

Chapter Twelve

Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

“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” (Romans 1:15-16).

To truly be a Christian is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. To be a disciple is to be an evangelist. The three words are almost synonyms. It seems strange that God would need to have Paul make this statement. Why would any saved person be ashamed of how he got saved or be ashamed to tell others how to get saved? It may seem strange, but in reality very few Christians actively seek to bring lost people to Christ.

Paul was ready to preach the gospel. “I am ready” (v 15) is from the Greek word *prothumos* (proth'-oo-mos). It is made of two Greek words. *Pro* meaning before in the sense of superiority and *thumos* (thoo-mos') meaning a boiling passion.

Paul had an extreme passion to preach the gospel. It was this passion to see people saved that kept Paul going through the difficulties, the persecutions, the rejections and the tribulations of evangelism. To Paul, ministry meant evangelism.

Paul had a passion for souls because he had a passion for Christ. When you love someone, you tell others about him or her. Your life is preoccupied with the person you love. When you have a passion for someone, your life is consumed with that person. Nothing or no one is more important than pleasing the person you have a passion for.

People with a passion for souls have that passion because they know that is their Savior's passion. If you lack a passion for souls, perhaps you should go back to the Cross and rehearse what your Savior did to save you. If you lack a passion for souls, perhaps you should begin to rekindle your personal relationship with Christ. Passion comes from devotion and intimacy. A person cannot have a passion for souls and a long distance relationship with Jesus. Consistent soul winners usually have an excellent devotional life, an intimate walk with the Lord and a desire for personal holiness in their lives.

Preaching the gospel is simply telling people about a wonderful Savior Who loves us and the extremes He went to in order to save our souls from an eternal Hell. To be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of Christ.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The word “gospel” is translated from the Greek word *euaggelion* (yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on). The word “gospel” is a term referring to a broad scope of things regarding Jesus Christ. Specifically it refers to the glad tidings of salvation through Christ and the proclamation of the gift of salvation by grace received through faith in Christ and His finished work of redemption. In the broader sense, it refers to all that Jesus taught and did for us and what He will do for us in the future. His life and works, his death, and resurrection came to be called the gospel or glad tidings.

People cannot get saved without hearing the gospel. The power of God to save souls is intrinsic to the gospel. “Power” is from the Greek word *dunamis* (doo'-nam-is). *Dunamis* (doo'-nam-is) refers to the inherent power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. The gospel, like a stick of dynamite, is inherent with power. The inherent power of the gospel is the power of God to regenerate a soul dead in trespasses and sin. However, just as a stick of dynamite needs to be lit before its inherent power becomes evident, the gospel needs to be preached before the power of God to save souls becomes evident.

“¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher” (Romans 10:13-14)?

People cannot be saved without hearing and understanding the gospel. Understanding is an act of God upon a person's heart (not his mind). God communicates with the conscience (heart). To believe is an act of the heart, not of the mind.

Apostasy and unbelief blinds the eyes to spiritual truth and closes the mind to spiritual understanding. To get beyond unbelief, a person must be able to see, hear and understand through means beyond the human senses. Preaching the gospel is much more than transferring facts intellectually. It is one heart controlled by the Spirit of God communicating life changing truths to the heart of another.

“¹⁰ And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? ¹¹ He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. ¹² For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. ¹³ Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: ¹⁵ For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. ¹⁶ But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*. ¹⁸ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. ²⁰ But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹ Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. ²² He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. ²³ But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:10-23).

The power of God to save is activated by a public confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritually understanding the gospel leads us to publicly identify ourselves with Jesus Christ.

“⁸ But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; ⁹ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 10:8-11).

Saved people publicly identify themselves with Jesus Christ and His gospel. The true evangelist believes with all his heart that the power of God to save is intrinsic to the gospel. The Spirit filled evangelist shares the gospel and knows the power of God is working on the heart to bring about spiritual understanding, conversion and regeneration. There is nothing in this world more exciting than sharing the gospel.

Most Christians would boldly say they are not ashamed of the gospel. However, the degree this is true is manifested by the action of confessing Christ before men. If we are not ashamed of the gospel, we will proclaim the gospel. The word “ashamed” refers to something that causes us dishonor or causes us to blush. It can also refer to feelings that keep us from being public about identification with someone or something. If we are unwilling to publicly speak of the sacrifice of Christ and His free gift of salvation, this manifest being ashamed of Christ. By that definition, many Christians are ashamed of the gospel.

The gospel is the greatest message of truth ever given to this world. It details the accomplishments of the greatest Person Who ever walked the face of this earth. God has commissioned us to communicate that story to everyone in the whole world and to keep doing it until they understand.

Unless we do it, people will not hear and people will not be saved. Evangelism is God's ordained way of spreading the good news about Christ. You and I (believers) are the only media God has ordained to get His message to a lost and dying world. Will you GO with the gospel?

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1. Discuss the meaning of the words *Christian*, *disciple* and *evangelist*. Discuss why these words are almost synonyms and how they define one another. _____

2. Discuss the significance of the Greek word translated “I am ready” (*prothumos*; proth'-oo-mos) as it regards a passion for proclaiming the gospel. _____

3. Discuss where this kind of passion comes from and detail something you might do to cultivate it in your life. _____

4. Discuss the meaning of the word translated “gospel” (*euaggelion*; yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on) both in its broadest sense and its specific details regarding the work of Christ. _____

5. Discuss the practical significance to the evangelist in understanding that the gospel is inherent with the power of God. _____

6. Read Romans 10:13-14. Discuss the significance of these verses from your understanding of the inherent power of God in the gospel. _____

7. Read Matthew 13:10-23. Discuss the meaning of the statement: “*Understanding is an act of God upon a person’s heart (not their mind).*” _____

8. Discuss how your understanding of the above might effect the way you approach a soul with the gospel, what soul winning is about and what it is not about. _____

9. Read Romans 10:8-11. Discuss what a person needs to do to actuate the power of God in the gospel to save him. _____

10. Discuss the meaning of confessing Christ as Lord. _____
