an announcement to the needy And of course we can be legalistic more about more than just theology. Can't we, we're gonna be legalistic about the fruit that the gospel produces and the life And that fruit that the Lord produces by his gospel in our lives, is one of the great subjects of this letter.

And yet he is not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's good news Whenever you and I think or feel like we are doing really well in theology and we're proud of that whenever you and I think or feel like we're really we're doing really well in spirituality and morality and service, and obedience, and that we're doing well in that we're actually setting ourselves up to be ashamed of the gospel because we'll be invested in how clever we think we are.

Then we may run into someone who's more clever. They might not even have as good theology as we do, but they're better at articulating. It we might we're might be full of how good we think we're doing how? Well we we think we're doing you say good in that case too because it is a moral goodness but you might run into someone who is selling all they have and giving it to the poor and offering their body to be burned.

And Perhaps even more loving, and if you're full of yourself, suddenly you'll be ashamed to tell of this gospel that you believe. Because you're not as sharp as they are, or you're not as good as they are. But if you have no goodness in you, if the news isn't about how you have believed and what you have done from your faith, if the news is about the one in whom you and what he has done,

and what he is doing, and what he will do, Then you're not ashamed because you'll never find someone who has something better to tell you about.

Then Jesus Christ and God. Exerting His Almighty power to save sinners through Jesus Christ. Whatever it is that they have to tell you have something better to tell about. But that comes from knowing that the gospel is good news, not good, advice. It comes from knowing what it is.

It's gospel and whose it is. It's Christ's. And that makes it not just superior, but precious to the believer. You who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not the case that you have at times? Many times realized how very much you deserve the wrath of God, how right?

He would have been to give you over to your sin and to come near in all of his glory without giving you any relief from your guiltiness and just making you to endure the holiness and greatness and gloriousness of His presence. Whom you had sinned against and you have felt that you would be undone even by starting to imagine what that would be like.

And yet you have had announced to you that this God has become a man for you. And this God has obeyed His own law as a man in your place. And this God has put himself on a cross and bearing, your sin. He has taken His wrath against your sin upon himself wrath that you would never have finished enduring.

If you were the one who was taking it, but because he is the one who is taking it, He said it was finished and it was completed. The wrath was propitiated. Only the favor of God was left for you and he loved you not. And non-specific non-numbered nebulous. Body of nameless people.

He loved you so much that he did that for you so that he could give himself, not just for you, but to you and could take you to himself and you would delight in him and he would delight in you, even as, you know, theologically that he does. But you have a hard time getting it into your head and into your heart, how the Lord, Jesus loves you and delights in you and he is more eager to return bodily and take you to himself.

Then you are for him to return that. You may give yourself entirely to him and be welcomed by him. In fact, he went to the cross more willingly than you long for his return and to lay eyes on him, oh, how he has loved you. And one of the things you desire most of all in the world.

Well, beyond the world is that the spirit would perfect your love for him of which he is. So worthy, You see, the fact that the gospel is Christ's, doesn't just mean that whatever someone has in the name of Rome or the name of America or the name of philosophy or in the name of life coaching or in the name of science.

Whatever they have can't compare in its greatness. But the fact that the gospel is, Christ's means that it belongs to him. Whom your soul loves that, you delight to tell of who He is and what he has done and how could you be ashamed of that? Just as a parent to his learned to get over that horrible, feeling that wicked ashamedness of your child's not necessarily sins but idiosyncrasies and peculiarities.

That's your child, We proud of that child and whatever it is. That is so important to then you care about it and you're not embarrassed in front of the the other adults as it were. Who is it is? It's Christ. It's precious. And each one of us, then should be able to do what the apostle does here.

And use the first person singular say, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. We are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, when we are together. It's one of the blessings of Christian fellowship. It's one of the blessings of our worship. Gatherings. We were built built up together in our confidence and courage, and right pride being boasting, not in the south, but in the Lord, Jesus who He is and what he has done.

