

Romans 1:16-17

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"

When Paul spoke these words, it had been just a little more than thirty years after Jesus' death. Christianity was not yet a major player. Paul was preaching the Gospel to a Roman world that was filled with numerous belief systems. The Romans had adopted most of the Greek gods, adding them to their own multiple God structure.

Christianity, to most Romans, was just a story about a dead Jewish carpenter from a small conquered nation. Paul's eagerness to go to Rome was fueled by the fact that he knew he was set apart to spread the Gospel... to tell the truth of the Messiah.

So Paul states... I am not ashamed...

I have to think though... There's no sense in declaring that you're not ashamed of something unless you've been tempted to feel ashamed of it... or have been... gives me encouragement to think that the Apostle Paul had doubts.

Paul is saying... I am proud of the good news! It is God's powerful way of saving all people who have faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. God reveals Himself through the Gospel... we receive it by faith and live because of it! My confidence is not misplaced... there is no disgrace in knowing Jesus... in fact there's power!

Power ... the Greek word means miraculous power, strength

Salvation... the Greek word means rescue, safety, deliverance, physical and moral rescue. Present tense and future tense... God has both covered.

The Gospel is not potential salvation. The Gospel is promised salvation. The Gospel, the Good News is the power of God for salvation. He makes salvation happen! The preaching of the Gospel does not merely make salvation possible; it powers salvation in those who come to the King by faith. The power of God transforms, redeems, restores, delivers.... Makes new... all through the Gospel!

Do we really believe that? Because if we do believe the Gospel has the power to change lives (including our own), this passage takes on a whole new level of meaning.

I am not ashamed... The Greek word for shame means to be disappointed, feel disgraced.

So often we make this passage about not being afraid to witness... this Scripture is so much deeper than a motivational message to evangelize and not be wimp. Sons and daughters... don't need that type of motivation. We are motivated by love for the Father and the faith we have in His plan of redemption... the Good news... the Gospel... it's the power of God for salvation!

Paul is saying... the Gospel message does not disappoint me... I'm not afraid of how it makes me look, I'm not disgraced because I've met the Master, I'm not disappointed with His message, the cost of the message because I know firsthand of its power to save... to change the path I was on and to set me free.

I am not ashamed... do we really believe that?

Shame is poisoning to our identity... it lies about our value to God.

Since the Garden human beings have had a shame problem. Shame from the sin, the past, the mistakes, the bad decisions, and the effects from other people's sins... all of it causes the human heart to hide from God. Shame is the belief that we are not enough, we made wrong, and we are unlovable. Shame has us believing that we are flawed and THEREFORE unworthy of love.

Shame is a huge mouthful of disappointed regurgitating over and over....

We feel shame in three primary ways.

First we feel shame because of things we have done or felt we should have done.

Second, we feel shame because of things done to us that deeply wounded us.

Third, we feel shame for who we are.

Like Adam and Eve, when we believe the lie of shame, we seek to hide. We look to everything besides the Gospel to give us worth - success, exercise, relationships, food. As we turn to these idols and coping strategies we hope for validation, acceptance and affirmation.

These idols of self medication... never meet this need.

If we give more power, more authority to our own opinion of ourselves and to the lies that shame tells us... please hear this...

Then we believe that the Gospel message has disappointed us... that God's power of setting us free is not stronger than what keeps us bound. This is what Scriptures call an idol... we bow before it and give it authority over us.

Idolatry is giving something ultimate authority to determine our worth. They don't take our authority, we give it away.

This is why this passage in Romans is more than being afraid to witness... this is being afraid to trust the power of God to SAVE us and to change us... God wants us free from that fear.

Only the Gospel frees us from the cycle of our shame.

The Gospel is the only power that can affirm our identity, rescue our value and prove that we are loved by God.

Isaiah 43:1 says

“But now thus says the Lord, he you created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”

Here in this Scripture is a powerful truth... You only use a person’s name when you know them!

The cross is the ultimate reminder of this love and belonging. Jesus died on the cross so we never doubt we are known and loved.

God answers these questions “Am I loved? Does anybody really know me? Is this really God’s best life for me?” ... with powerful answers from His word.

Romans 5:5

“Hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

Isaiah 54:4

“Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth.”

2 Timothy 1:7-8

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (8) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.”

Romans 10:11

“For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

The Gospel takes us from disgrace to full of grace! On the cross, Jesus bore the full weight of our guilt and broke the power of our shame.

When you are free from shame you no longer hide from the purpose for your life

Part of Jesus' mission on earth was to release captives from their prisons, shame is a strong prison! It's one thing to believe that your sin has been removed from you; it's quite another to believe that there is a divine love that can never be taken from you.

This is the power of the Gospel... to get us to believe by faith that we can never be separated from His love.

Romans 8:38

"And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow--not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love."

We are not frozen by the areas of our life still being worked on by God... we are not disqualified by the fact that we still NEED a savior. We need His love!

If we want to see lasting change in our lives and the world... we actually need to believe what we say we believe. The gospel removes shame, it removes fear, and it removes guilt, it restores identity, it restores innocence...all through the power of the Gospel!

Galatians 5:1

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

Stand firm = to persevere... stand your ground (this is a military term)

Submit again = to hold in, be ensnare (trapped) hold a grudge against someone

Shame will keep you captive...but God sets us free!

I am not ashamed!