

Intro: The book of Romans is an epic book. It's epic because it's Paul's most reasoned presentation regarding all things gospel: what it is. who needs it. who receives it. And how it transforms a life. All things gospel.

It's why this book has been so instrumental in bringing many to salvation—even early church fathers like Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Welsey came to know the saving power of the gospel by studying this book.

Perhaps the same can be said of you this morning—you came to know Jesus and your need for him by way of the Romans Road (3:23/6:23/5:8/10:9-10). And perhaps if you have never bent the knee to Jesus, you will do so because of these verses today.

I've strung these four verses together to help us capture the flow of thought from Paul and Lord willing, personalize them for ourselves this morning

Romans 1:14–17 [14] I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

[15] So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

[16] 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.”

Gospel: in the original language of the NT—Greek—that word is "euangelion." A word that was very much in use already during the writing of Scripture. It's two words put together that mean “good announcement.”

Cultures of old would announce good tidings to the people throughout a land by way of heralding. By way of running and proclaiming good news to whoever had ears to hear: good news like a victory on the battlefield, or like the rise of a new king or emperor, or even an invitation to celebrate a special occasion. The good news was sent forth to be spread throughout the land.

We now use the word to refer to the good announcement of the salvation God has provided to man through Jesus Christ on our behalf. The good news. The gospel.

*In my role as a pastor, I have had the privilege to have many conversations with people about the gospel. Many of you are perhaps sitting here this morning. Whether it's regarding baptism/membership/premarital/marriage/BSC or just grabbing coffee, those conversations are hands down my favorite conversations to have. Because nothing is more important for our lives today, and nothing else matters at the end of our lives—except the gospel.

Apart from being forgiven of your sin and being reconciled to God himself ... nothing is more important. That is not an overstatement. That is the overwhelming point of God's Word. What we do or don't do with Jesus is what matters more than anything else in this brief life we are given.

And what Paul does here in the beginning of his letter to the Romans is make a personal statement about the gospel. And it's clear from Paul that the gospel is of utmost importance to him. And may we be challenged to make that true of us today.

[14] I am under obligation (Paul is indebted to preach the gospel; Paul has to give to others what has been given to him. He has to. He must. The gospel was never meant to be something that is only received and never proclaimed. And for Paul, not to give the gospel to others would be disobedience) **both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.** (IOW—everyone. The educated and the uneducated. No one should be left out. The gospel is for everyone, and he is under compulsion to take it to as many people as is humanly possible) **[15] So I am eager** (since he is under obligation; he chooses to be willing and ready) **to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.** Even to the believers in Rome, Paul needs to preach the gospel, so they are better able to fully comprehend the gospel. Not to mention preaching to those who still need to receive it.

And the only way for Paul to fulfill his duty is to open up his mouth and articulate the greatest message about the greatest savior who has come to address our greatest problem. Which means it was meant to be spoken.

As I mentioned already this morning, I want to challenge us to personalize Paul's statement, and I have 3 questions to help get us there.

Are you speaking the gospel? (14-15) As a believer, are you eager and willing to preach the gospel? Paul's obligation needs to be our obligation.

IOW: Every believer is called to preach the gospel. I am not talking about formal preaching like I am doing today, but rather the clear and bold articulation of the gospel to those he has placed in your life.

Gospel proclamation is for all believers. It is not just for a small sect of the church, like apostles in the NT—Paul, missionaries, and pastors.

Jesus literally commands us to go and make disciples—which can't be done without the proclamation of the gospel.

We as believers, by way of the Great Commission, are now under obligation to speak and to preach the gospel.

There is a saying that used to be thrown around frequently in the church world. Too frequently, I believe, and it says, *"Preach the gospel and, if necessary, use words."* IOW, your life needs to be so in line with the gospel that people get saved simply by watching you. And as a last resort, if you must, you put words to why you live the way that you do. “Preach the gospel and, if necessary, use words. “It's catchy, but it's not biblical.

