

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED: Romans 1:16-17

INTRODUCTION:

Keeping with Dave's theme Surrendering to Grace as he teach through Galatians

- I want us to look at Paul's letter to believers in Rome starting with a verse that clearly introduces the idea that salvation is by the work of God alone.
- It's the verse that dramatically changed the life of a legalistic monk tormented with his own sin and the holiness of God – Martin Luther
- It's the verse that set in motion the protestant reformation in 1517 with Martin Luther post his 95 theses on the door of The Church at Wittenberg against the Catholic Church use of indulgences – it is by faith in Jesus Christ alone that becomes the center piece for salvation and not one's works earning their favor with God.

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 Gentile, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, the righteous man shall live by faith.*

My goal is that we would leave here with greater appreciation, confidence and assurance of our salvation by grace and a greater sense of the mercy, the power and the purpose of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Background on the Letter to the Romans:

- The Apostle wrote the around the mid to late 50 AD
- Paul had never been to Rome, but wanted to get there
- Scholars generally agree that at the time Paul was writing this letter to the Romans there was a large community of Christian there probably meeting homes – houses churches.
- The church was made up of Jews who believed Jesus as the Messiah and Gentiles who had originally been "God fearers" those who originally found Judaism appealing as a belief system.

Romans - Paul's most complete statement of the gospel:

- **Example:** I'm sure the people who invested with Bernie Madoff are disappointed in their investment and been shamed by a con-man ponzi scheme...especially if they boasted of their returns and even touted him as a good investor.

So why will this message of good news never disappoint?

- Because of the power of God...and because His power is omnipotent power (unlimited, infinite power and because is God He can use it as he pleases...this power is part of His Devine nature...
- [And] because of God's love and mercy He use His power to save a people from their sins and His wrath for His eternal purposes in Christ Jesus.
- This is an effectual power to everyone who believes. To believe means to trust in God to save them from their sins and death.

...to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles

- God dealt in a very special way with the Jews in the OT and followed this by sending His Son to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel"
- The Jews were given the first opportunity to receive Jesus as their Lord during His ministry and after. (John 1:11; Acts 1:18; 3:26)
- Doesn't mean we evangelize Jews first before sharing the gospel with a Gentile...Paul did go to synagogue first...**point here:** God's love and power is directed to all ethnic groups.

The righteousness of God revealed...what does this mean?

Is this referring to God's righteousness, i.e. His righteous character or to righteousness (justification) received from God?

- Clearly, the character of God is involved in the sense that what He does and provides must be in keeping with His Character.
- **Martin Luther:** Always struggled with this verse seeing it as God's righteous justice. One day while preparing for a lecture to his students was studying a commentary on this verse from Augustine and the "light went on" – no longer did he see this verse to mean God's retributive justice but instead righteousness/justification freely imputed to sinners by God's sovereign grace.
- Therefore, this is a salvation freely given by faith in Christ that satisfies His righteous justice...this is good news.

Faith to Faith....

- Salvation is always been by faith even in the OT...never been by keeping the Law

Now you would think following this introductory verse to the gospel as explained in the book of Romans that verse 18 would start the revelation of God's grace...but no Paul starts with the revelation of God's wrath.

- Like some one asking you the question: "I've got good news and I got bad news, what do you want to hear first?"

....WRATH OF GOD REVEALED...

Read verses 18 thru 20..."so that they are without excuse"

- No one is every going to use the excuse when they stand before God on that judgment day..."you never made yourself know to me."
- **Example:** Schematic diagram of the human eye...Dr. Alex office.
- To hold to the position that we have evolved from slime is a lie...see verse 29
- Do we see the wrath of God reveal in this present age...absolutely...read verses 24; 26; 28...

Chapter 2 verse 15 we are told the Law of God is actually written on our hearts...

- There is no innocent native in Africa, South America, New Guinea or for that matter urban America..."I never went to church no one every told me about Your laws..."
- **We have external revelation of God and we have internal revelation of God...so that we are without excuse.**

The bad news continues....

Chapter 3: 9-11..."none righteous, not even one..."

- No seekers of God...NOT EVEN ONE...
- We have churches today that design the worship to attract seekers...they may want the benefits of what Christianity offers...comfort, peace, joy, friendships (fellowship) **but they are not seeking God.**
- **Example:** Ken Hilts coffee time: talk about all kinds of subjects...politics, financials, theology, weather, etc

- *Story...about his ^{friend} brother becoming a Christian, but doubting if he is saved...Ken's response: do you read your bible? Are you interested learning about God? I think God's got a hold of you.*
- *John: 6: 37-38; 44: All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out...This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day... No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.*
- *Everyone who believes, put faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the "power of God for Salvation is at work...this is the good news."*

THE GOSPEL – GOOD NEWS:

The Apostle first definition of this good news...apart from 1:16-17

Read Romans 3:21-23... "NOW" apart from...introduces us to the wonder of God's mercy and forgiveness through faith in Christ...

Read Romans 3:27-28: Boasting is excluded... on what basis? Works – No, but on the basis of faith. We can't even brag about our faith, for this too I believe is a work of the power of God on our hearts.

- **Ephesians 2:8-9:** *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Granted there are differences among scholars as to if the parenthesis "and this not of yourself" is referring to "have been saved" or to "faith". I think it refers to faith because it is consistent with Paul is proclaiming the antithesis between faith and works in all of his letters (writings).

1 Corinthians 1:26-31: *Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: " ... him who boasts boast in the Lord."*

- **Example:** Abraham in Romans 4:1-5 “reckoned as righteousness”

Romans 5: 1-5; 8-11: results of our justification

- Peace with God: not a subjective peace but an objective peace – a reality that the war is over no longer do we need to fear the anger (ultimate wrath) of God...see verse 8-11.
- Permanent position of grace: idea is that we will continue stand in a position of receiving God’s grace that allows us endure, persist in faith until the end...that why we can boast in the hope of the glory of God...eternal life.
- Perseverance in the midst of difficult circumstances: our faith is proven through trials, the power of God preserves you through the trials that the providence of God brings into your life. On the other side of the trial our faith is still intact and so is our hope...WHY?
- Because the love of God has been demonstrated in our lives through the power of his Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION:

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. Paul states boldly that he is “not ashamed” of the gospel. Describe a situation in which you acted as though you were ashamed of the gospel. What about the gospel felt embarrassing to you?
3. In Romans 1:18-20 Paul states that all people are “without excuse.” What are the various ways God has revealed himself to all people?
4. In Romans 1:18 and following Paul talks about the wrath of God being revealed. How would you articulate God’s wrath to a non-believer in our culture today in a way that would make sense to them and also actually draw them to God?
5. In Romans 5:1-5 and 8-11, Paul articulates some of the benefits of our justification by faith. Which one resonates with you most and why?