

Romans 1:16-18 – The Gospel: Receive it or Die

Rienecker, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Vincent, Trapp, Robertson, Poole, PNT, Geneva, Family, Newell, Henry, Handfuls, Lightfoot, Calvin, JFB, Koning
Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

The Epistle to the Romans is the best systematic theology in the history of humanity.

It is the foundation of the Christian life and doctrine.

It is often referred to as the greatest book in the Bible, the richest book in the Bible, and the most important book in the Bible.

We can say it covers the **spectrum of human existence and purpose.**

You wouldn't have known what to believe and how to live without it! This is the Gospel – the Good News!

So how do you respond to this Gospel? This is the subject for today.

Our headings are:

You must embrace the Gospel

If you embrace the Gospel, it will save you

If you don't embrace the Gospel, it will condemn you

Our goals are: **That you will receive, rejoice in, and promote the Gospel of Jesus so good can come to man and glory to Jesus.**

You must embrace the Gospel

16 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.**

1. Apostle Paul declared *he was not ashamed of the Gospel!*

It looked like Jesus was destroyed by the Jews and the Romans on the cross...at least that was how the world saw it! **It looked like defeat.** The Christians' Lord and Master was crucified and hanged on a tree! That did not picture a great conqueror!

2. But Apostle Paul explained why he as not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, and why he embraced it: *It brought salvation.*

No one is ashamed to bring life-giving medicine to the dying and neither was he ashamed to take the life-giving message of the cross to the world.

You might remember how Western government and doctors mocked a medicine during Covid...yet that medicine saved India from devastation. Our doctors wanted to appear enlightened by Western medicine, but where would the poor of India be if

they didn't have it?

Christ's Gospel brought salvation. *The Gospel looked weak at the cross, but it wasn't!*

2. Apostle Paul proclaimed that everyone from any language, culture, or nation could receive this Gospel of Jesus and live!

It started with the Jews, but it was not limited to the Jews.

John 4:22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

"In you all the nations of the earth will be blessed." (Genesis 18:18, 22:18, 26:4)
The wild olives are grafted into the true Olive Tree. Romans 11.

Inclusion of the Gentiles was always God's plan!

4. Lesson:

a. The world might try to make you ashamed of being a Christian (for trusting in another for salvation), but know the peace that you have with God now and for eternity and embrace the Gospel that brought that peace.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is **foolishness to those who are perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

b. Proclaim this Gospel of peace. Don't hide! This will bring praise to the Savior and salvation to the lost!

This Gospel is what preachers from long ago said must be proclaimed promiscuously! The whole world needs to hear it. Do it. Support those who are doing it.

c. There are many attempts to bring good news to man, but they are things that turned out to be failures, and therefore brought shame to those who embraced them.

Socialism did not live up to its ideals, not even remotely.

Hard work might bring worldly benefits and worldly comforts, but it **does not bring true joy** to the heart and **not a lasting joy** to the heart.

Only the Good News of Jesus – that he rescued man from sin and death and hell

can bring peace with God and present and future comforts.

There is no other name – given among men - by which we might be saved!

d. The Gospel is not excellent speech, it is not deep wisdom, it is not personal magnetism, it is not earnestness, and it not even sincere prayer!

The Gospel is this: Jesus came to die for sinners, be buried, and be raised from the dead for them.

If you embrace the Gospel, it will save you

17 For in it **the righteousness of God is revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, "**The just shall live by faith.**"

1. Apostle Paul stated that those who embrace the Gospel (by faith) are saved by the Gospel.

God gives the sinner the faith to receive what Jesus did! Of himself he would reject what Jesus did.

2. How does that happen?

God declares the non-believer “righteous” when he **counts the righteousness of Christ and his sacrificial death as the sinner’s**. It’s as if the non-believer perfectly obeyed God’s laws and died for his own sins, though it was Jesus who did this!

Romans 3:26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, **that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

God’s Righteousness, a name for Jesus Christ, is revealed and he showed man the seriousness of his sins and the greatness of his demands! Christ’s righteousness is counted as his!

Daniel 9:24 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, **To bring in everlasting righteousness**, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

“From faith to faith” meant this is the same continuous way to be saved from the Old and New Testament.

Habakkuk 2:4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; **But the just shall live by his faith.**

3. “The just shall live by faith in Christ,” caused the revival of the church during the time of the Reformation.

For many years the Roman Catholic church had taught their people salvation by grace and mostly works, leading men to hell.

Because of this teaching, the Roman Catholics had to come up with the old teaching of purgatory – which taught that as long as you were baptized, you are able to be cleaned up after you die and then be translated to heaven. How wrong they were!