But we're not always with one another. Are we and we need the Lord to build us up in the doctrine of these two verses. So that when it's us by ourselves, or when we find ourselves in the midst of a

situation somewhere in the visible church and the gospel, and we're tempted to be ashamed of the gospel that we, each of us.

Personally would not be ashamed Whenever you revel. In what the gospel is that it is good news and whose the gospel is that it is the gospel of Christ Whenever you revel and what. And who's the gospel is, you are strengthening fortifying yourself against being ashamed of it. So let us post much in the good news and let us post much in the fact that it is the good news of Christ that it is the gospel of Christ. Indeed, it is the gospel of Christ and it is the power of God to salvation for everyone, who believes for the Jew first.

And also for the Greek. This is the power of God for salvation. They're so much here. It the pet. The verse here tells us the source of the power. It is the power of God. Someone and for some reason it tends to be the lower level people who have authority that comes from higher up.

You find this out. When you put maybe one of the younger children in charge for the first time, the power goes to their head. When I tell everyone what to do, mom and dad are telling you what to do. No. God is telling you what to do. And suddenly they're throwing their their way to round in an empire.

Like Rome someone who has blanket authority in their tiny. Little sphere would would have a great amount of power and authority. We'd go to their head, they would lord it over. Just as the Lord Jesus himself said the, the kings of the nations lorded. Over one, another authorities in the nations lorded over one another but he who is the king of kings and the Lord of lords, how is he among us?

He was among us as one who serves. This is true strength, isn't it? When you're in among a group of guys, and maybe you young men, haven't figured this out yet. But we, we older men. I hope I figured it out by now. When you're in a group of guys, it's never the guy who's blustering about how powerful he is.

That is really the most powerful. It's the guy who knows that whenever he needs to, he could put everyone else down. He doesn't need to show himself off And the believer can have that kind of confidence about the Lord Jesus Christ because not only whenever he needs to can he put everyone else down, But he is appearing at the last day and he will put everyone else down the power of Rome has nothing Next to the power of God.

This is why it's so important that we live our entire lives. Before the face of God that we as we heard a couple of weeks ago and we say would be able to say, God is my witness. I live for His eyes, I speak for his ears, first and foremost.

And then when we get to remembering what and who is the gospel is, then that it is the power of God. It's the power of God So we're not ashamed to preach it in the congregation or tell it to our neighbor. And if we've told it a thousand times to a wayward son or daughter or brother or sister, or cousin, or Lord have mercy parent, we're not ashamed to tell them again.

Why? Because that gospel that good news about Jesus. That we tell them is the power of God. And however stubborn they have been for however long it has been. They have not suddenly in that time or gradually in that time become stronger than the living. God, he is powerful and he is saving, because he is merciful real power source, the gospels powers source as God.

And the gospel powers purpose is salvation. The mercy of God, descenders. Not just that we might be forgiven, not just that we might be right with him. That. That's the that's the beginning of your experience of salvation, isn't it? You realize who you are and you realize who Jesus is and what he has done for you and you turn to Him in faith and you rest upon him.

And the moment that you believe you are as justified you are as right? With God, as you will be in 10 million years from now, having been perfected, in glory, You are as righteous. Then that moment that you believed as the most righteous of the saints in heaven, but that's just the beginning of salvation.

You see his salvation isn't just forgiveness and being right with him. It's everything that you needed as a sinner and you need to deliverance from more than guilt. You need to deliverance from sin's power. You need deliverance, still from sin's presence and not only deliverance from, but deliverance. To in place of guilt, you get righteousness in place of being in bondage to sin.

You get the glorious freedom of the children of God in place of the presence of sin, you get unspotted holiness that you will have when you are conformed to the image of the sun. And he is the firstborn among many brethren And even the Holy angels. When they look at you they say this one has been pressed exactly into the shape of Jesus.

God Himself will do that. This is why in chapter 13 when he's saying, wake up The night is far gone. The morning is almost here. Our salvation is nearer to us, Then, when we first believed, haven't you spend enough time living in? In a way that is consistent with the darkness that is passing, You don't believe you don't belong to the passing darkness.