There's a sliver of truth in there for sure expressed in one of our core values as a church. **Courageous evangelism—in word and deed.** In speech and in action. *Believing that people are lost and Jesus saves, we share the Gospel and our lives boldly and urgently.*

We as gospel believers should live a life that shows we have the HS living within us.

And people watching your sanctified life should have questions about why your life is the way that it is.

But if you are not connecting your changed life to the articulation of the gospel, you're just a really nice moral person.

People are not saved by observation alone. People are saved by hearing the verbal explanation that while they were still sinners, Christ died for them. That's the good news. And good news is meant to be spoken.

That's what **Romans Chapter 10** is all about **How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? -- "Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ."**

Was that not the way you were saved? You *heard* the gospel. Like most of us, you probably needed to hear it multiple times. But nonetheless, you heard it because it was spoken to you. Even if you were drawn to the Bible and read it yourself, you *heard* God *speak* to you through his living and active Word.

It's why language acquisition is the first major step for those in cross-cultural missions. Learn the heart language of the people you have been sent to so you can speak the gospel, have it understood, and, God-willing, have it received. No language comprehension, then there is no effective gospel articulation.

*If God has saved you, you are now under obligation to speak about the gospel that saved you. You must use your words and proclaim it to others.

But maybe you think that you can't proclaim the gospel because you just don't know enough. Ultimately, if you have been saved, you know all that you need to know. You may not fully understand all the facets of salvation. But you do know what God has done for you. You do know what you believed in to be saved.

To be saved is to know the gospel and to know what one must do to be saved.

GOSPEL: The good news about the salvation God has provided through Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection that saves us from the penalty of sin and brings us into right standing with God.

So, just to be clear; the gospel isn't about making you the best version of yourself. The gospel isn't so Jesus can be your new therapist. The gospel isn't the magic mantra to make you healthy and wealthy.

The gospel is about reconciling you to a holy and just God, the forgiveness of your sins, and Jesus Christ ruling and reigning over your life.

And the best way to bring that up and articulate the gospel is to speak from your testimony. If you are saved, then you have a testimony. You have a story about how you were saved.

The easiest and best way to speak the gospel is to share about how you were saved:

ONSCREEN: You **Admitted. Believed. Repented. Received.** Read the slide.

Share your testimony and be explicit about that. Not your circumstances but how you're forgiven and adopted.

God's way to spread the gospel is through you. It is by saving people through the spoken word and then using those saved people to go and speak the gospel.

If you are not verbalizing the gospel, ask the Lord of hosts to give you the courage, compulsion, and clarity to do so.

Are you unashamed of the gospel? [16] 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.

The power to save people doesn't come from us. We can save no one. The power to save comes from God alone. That's why we pray and ask God save those who need to be saved.

But how is his power revealed to save people? By the preaching of the gospel. God's power travels with the gospel. God's power brings about salvation. That's why Paul is unembarrassed of the gospel because it's all on God and not him. He is simply called to preach it and let God do what he is going to do. Which we pray is to save people.

Now preaching the gospel doesn't automatically save people. Nor does it save everyone. God's power to save only happens for those who *believe*. Jew and Greek—regardless of ethnicity or location. **To everyone who believes.**

Anyone who fully and completely places their trust in the very truth and the very person of Jesus Christ experiences the power of God for salvation.

But in spite of all that, we unfortunately can be too often embarrassed by the gospel. Sheepish. Hands in the pockets and staring at the floor—unwilling to trust in the power of God and speak about the greatest truth and gift that could ever be conceived.

I think there are at least 4 reasons for our embarrassment. Four reasons that should cause us to examine our lives and ask if one of them is the reason for our mouths remaining shut when it comes to the gospel.

- **It's foolish**

At least to the unsanctified mind, the mere idea of the gospel is absurd.

Absurd that God would become like us in order to die in our place for free. What god would do that?

There is only one that would and did. And unless God changes a heart, it is silliness to believe it. **Onscreen: 1 Corinthians 1:18 ¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

The gospel is folly to the unsaved, and only when we preach the gospel is there an opportunity for them to be convinced otherwise.