The just “shall live” is an action that pictures perpetuity. In other words, they will live forever.

4. This means there is no other way of salvation. No faith in Christ, no salvation ever.

The Jews needed faith; the Gentiles need faith. The old need faith, the young need faith. You need faith.

5. Lessons:

a. God demands humility.

You must see your need for salvation and your hopelessness without it.

You have no righteousness of your own!

Satan drills arrogance, self-importance, and self-love into the heads and hearts of our young people! (The Devil is quite a genius at evil.) These things set-up our young people to fail and spend eternity in hell.

b. Start training your children now!

Talk about their sin from infancy! Don’t start with “Mommy doesn’t like what you do,” or “Mommy likes what you do.”

Start with “God doesn’t want you to do that,” or “God likes when you do that.”

c. Salvation is exclusively through Christ. Penance, pilgrimages, and prayers will not save you. The just ones live because they have a Justifier: Jesus! (See again the need for evangelism.)

d. Live like the righteous ones of God.

Romans 6:13 And **do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness** to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive

from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

2 Corinthians 6:14 **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.** For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

If you don't embrace the Gospel, it will condemn you

18 For the **wrath of God is revealed from heaven** against all **ungodliness and unrighteousness** of men, who **suppress the truth** in unrighteousness,

1. Apostle Paul declared those who don't embrace the Gospel would have "God's wrath revealed (shown) from heaven against him!"

How severe will be that judgment? God uses the word "wrath."

This is not like when God is disappointed when his child sins against him and he disciplines him. This is eternal destruction. **This is a wrath that is coming from heaven, not from man.**

This is worse than capital punishment.

Look at a little picture temporal and eternal judgment.

Genesis 19:24 Then the **LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah,** from the LORD **out of the heavens.**

Jeremiah 10:10 But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. **At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.**

2. Apostle Paul explained why judgment was so severe against those who rejected the Gospel!

a. These men were ungodly and unrighteous, meaning they rejected the 1st and 2nd tables of the law.

b. These men rejected the Gospel and suppressed the truth in a defiant act of rebellion. Literally, they wanted to **hold down the truth so it didn't get established.**

It is like holding one down so you can beat him up. It is like putting a man in a box, putting on the lid, and sitting on it so he couldn't come out.

3. No one was able to escape who was unholy, unrighteous, and suppressed the truth and did not have the righteousness and holiness of Christ as his own and he rejected the Light of the Gospel.

Holding the truth captive was a personal attack against God. God warned, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you are destroyed in the way!" (Psalm 2)

4. Lessons:

a. You are taught in society that as long as you are sincere about what you do, God will be pleased with you, and society then declares you to be a good person!

How the Devil must love that doctrine! *People feel religious* and so they pat themselves on the back and *think everything is okay*. **God disagrees.**

1 Thessalonians 5:3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

b. What do you say to others who sincerely believe that killing those who don't follow their religion or criticize their beliefs?

What about *those who promised their political system would bring utopia*, even though it has caused the murder of millions and only brought poverty and starvation?

Sincerely held beliefs can be destructive and lead men to hell! Warn them of the coming dangers.

c. Some know the truth, the real truth of God's Word, but suppress it! This applies even to those who are baptized, raised, and taught in the church but reject the only hope that could be theirs!

Don't do it.

d. God sends plagues from heaven today on the wicked, but the ultimate judgment will be hell.

Conclusion:

Those who are lost in sin must **embrace the Gospel of Jesus** – that God is holy, that man is sinful, and that Jesus died on the cross for men's sins.

If they do, they are saved.

If they don't, they are damned.

There is nothing to nuance here. There is no exception. **It is this truth or death.**

Beloved in the Lord:

1. Learn you must not be ashamed of the Gospel, but rejoice that you have it. You needed it but you didn't know where to look (and you weren't looking), but Jesus found you and gave the Gospel to you!

2. Love the Lord for the wonderful thing he has done for you.

3. Let the world know he loves all kinds of sinners. He takes them and cleans them up and adopts them as his own sons.

No one is so nasty that he can't be cleaned up and given a new heart, a new record, and a new life.

Finally: If you have not received the Gospel of Jesus, but hold to another gospel, you are in your sins and will have to pay for them. **Maybe you want to pay for your sins in hell for eternity, but if you know what hell is like, I think you will run from it.**

I urge you to run from it and **run to Christ**, in whom **there is safety**.

He will give you faith to receive his life and death, he will remove your sins, and he will name you as his child.