

Romans
Message 14
Not Ashamed 01
Rom 1:13-19

- 13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.
- 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.
- 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.
- 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
- 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
- 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
- 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. KJV

Introduction:

As Paul finished his comments concerning his reasons for desiring to come to Rome, he transitioned into what he intended to proclaim when he arrived. There is reason here to doubt his confidence in the full understanding of the gospel message among those who had formed the church there. No doubt their knowledge was sufficient for salvation but Paul doubted the fullness of it and, so, prepared them for his visit by expanding their understanding of his message.

V 13 is one of those places that reminds us of the importance of understanding punctuation whether included or understood, “I would not have you ignorant brethren,” or “I would not have you ignorant, brethren.” :-)

We see in v.13 another affirmation of Paul’s longstanding desire and purpose to come and minister to them. It sounds like he had actually formulated plans on several occasions but something or Someone had hindered (let) him. We know that God actually hindered him from going to Asia once, so we do not know if this had happened in relation to Rome or if Paul is speaking of circumstances which prevented him. We certainly know that he had originally intended to come immediately after visiting Jerusalem and had been hindered by what had transpired there and the decisions which the Romans had made to keep him in prison.

He also shared his intense burden to proclaim the gospel to the ‘Greeks’ and the ‘Barbarians.’ Martin Lloyd Jones correctly noted that he was referring in general terms to the civilized and the uncivilized people of the world. The government of the world had become Roman but the culture was primarily Greek, so he called all of those under the Roman rule ‘Greeks’ and those outside that rule ‘Barbarians.’

He felt in their debt but he did not explain how or why. No doubt at least part of his guilt was the murder of those early Christians who may have been preparing to take the gospel outside of Israel but Saul's murderous assault on them cut many lives short and ended many plans for the expansion of the gospel. Those he had hindered would have carried the gospel to many places so, now, Paul reflected, thousands of heathen would never hear the gospel of Christ because of him. This may have been some of his thinking.

Think about how unusual an idea this was for a man who had been raised to think of all Gentiles as certain for destruction and outside of the Covenant of God.

Since these were exactly the people that inhabited Rome, Paul was 'fully ready' to proclaim the gospel to them. Wouldn't it be amazing if all of God's people had a longing to speak the gospel to others?

Then, Paul made an unusual proclamation, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ..."

Here, again, is that Jewish tendency to declare a thing by denying its opposite. My question has always been, "well, if you are not ashamed of it, what are you in regard to it?" What is it that Paul was affirming in this peculiar way?

Why would anyone be ashamed of the gospel?

Actually, there are a number of reasons we might mention.

It challenges people and says to them, "you are doing life incorrectly."

Humans are almost universally embarrassed (ashamed) to tell another person that they are wrong.

- This is often the reason incompetent people do not receive correction.
- Also, people are often embarrassed (ashamed) to speak to others about issues of faith.
- There is a certain cowardice which we all experience at times.

We must know and fully embrace the principle that the Gospel - the real message of the NT - is designed, beginning to end, to glorify God and not man.

So... if the message is modified so that man can more easily embrace it, then it has ceased to be the Gospel of God. And this is literally the problem of the world at this point. The gospel has been altered. What is preached glorifies man and not God. Instead of saving people it makes religious professors of faith who are not truly converted. This 'gospel' has no power... it is useless... even worse, it is a lie.

So, since we are susceptible to embarrassment and since the Gospel is destructive to the Kingdom of Satan, guess where he attacks those who believe the gospel in order to keep them silent?

Those who are unconverted are in the Kingdom of the evil one.

Eph 2:1-2

- 1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
- 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: KJV

Col 1:9-13

- 9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;
- 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;
- 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
- 13 **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness**, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: KJV

The unbelieving are held in a spiritual bondage by a personality that is purposed to destroy them and keep them from ever having communion with the Living God.

He undertakes to keep them all, not to lose a single one.

So, he attacks all those who would work to see them delivered, to give them information by which they might be liberated.

Have you ever stopped to think how awful it is to be the captive of Satan?

Everything they experience, hear and see, passes through a spiritual filter (invisible to them) which so distorts spiritual realities that they cannot be understood, a condition which god speaks of as being 'blindness'

Isa 42:5-7

- 5 Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:
- 6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;
- 7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that

sit in darkness out of the prison house. KJV

For this cause they cannot process the distorted images in their minds nor correctly understand the words of truth spoken to them that they remain in this state, reject the gospel, and even intimidate, if they can, those who would bring words of hope to them.

It is truly frustrating that the very condition of the captives of Satan leads them to resist all efforts to help them.

Then, the gospel is embarrassing to some because it is rigid, it will not yield to pressure, it refuses to 'update' itself and 'keep up with the times.'

Those who cannot value it see it as old and outdated and they criticize it as such.

In reality, it is timeless, refusing to age, and absolutely appropriate for every time and for every reasonable person. I do not say that to suggest that the unconverted are stupid but merely that their senses are distorted to the point they cannot see the logic of the gospel.

One of the things every believer must decide is that he will refuse to allow the devil and those in his kingdom to set and establish the values by which we judge spiritual realities. The devil is the enemy of those realities and those under his spell cannot properly process spiritual information.

For example, I have some things that are valuable to me, things you might not value at all.

- my stamp collection
- books from my father's library
- other items that belonged to him

To you they might have little, if any, value at all but it does not bother me because I have set a value on them that has nothing whatsoever to do with your opinion of them.

