

Romans
Message 15
Not Ashamed 02
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:

In last week's message we spent some time talking about and considering that Paul said in the beginning of v.16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." I would like to share with you some observations from Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones on this subject.

"But why should anybody ever be ashamed of the gospel? Do you know anything about this my friends? It seems to be to be a very important question. And I am very ready to assert that if you have never known this particular temptation then it is probably due to the fact, not that you are an exceptionally good Christian, but that your understanding of the Christian message has never been clear."

What we are going to see in today's message, I think, is that this is the case of many. They think the gospel to be something very different from what it is.

The world has, from its' inception, mocked the Gospel. A carpenter from Galilee, a Jew, the Savior of the World? Crucified and Risen? Ascended to heaven? Calling on men to repent of their sins? How ludicrous! Remember what the philosophers of Athens said... "what will this babblers say? He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." And, then, when he had preached to them:

Acts 17:32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: KJV

Dr. Jones said, "man by nature does not like being ridiculed, so he is ashamed of this gospel."

He continued, "And then, add to all that, of course, that the Apostle was here writing to

Christians in Rome - the mistress of the world, the imperial city, the seat of government where all the great people always came. Just think of it. In the midst of all the pomp and the ceremonial of those Roman emperors and the Roman court, there come a man who says that the Savior of the world was a carpenter from Nazareth, and Paul imagines the ridicule and the laughter of the court and the great people. The latest joke..."

And, little has changed except for the manner of the ridicule. We see it being manifested today in the ways that the message of Paul has been modified so as not to be offensive to the world. All talk of Repentance has ceased and many so-called 'Christians' are embarrassed about the idea of eternal judgment. Holiness, biblical holiness, is ridiculed by outright rejection. All around you people are ashamed of the gospel message of Christ and the apostles and if we are not careful we will become caught up in it.

Persecution is increasing all over the world against Christians and if things do not change it is coming here. Will we be bold to stand and declare our commitment to it when the cost is all we have... or our lives?

But then, the apostle makes a very unusual statement about this 'gospel' of which he is 'not ashamed.'

"... it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..."

He does not say that it is the message of God telling us what we have to do to be saved for then, as Dr. Jones rightly states, that would mean that the power is in us and not in God. It my salvation is caused by my response to God's message then the message's effectiveness depends upon power in me. But this is not at all what he said.

It is not even a message about what God has done concerning our salvation. If so he would not say that it is the power of God unto salvation but he would say that it is a message telling us about God's power unto salvation, again, a very different thing. (Paraphrase from Jones)

So, how is the gospel the power of God?

The gospel is a message, right?

It certainly *concerns* the power of God.

In fact, if you were to ask me to write a sentence connecting the gospel and God's Power to save I might say that it is the message concerning God's power to save sinful men.

But I might not say what Pau said here, at least not before this encounter with the text that I have enjoyed this week.

Looking at this statement by Paul seems to point us to the conclusion that terrible misconceptions have been made, taught and accepted in our time.

We hear people say and see them practice, “The Gospel is one thing but doctrine is in a different category and is optional.”

We see churches advertising themselves as “just preaching the gospel... not all that doctrine that divides people...”

Let us as we seek to understand this difficult statement look back at what Paul intended to do at Rome.

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

And what is it that he did?

Well, actually, we do not have a summary of what Paul did and preached at Rome... History nor scripture have left us that.

But we do have his own summary of what he did in another place and we are pretty confident that he did not preach one thing in one place and another thing in another place.

On his last visit to Ephesus he reviewed his ministry there with the elders.

Acts 20:25-27

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. KJV

I will not hesitate to say to you that Paul saw no difference in the two statements:

“preach the gospel to you” and

“declare unto you all the counsel of God”

They were one and the same thing but with an element that we do not usually connect with either of them. More on that in a bit.

He called the whole thing, “all the counsel of God,” “the gospel.” But you know that information alone is not the gospel. It is only good news to those who see it as good news and one can only really see it as good news if the Holy Spirit of God attends the declaration of it and reveals it to hearts. Only then is it **the Power of God unto salvation.**

So, how did Paul’s conception of the Gospel differ from ours so that he could make this clear affirmation concerning it? *Paul apparently thought of “the Gospel” as the entire revelation accompanied by the Work of the Holy Spirit.* Let me repeat that. *Paul apparently thought of “the Gospel” as the entire revelation accompanied by the Work of the Holy Spirit.* That, indeed, is *“the Power of God unto salvation.”*

This, of course, means that no piece of the revelation of the Son of God can be carved off from

the rest and called “the gospel.”

And, it means that without the attending power of the Holy Spirit it is not the Gospel, not as Paul thought about it.

So, the Gospel preacher is to declare the Whole Counsel of God AND pray for the empowering work of the Holy Spirit so that he will have preached the Gospel.

If you look a little further in our text you will realize that this is what Paul is saying. “In it (the gospel) the Righteousness (Holiness) of God is revealed and so is the Wrath of God.

Until these two principles are comprehended in some genuine way the rest of the story cannot possibly be understood in any useful way.

