

I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel

(Rom 1:16-17)

- Beginning of next section covering from Rom 1:16-4:25 (foundation of gospel is justification by faith)
- I. With his introduction now complete, Paul immediately states his “theme” for this epistle, and in doing so also of all his preaching
 - A) Remember that Paul has never been to Rome and is wanting to build these people up in the truth, so what we have in Romans is really a synopsis of Paul’s preaching and teaching
 - B) Read Rom 1:14-17- Notice the “For” of v. 16 (and down thru v.20)
 - 1. Paul’s reasoning and his method are always like this, logical and progressive
 - i. He alleges a thing, proves the thing, demonstrates it and then applies it
 - 2. “Why” I am ready to preach the gospel at Rome also = v.16-17
 - i. v.16- Theme in general
 - ii. v.17- Exposition on v.16
 - 3. Rom 1:18-4:25- Paul works out the theme in detail
 - C) Let’s remember that this theme was the cause of the Reformation, and stands in opposition to all the man-made systems of redemption based on works or sacraments
 - 1. In many ways, this is the most important set of verses in all the bible
 - 2. It is also a succinct summary of the gospel as a whole
- II. “I am not ashamed of”
 - A) This is a figure of speech known as “litotes”
 - 1. Litotes- “a form of understatement in which a sentiment is expressed ironically by negating its contrary; to state a positive by its opposite negative.”
 - i. Examples from scripture:
 - a) Isa 55:11- Word won’t return unto Me void
 - b) John 6:35- Shall never hunger nor thirst
 - c) Acts 12:18- No small commotion
 - d) Acts 15:2- No small dissension
 - e) Acts 19:23- No small stir
 - f) Acts 19:24- No small gain
 - g) Acts 21:39- No mean city
 - h) Acts 27:20- No small tempest
 - i) Rev 3:5- I will not blot out thy name (I will keep thee forever)

- B) Why did Paul use litotes here? Because Christians can be and often are ashamed of the gospel, and some types are especially prone to it, and by using this method, Paul introduces another detail of the gospel
1. 2 Tim 1:8- Timothy seemed to be by nature susceptible to this (v.7)
 - i. 2 Tim 1:12- All had forsaken Paul at his defense at Rome, but he states “he was not ashamed”
 - ii. 2 Tim 1:16-17- Paul makes a point of this about Onesiphorus
 2. It would be very easy to be “ashamed” of the gospel at Rome, the imperial city with Caesar and the senate and all the pomp of roman people
 - i. “The King is a carpenter from Nazareth, who won no wars physically and was crucified”
 3. Paul probably knew very well this temptation, as we know Satan tried everything in his power to stop Paul’s preaching
- III. Why would there be shame associated with the gospel?
- A) If a person has never known what it is to be tempted to be, or have been ashamed of the gospel, it is not because they are an incredibly strong Christian, but that they are probably either a very weak Christian or not one at all
1. Great saints down through the ages have testified to this
- B) 1 Cor ch 1-3- Paul fully covers this and knew it well
1. **Reasons:** There is shame associated with the gospel because the gospel always brings about the ridicule of the world, and we humans naturally do not like ridicule
 - i. 1 Cor 1:18-24- Gospel is foolishness to the world
 - a) Jews- Thought it foolish because of the person and lowly manner of Christ
 - b) Greeks- Thought it foolishness because it is against their philosophy and logic
 - c) The gospel is completely out of step with the course and ways of this world
 - ii. The gospel offends because the message proclaims a lowly babe, born in a manger and raised a poor carpenter, crucified in weakness as an impoverished criminal after having made great claims about Himself
 - a) Poverty is the mark of failure to man
 - iii. The gospel offends because it asks man to believe claims contrary to his understanding and his science, such as resurrection
 - a) Acts 17:18- Wise Greeks thought Paul a babblers when he preaches Christ resurrected
 - b) Acts 26:23-24- Paul thou art mad!
 - c) 2 Cor 11:16- I am not a fool (Paul must often have been called a fool)
 - iv. The gospel offends because- 1 Cor 1:26-29- Not many wise are called