I am not embarrassed to own them nor am I embarrassed that I have set a high value on them.

We must do the same with the truths of the gospel. Others do not value them but we are not to be embarrassed about that. We must decide that we will value things on the basis of how God considers them, not how men regard or disregard them. This will help us not to be embarrassed concerning the gospel.

This is what Paul had done with the Gospel.

- He placed high value on it because God did
- He had accepted that when God so places value on a thing it is truly valuable and to be honored as such.
- It did not, then, embarrass him to be an agent of the gospel and to carry high the privilege of serving Him in the publication of it.

But the reality is that we struggle with this idea. It tends to embarrass us that we value things

that those around us discount as worthless.

One of those things we are led to value because of the gospel is the company and fellowship of those who believe the gospel as we do, also called “communion.” Many of those people are not, and will never be, valued by the world.

1 Cor 1:26-29

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. KJV

I said at the beginning that the gospel is designed, beginning to end, to give God all of the glory and man none. This is not an idea regarded well by the world of men who live in the Kingdom of Darkness. The church is made up of people generally discounted by the world but we set value on them based on God’s value set rather than that of men.

It is literally forbidden that men glory in themselves or in one another. And that is a thing of huge value to those who have not embraced the gospel message.

This pulls the rug out from under most religionists.

Another part of this process which can tend to embarrass us is that the gospel limits our contact, and the nature of it, with those in Satan’s realm.

2 Cor 6:14-18

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. KJV

The very nature of our relationship with God through the gospel demands that we draw lines of interaction between ourselves and those around us. We do not go into the mountains and live in a cave so as not to have any contact with them at all, but we do make conscious and real

decisions about how we will interact and what will be the principles of those interactions.

There are many today who seem to think that these words are some kind of ‘misprint’ in the scriptures because they are generally being ignored, if not outright denied, by the greatest majority of the so-called Christian world. But it is a major principle of scripture.

1 Cor 15:33

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. KJV

1 Cor 15:33

33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." NASU

A universal truth.

People, even God’s people, can become uncomfortable with these principles. They don’t like the feeling of them. It embarrasses them and makes them ashamed.

Changes of behavior call for explanations and many people have not sufficiently re-calibrated their own value systems to be able to fully agree with Paul. But, then, of course, he was not ashamed of the gospel.

May God grant us the grace to grow to the place where we can say the same thing Paul said, and do so with integrity.

We spoke of the fact that Paul was affirming something by a negative statement, so we should examine what it was that he was affirming.

On first impulse it looks that Paul was saying, “I am not ashamed of the gospel but I am proud of it.” But the word ‘pride’ does not really work, does it?

Notice that it is a reflective statement.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The word ‘for’ links back to “I am a debtor” and “I am ready.”

The word ‘ashamed’ is used several times in the NT.

There was a very solemn pronouncement made by the Lord Jesus using this word.

Mark 8:34-38

34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

- 35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.
- 36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?
- 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?
- 38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. KJV

Jesus made being 'ashamed' of Him synonymous with
 refusing to deny self
 refusing to take up the cross
 refusing to faithfully follow Him
 saving one's life for himself
 gaining what the world has while losing one's soul

The idea is more related to 'shame' than 'embarrassment' even though the two concepts are related to one another.

Look at the effect when Jesus is 'ashamed' of someone.

- If Jesus is 'ashamed' of one on the Last Day do you have the sense that this one is going to be 'caught up' and changed like those who have denied themselves and taken up their crosses to follow Christ? Of course not.
- What we will see is an outworking of what He said in a place in Matthew on the same topic.

Matt 7:21-23

- 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
- 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?
- 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. KJV

For Him to be 'ashamed' of someone is for Him to reject them and send them away from Himself in eternity and for all of eternity.

To be ashamed of Him is do essentially disavow His claims on our lives, even though it is possible to do that and keep up a religious front.

Jesus (and Paul) drew a very bold and emphatic line. On one side of it were those who had fully embraced the Lord and all that He taught while on the other side was everyone else, including the very religious who has refused to devote themselves to Him in the way that He demanded. They were, in reality, 'ashamed' of Him.

We have in scripture the repeated assurances that those who have chosen to follow Christ with the whole heart will be saved and ultimately granted admission into the Eternal Kingdom of God. But we are also continually taught that those who do not and will not obey Him, who refuse to identify themselves with Him in a genuine way, will be destroyed.

Now, there are those who are embarrassed about this part of the gospel message.

I want you to notice again the text and see that Paul had not one whit of shame in saying, concerning the gospel,

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

The Righteousness, the Holiness, of God is revealed in the gospel and the Wrath of God is also revealed in it.

This means that any so-called 'gospel' which does not speak truthfully concerning the wrath of God is not the gospel but a fraudulent message invented by men and possibly the devil himself.

God is Love... for sure

But... He is also Holy

So much so that He burns like a fire in Judgment against all sin.

Deut 4:24

24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. KJV

Heb 12:29

29 For our God is a consuming fire. KJV

God cannot be divided up into pieces. You cannot embrace His Love while rejecting His Holiness and His Wrath against ungodliness.

If you are ashamed of any of His Attributes you are Ashamed of Him and if you are Ashamed of Him, He will be ashamed of you on the Great Day of Judgment. You have His word on that.