No one who fails to understand how Holy God is will ever understand the Death of Christ, why it happened, what was accomplished in it, and where we stand in relation to it. Neither will the one who fails to comprehend the Wrath of God.

The Gospel cannot be told without telling of the Person of God. Who is this Person you are asking someone to believe and trust with their eternal welfare?

And the Key Truth about God is that one which Paul mentioned first in this letter... His Infinite Holiness... “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed...”

Now, on the one hand, the Holiness of God is marvelous beyond words.

The angels who live in His Presence are continually stricken with wonder and amazement.

Every human who has ever been granted even a glimpse of His Glory has been profoundly changed by the experience.

But, there is another side to this reality, and God explained it to Moses.

Ex 33:18-23

18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:

23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen. KJV

Notice the expressions, ‘my goodness,’ ‘my face’ and ‘my glory.’ They are all referencing His

Holiness. It is of Infinite Intensity so that physical beings cannot survive in His Presence. Even the Angels hide their faces.

Isa 6:1-3

- 1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.
- 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.
- 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. KJV

It really is difficult for humans to conceive of this Being Who is so Profoundly Holy that to the rest of the Universe, whether spiritual or physical, He is perceived as a brilliant light and a burning fire so intense that no living creature may look upon His Brilliance.

And, it is This Being Who has condescended to reveal something of Himself to us in His Word. That alone makes the whole thing Good News. But such is the Essence of the Lord Our God.

And, there is no Gospel if this Reality of His Holiness is withheld in the message.

To imagine that such a Being could receive corrupt sinners into His Presence, into Communion with Himself, in their natural condition, is to imagine one of the most profound lies that has ever tracked across the mind of sinful man.

But this is the hope on which almost all men rest their eternal destiny.

They speculate that God's Love is such that He will receive them in eternity with their sins and corruptions, that He will be willing to take corrupt man into Intimate Relationship with Himself.

If He were to do that, man fails to comprehend, His Goodness, His Glory, would destroy them.

Even the favorite verse of the "God is Love" crowd tells otherwise.

John 3:16

- 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. KJV

Some are to have everlasting life while others perish. God in Love gave His Son so that men might be delivered from eternal devastation. God was unwilling simply to 'forgive' the wicked. Something had to be done which would fundamentally change men so that they might be able to commune with Him both now and in eternity.

2 Cor 5:19-21

- 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
- 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. KJV

His Holiness is such that unless we are made into a mirror of that Holiness we cannot be accepted by Him.

Many people think that the Wrath of God is the problem but it is not. It is the Holiness of God which keeps us shut out of heaven until He reveals His Son to us and in us.

The Son came to give everlasting life to those who believe on Him *so that* they will not perish by being refused entrance into the Eternal Dwellingplace of God.

A Holy God should terrify unholy men. And, I will tell you a secret (He does!).

Speaking of the Love of God, we must all realize that something very profound must happen before God will love sinners.

We are told that Jesus stood as a Slain Lamb before the world was ever created.

Rev 13:8

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. KJV

All of those who would ultimately come to faith were viewed from the beginning through the lense of their ultimate redemption.

How do I know that? ***Their names were written in a book!***

Phil 4:3

3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life. KJV

Rev 3:5

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. KJV

In that context He loved them, ordaining that the Work of His Son would ultimately solve the problem of their sinfulness.

Rom 8:28-39

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called,

- them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
- 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?
32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.
34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.
35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. KJV

It was the Work of Christ that provided Justification, which made all the rest of it possible. Justification deals with sin to the satisfaction of the Holiness of God so that He does not hold us away from himself.

Heb 2:11

- 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, KJV

Heb 11:16

- 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. KJV

Wicked men arrogate to themselves the Love of God without any justification. They have been deceived by preachers who lie.

Ps 7:11

- 11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. KJV

Those who tell people otherwise are corrupting the Gospel.

Heb 10:26-31

- 26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,
27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:
29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

- 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.
31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. KJV

By the way, the ‘sin’ mentioned in v. 26 is that described in v. 29, the rejection and turning away from Christ.

Here is a part of the Gospel that must be embraced. The Holiness of God expresses itself toward rebellion and disobedience as Wrath and Anger. The two things are not opposites, Holiness and Wrath, and they are not incompatible. They both exist within the Person of the Eternal God.

The enormity of this picture is the reason we must deal carefully with children.

Telling them to “ask Jesus into their hearts” without explaining what the problem is, Who God is, and What Christ Has Done, confuses all of the issues and it is not the Gospel.

Hear me, it is not the gospel.

Man needs God because He is Holy and because Eternity Future has a place of peace reserved only for those whom God makes Holy through the Work of His Son.
To think otherwise is to disbelieve God Himself.

Rev 22:12-16

- 12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.
13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.
14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.
16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. KJV

All who hear and understand the Truth are invited to take part in a blessed eternity.

Rev 22:17

- 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely KJV

Every human should ask God in an honest and a profound way to make this all true to him. This is the Gospel, the Power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.