- a) So the world considers the Christian message to be for the dumb and unlearned, the illiterate that fall for it
 - 1) Look at the way in which TV preachers prey on the elderly, and people associate Christianity with that
 - b) Look at the bulk of the church, the apostles were unlearned fisherman, and the bulk of the church were Roman slaves
 - c) Example of my 2 doctors:
 - 1) My “learned” American doctor wanted to prescribe me medication for the “preaching of the gospel”
 - 2) My “believing” Indian doctor prayed with me and hugged me
 - (a) 1 Cor 3:18- If any man be wise, let him become a fool
 - v. The gospel offends because- man’s natural abilities play no part in redemption
 - a) In fact, intellectual pride is probably the biggest obstacle to faith
 - b) Gospel takes away my “special” things and lays me low with all the others
 - vi. The gospel offends because- suffering, and that often publicly, is attached to its belief, and often causes public shame
 - a) Heb 12:2- The Lord “despised the shame”
 - b) Look at the way Christians have been martyred and persecuted down through the ages
- IV. This is all actually a very good test of our gospel individually
- A) The gospel is always offensive to the natural man and the world
 - B) When we hear the unregenerate praising a preacher and his message, we had better look very closely at him (Olsteen, Copeland, Warren, etc.)
 - 1. Olsteen on Larry King- “well, we don’t wanna offend anyone”
 - C) Men will alter the message to remove the offense
 - 1. Gal 5:11- Paul could have stopped the Jewish persecution if he only included circumcision in his message
 - 2. Today we have the “repentless gospel” William Booth warned us about, and any mention of “Christian works” are viewed as opposed to the grace of God
 - 3. Present the Lord Jesus Christ as a great human, such as “Jesus Christ Superstar,” and people will flock to follow that
 - i. Example of woman crying out at Easter service about crucifixion, “why didn’t someone stop them”
 - ii. “They crucified that poor Jesus just as they drove the great Socrates to suicide, oh that foul world”
 - iii. Phil 2:3-9- Compare the true Christ

4. Present the “gospel” as the “what would Jesus do” movement, or the “moral gospel” of just the Sermon on the Mount, and men will follow that, as it appeals to our self righteousness
 - i. But present the gospel as it is in truth, the only hope for a world of lost sinners, and the natural man is immediately ready to bite and devour you
 - a) Example of sweet lady I know, whose teeth come out at the mention of gospel
 - ii. This is why people won’t to change the old hymns, and remove Wesley’s great ones as “vile and full of sin I am”
 - a) Example of man that sad what foolishness talk that was, and who would put that on their resume if they sought a job
 - b) Example of the changes to “At the Cross”
5. Present the “self-help gospel” and people will follow that
 - i. “Got worries, come to Christ,” or “has life left you unfulfilled”
 - a) But the cults can make this same claim, so also can psychologists, and AA
6. Present the “prosperity gospel” and people will flock to you to give you their money
 - i. “Got income issues?” or “tired of that old car, God wants you to have a nice one”
- D) The gospel when truly preached produces ridicule and persecution because the truth is “I am so vile with sin and rebellious, God Almighty had to act on my behalf to save me, or I’d go to hell where I belong”
 1. Preach this and ridicule is sure to come
 - i. Example of Whitefield and “Dr. Squint-em”
 - ii. Example of caricatures of Spurgeon in newspapers weekly
 - iii. Example of Wesley brother’s family urging them to not go to the dredges of society, how can that be of God? And referring to John as :pied piper of the rabble”
 - iv. Example of friend they call the “Jesus man”
- V. Why are we not ashamed? (this is also a good test)
 - A) Rom 1:16-17- Paul’s answer (it is the only hope for the lost world- v.18-19)
 1. Notice Paul doesn’t focus on himself or what it has done for him
 - i. John 14:6- I am THE WAY
 2. People often make comments about not being ashamed because ever since the decided to believe, life has been good, or better, or they have no regrets
 - i. But again, the cults can make this claim, or Dr. Phil
 - ii. Or “I’ve been so much happier since I became a Christian” is not a statement testified by the Spirit in a saved man

- B) The gospel is God's will and method of salvation, it is His eternal purpose, and it is the only way a man might not only escape eternal torment, but be brought into reconciliation with God
 - 1. The gospel reveals God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and God the Father
- We would never have covered all of this if Paul had not used litotes in Rom 1:16