You belong to the coming, light the coming day, the coming glory, then you heavens and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. And in which the holy the in which holiness covers everything as water covers, the sea, The knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters, cover the sea.

That's what you belong to wake up. And he says this wonderful thing there, our salvation is nearer to us. Then, when we first believed, You're justification isn't nearer to you than when you first believed. Is it the day? And the moment that you came to faith, isn't nearer to you.

Then when you first believed, but his salvation is more than that Our catechism kids. Of course this week are memorizing. What are those benefits? Which in this life, a company and flow from justification and adoption. And sanctification assurance of God's love and peace of conscience. Joy of the Holy Ghost progress in.

Or, I think it's as increase of grace and perseverance, they're into the end, and that's not the end of Salvation. Is it? There's the benefits that you receive at your death. There's the benefits that you receive at the resurrection. All of this as a salvation that God is giving by means of the gospel.

The gospel isn't just news about Christ. It is the means that Christ uses to give you all of the salvation that he has for you as your Savior. In fact, there's only one condition. We'll get to that in a moment. It's it's a condition of instrument, not earning, but everyone who believes receives this entire salvation, by the power of God, Notice that for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God to salvation.

For everyone who believes There is not a single one of you here or in the sound of my voice. Who if you believe in Jesus Christ, There will not be exercised in your behalf. All of the power of God that he gives that he, by which he saves in his power through the preaching and believing of the gospel through it.

You are united to Christ about whom the gospel. Tells you whom the gospel announces to you. So the source of the power God himself, the purpose of the power salvation, the scope of the power for anyone and everyone, the mechanism of the power who believes faith is the instrument.

It's the only instrument because it's the abandoning of doing herself and the dependence upon abandoning dependence upon what you do and turning instead to depend entirely upon what God does, what Christ has done. So the the mechanism of real power is faith And then real powers history for the Jew first.

And also for the Greek, this is something he's going to be showing when he gets to chapter 4 and he's he's been reasoning with them that that justification forgiveness salvation that comes from that righteous standing that you have that. It's only by faith and the Jews in the congregation at that point, because they've been taught wrongly and will get to the way that he is correcting.

A lot of the theology that they've heard. They may say, well, it wasn't like this before, and then he starts arguing in chapter 4. It's always been like this. Don't you love to sing? Psalm 32, with David, you know, Jews love to sing. Psalm 32 with David and I know that it's a favorite of many of yours.

We get it on the request board with all the stars next to it. And they love to sing, Psalm 32 with David, and he points out in chapter 4. Well, David says, the blessed one is the one who contributed nothing to His blessing, but the sin from which he needed to be forgiven.

He points out the same about Abraham. You see, we know that God saves by His power through faith in Jesus Christ, because he hadn't just started it. By the time, the letter to the Romans was written. He had already been doing it for 4,000 years at that point. And for us, he's been doing it for 6,000 years.

So when he says to the Jew first and then to the Greek, he's he's setting us up to love the Jews. Like God loves the Jews and he's gonna, he's gonna get into that and chapters 9 through 11. But one of the things that we love about them is that for a long time in the history of God, saving in this world, He did it almost entirely exclusively among the Jews.

Oh, he brought Gentile Sinners in, but he brought them in by making them nationally ethnically Jews. And even now he's going to say, later in this book, we are being grafted into us a spiritual family tree. That is 4,000 years old. By the time this letter is written but doesn't it?

Give you confidence that God has been saving by His power as he announces this good news of the Christ and people believe in the Christ who are who has announced to them, doesn't it give you confidence that he will do it for you who are Gentile? As it were, You're certainly more Greek in your culture than you are Hebrew that he's been doing it for the Jews and now he's doing it for the Greeks.

It is the power of God. It is the power of God because we are powerless, either to deliver ourselves from the guilt of our sin, or the power or presence of our sin. But God does all those things is the power of God, for, in it. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

As it is written the just shall live by faith Indeed. The fact that it is not just the righteousness of a perfect man, That is the righteousness of God who became a man and he didn't become too persons at that point. God, the Son is one divine person, but he has two natures.

