



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

## **The Crown Jewel**

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Romans 1:16-17

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*<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. <sup>17</sup> For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”*

*(Pastor prays)*

The Crown Jewel. If the Bible is the most important book in the world and Romans is the most important letter in the book of the Bible, then what we have come upon here in verse 16 is the Crown Jewel of the Bible and the only hope for our world.

Here we find the thesis statement for Romans- and— I would argue— the whole point of God’s revealed truth in the Bible. This is the centerpiece. If you to memorize one passage for your whole life to help you understand how God works in the Gospel, then this would be the one.

Now it's important, on the front end, that we are using the same dictionary when we talk about the Gospel. When I say Gospel, here's what I mean: God is the holy creator who created us in His image. But when Adam and Eve sinned, which is called “The Fall,” the fellowship with God was broken. And ever since then, man has lived in a fallen state. We are sinners, by nature and by choice. And since God is just and sin against Him is a cosmic crime, sin must be punished to satisfy justice. But God is also loving and He so loved the world that He sent His son, Jesus, who lived perfectly and then died as a substitution, taking the punishment in the place of sinners, satisfying justice. God raised Jesus from the dead as a declaration of victory and a

promise that anyone who believes the Gospel (trusts the Gospel), that person is saved. That's the Gospel, and that's what Paul is unwrapping for us in these two verses.

## **The Gospel is Proof That God Loves Us**

### **The Gospel Keeps Us Humble**

Do you see what Paul says there in verse 16? "I am not ashamed of the Gospel." It's like he's saying, I know this is gonna rub people the wrong way and it won't make me popular, but I am absolutely confident because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is superior to any religion, system or philosophy ever known on earth. The world doesn't need a better system of educators, more social reform or new ideas in religion. It needs the Gospel. But the true Gospel will not be loved by everyone. Paul knew that it's hard to share the Gospel. The temptation is to be intimidated because the Gospel is repulsive to the unsaved person. Paul says it's foolishness to those who are perishing. The Gospel is unattractive to the worldly person because it seems judgmental, because the Gospel warns us of God's holiness and justice and punishment of those without Christ. The Gospel exposes man's sin and wickedness, depravity and lostness and reminds us that we don't bring anything to salvation except the sin that makes it necessary.

And the reason that a "prosperity gospel" is so popular is that it's not offensive to the world because it offers the world what it *wants*. And Paul is reminding us that we cannot back away from the truth of the Gospel, even though hard truths are offensive and off-putting.

And I just want to encourage you to trust the spirit of God when you are ridiculed and misunderstood. You will start to see more about this but we are going to start asking: Who's your one? Who is the *one* person in your life you are praying about to share the Gospel with this year?

We can take comfort from what the writer of Hebrews said about suffering for the Gospel in Hebrews 13: 12 - 13. <sup>12</sup>*And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.* <sup>13</sup>*Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.* So, part of what God does in the Gospel, is the Gospel humbles us. The second point tells us why.

### **The Gospel Keeps Us Saved**

Verse 16 says: I am not ashamed of the gospel. Why? For it is the power of God for salvation. Let's split the phrase up and deal with each section.

### **The Gospel is the Power of God**

The gospel is the *dunamis* power. This word is where we get the word “dynamite.” The dynamic and unharnessable power of God to effect salvation... the power of God to grip the mind, stab the conscience, warm the heart, save the soul and sanctify the life. It's the power of God to make a drunk man sober and a crooked man straight. The Gospel is the creating power of God, the resurrection power to take a man— dead in sin—alive in Christ! John MacArthur says the Gospel carries with it the omnipotence of God whose power alone is sufficient to save people from their sin.

Paul said in I Corinthians 1:18, *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* This is the unsearchable, effectual, mighty power of God; the sovereign, glorious, great power of God. No heart is so hard that He can't break it or so foul that He won't clean it. Why? Look back at the verse. I am not ashamed of the Gospel because ...

### **It is the Power of God for Salvation.**

Salvation. That is the Greek word *soteria* and it means deliverance or rescue. The Gospel is the power of God that rescues us from the penalty of sin and the pain of being separated from God. Our sin has us free-falling into a bottomless dungeon with ever-increasing velocity and depth, and the Gospel is God reaching to us, in Christ, to stop us and save us.

What are we saved from? We are saved from an eternal Hell, saved from being lost, and Romans 5: 9 says we are saved from the wrath of God! We are saved from a purposeless life that ends with an eternal judgment.

Remember what I said in the intro, that God is holy and just. We live in God's courtroom and we are handcuffed by our sins and branded with a scarlet letter. We've been found guilty and the gallows awaits. We've heard people say of guilty convicts, “Only God can save him now!” But the truth is, only God can save him ever! He does it through the Gospel, the

life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He has the power to save and to keep us saved. It is eternal security. Let me tell you something else about the Gospel:

### **The Gospel Levels the Playing Field**

Let's finish out the verse. Verse 16 says, I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew and then the Gentile. The driving force in this phrase is, *everyone that believes*. Believe. That word comes from the word *pistevo*, to trust or rely on, to have faith in. Being saved is not “going to church” or “doing right” or “being kind” ... or quitting drinking. Salvation is believing in what Jesus has done on the cross for your salvation; it's for everyone. Could anything be simpler than that, a simple trust in God's son, Jesus, dying on the cross for your sins?

You'll notice further, that there are no racial or ethnic barriers. It is given to *every* person who believes, the Jews and Gentiles. Belief, trust, to rely on. It is a giving over to something that you have done but trusting in what has been done. Have you actually believed? Let me pull one more thing from this passage. Verse 17 is the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

### **The Gospel Shows Us Our God**

Verse 17 says, for in it (the Gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed *for* faith and *from* faith. “As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.” Righteousness. That's a word Paul uses more than 35 times in the book of Romans alone. The righteousness of God. That which God *is*, that which God *has*, and that which God *gives*. The righteousness that is in God himself, He provides in Christ. The righteousness of God that condemns us when we *reject* it is the same righteousness that saves us when we *accept* it. God is righteousness, man is unrighteous and the Gospel shows us how the righteousness of God can be given to unrighteous men.

Martin Luther says this happens at the cross. 2 Corinthians 5: 21 says, <sup>21</sup>*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*. The righteousness we have in Christ originates in God, is prepared by God, it is revealed in the Gospel, and offered to us. And verse 17 says this righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, the mighty shall live by faith. From faith for faith. This is an

intensified phrase that means *entirely* of faith... that we are saved by God's grace alone, through faith, alone in Christ alone.

Paul bags it up with scripture quoting Habakkuk 2: 4, *as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith*. Today I've set before you the Gospel. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes. Turn and put your faith in Jesus.

*(Pastor prays)*