We must not be ashamed of what the world calls foolish.

Secondly, we may be embarrassed because...

- **It's offensive**

It's offensive because it exposes the very heart condition of mankind.

The gospel identifies people as sinners, enemies of God, separated from God, insufficient to save themselves, needy, hopeless, and helpless.

And that is an offensive assessment to people, especially in this self-obsessed and sensitive culture that we currently live in.

The gospel says we are not even loved by God because we are lovable and wonderful. We are only loved because God, in his immeasurable mercy, in spite of our sin, chooses to love us because of no reason on our part.

And that offends the very core of people's evaluation of themselves. People believe themselves to be lovable because they are good. Or at least good enough. They think they deserve eternity with God because they are not as bad as they could be, or at least not as bad as their neighbor.

The gospel says otherwise; the gospel exposes the fact that we are totally depraved and dead in our sin. And that offends sensibilities. And unfortunately, it can cause us to keep our mouths shut.

We may also find ourselves embarrassed of the gospel because...

- **It's exclusive**

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the *only* way to be reconciled to God. It's not the best way among many different ways. It is the best way, because it is the one and only perfect way to be forgiven and made right with a holy and just God.

Onscreen: Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Jesus alone saves.

No one has a problem talking about ambiguous faith. Or even discussing God until you bring up the true and biblical Jesus. Then people have a problem. And it can shut our mouths.

The gospel is unapologetically exclusive. It is inclusive in that it's for everyone, but it is exclusive in what it offers. And for that reason, it can cause us to shrink back and to be ashamed of it—once again, forcing our mouths shut.

And fourth, we can be embarrassed because...

- **It's costly**

The gospel is free; grace is free, or it's not grace. But that doesn't mean there isn't a cost that flows from it.

And too often if we open our mouths and proclaim Jesus, we can offer easy believism.

Easy believism is the idea that all someone has to do to be saved is to just say a prayer. “You believe in God? You have some form of faith? You're good to go.” Easy believism says, “No change is needed. No dying to oneself. No picking up your cross and denying yourself. Just call yourself a Christian, and you are saved.” When we sell that unbiblical garbage, we do nothing but allow people to live with a false hope of salvation. Meanwhile, they remain condemned.

The gospel is free, but it costs. **Whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.** But it's so worth it; what we give up—our puny and temporary kingdom—is so little compared to what is gained in Christ.

We could be wrongly embarrassed by the gospel because it's offensive, exclusive, foolish, and costly. But Paul wasn't, nor should we.

Last question for you this morning;

Are you living fully dependent on the gospel? [17] For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Faith is the lynchpin to the gospel. No faith, no gospel to deal with our condemned state.

In our sin, what we need is to be declared not guilty. We need to be able to stand before a holy God and for him to not see our sin. And the only way for that to happen is if God places us in Christ so that now when God looks upon us, he sees Christ's righteousness and not our filthy rags.

In the gospel, God's righteousness is given to those who believe by faith. It is available to be credited to those who place their complete trust in what Jesus has done for them.

That is the continued reason why Paul is unashamed of the gospel. We are justified by faith.

And by faith we are now dependent on the work of Jesus, as long as we live this life. **“The righteous shall live by faith.”** or **By faith the righteous shall live.** The gospel is not a one-and-done experience. The gospel needs to be an everyday, every-hour reality in our lives. We need to live in dependence on the gospel.

Which means if we are to preach the gospel to others, we must first preach it to ourselves.

Author PDT says that “no one speaks to you more than yourself. No one has more influence on your life than you do.”

So in light of that reality, if you are going to talk to yourself, preach the gospel to yourself.

Every day **consider** the beauty of Christ and his work. Every day **remember** you have been declared righteous. Every day **rest** in the finished work of Christ on your behalf.

And when you do that consistently, you won't be able to stop yourself from preaching it to others.

Are you speaking the gospel? Are you unashamed of the gospel? Are you living fully dependent on the gospel?

May the answer be a resounding yes, as we go forth today.