He is God from all eternity, the nature of God could never change. Anyway, You can't stop being God to become a man. He can't empty himself of all but love as Wesley. So so romantically and inaccurately interpreted what Philippians chapter 2 was saying He emptied himself by addition. He added to himself this humanity that was fully human like us in every way except without sin.

And yet, you still one divine person, which is why we usually, quote, from when we're thinking about this point together, second Corinthians 5:21, he made him who knew no sin to be sin. So that in him we might become what the righteousness of God. Same same thing here For in it.

The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith When you are counted. As in righteous in Jesus, you are counted as righteous as God is righteous. When you are growing in righteousness by faith. In Jesus Christ. Not passive now and you're sanctification, but it's still by grace. It's still by faith.

We'll see that in a moment. In Jesus Christ. It is the righteousness of God that is making you more and more. Righteous Jesus will never run out of righteousness for you. The righteousness of God was imputed to you, counted for you. The moment that you were believed the moment that you believed the moment that you were justified, But the righteousness of God that has now being in the righteousness that has now being imparted to you in.

Your sanctification is also the righteousness of the godman Jesus Christ. It is a real human righteousness that comes from but from the virtue of his resurrection as we'll hear about in chapter

6, But it is still the righteousness of a divine person. This is something that was the means by which Luther Martin Luther was converted.

He used to hate verse 17 because he took it in conjunction with verse 18 for in it. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men and he didn't understand that it was the righteousness of God, that would be counted for him.

And the righteousness of God, that would be imparted to him once he had been justified. And so it terrified him. There was nothing that could ever be done to attain to what was necessary And if you didn't have what was necessary, all you had was the wrath of God against you.

This is a greater righteousness than we could ever have hoped for. That's not a righteousness that is achieved by. How hard we work or discovered by how clever we are. There's a righteousness that is revealed by being announced to us as the righteousness. That is from faith and to faith.

That is from faith. Just counted for us. We are made right with God by grace alone, through faith alone and it is a righteousness that is for faith as it is written the just shall live by faith. How do righteous people proceed to live? Righteously. We know that they will, God is God is not a liar and God is not mocked and it's part of what Jesus deserved for us.

Part of what you right now. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ in Christ, you deserve to be sanctified. I know that you don't. And so you are afraid to think of the idea that you deserve to be sanctified, But if you are in Christ, you are righteous in Christ.

And His righteousness is yours and that righteousness, which you have counted for you, from him, deserves for you to be made righteous in your thinking, and in your feeling, and in your desiring, and in your conduct, and you will because Christ cannot be denied. And so the righteousness of God that is revealed in the gospel is not just the imputed righteousness, counted for you by which you are made right with God.

And you'll only ever be right with God through what Jesus has done. You will never be right with God through what you have done, but it's also the righteousness to faith that as you walk by faith. In Jesus Christ, He does work out in you more and more of his own resurrection life and you walk in newness of life.

And in obedience, It's that sanctification question. That many of you repeated for us or studied, at least last week. The only way to live or to progress in the Christian life is the way that you came into it in the first place, You didn't do anything to come into it and you are to do things now.

But everything you do is supplied by Jesus. Sanctification is by grace every bit. As much as justification. And so it's a righteousness that has given to you as you walk by faith. If you are a believer in Christ Tonight, then you know that you came into life through faith in Christ rejoicing over, how God saves you in his Almighty power.

But that's not just the way to come into life. It's also the way that you keep living by faith in Jesus Christ, rejoicing. That it's God by His Almighty power, who is giving you this part of your salvation too, and he gives it to you through hearing and believing the gospel.

That's why we're not ashamed to have a simple gospel, sermon that announces to you things that you already knew, because the Lord, Jesus has given His Spirit. So that as I preach it and we all hear it together, we grow in. Jesus Christ, we grow by His grace. We grow by knowing Him.

The just live by faith. It was true to Habakkuk. It was true to Rome. It's true to Hopewell Church and 2022. Amen.