

THE POWER OF GOD

Wednesday, May 10

Reading: Romans 1:8-17

Romans 1:16 *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.*

As Paul thought about these believers whom he had never met, he was first thankful for the news of their faith that had spread out from Rome. To be a faithful Christian in the capital of the Roman Empire where there was so much corruption and decadence was a reason for rejoicing. Paul also knew it was a matter for prayer and so he tells the Roman believers that he prays for them “at all times” and hopes to visit them soon (1:8-10).

He longed to visit Rome but until now had been prevented from doing so. His desire was to strengthen their faith through a mutual sharing of encouragement. He wanted to share God’s gift and call on his life with them. God had called him and gifted him as the apostle to the Gentiles. What better place to continue that mission than in the capital of the Roman world! (1:11-15).

Romans 1:16-17 present the theme of Paul’s letter. The reason Paul was so driven to preach the gospel was because it is “the power of God that brings salvation.” Even though the gospel had been ridiculed and held in contempt wherever Paul went and even though he had suffered personal hardship and suffering for proclaiming it, Paul was not ashamed of the good news of salvation nor was he intimidated by the worldly philosophy of the Greeks or the power of Rome. He knew that the gospel message was stronger than any obstacle or authority that tried to stand against it.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. “I Remember You in My Prayers At All Times.” Paul constantly prayed for these believers living in the midst of a wicked society. He also wanted to come so they could encourage each other and be strengthened in their faith. We too live in an increasingly pagan society. Do we pray for each other and encourage each other regularly so that we might remain strong in our faith?
2. “The Power of God That Brings Salvation.” Paul had seen firsthand how the message of the cross changes lives. The word “power” in Greek is *dúnamis*. It is the basis for our English words dynamic, dynamo, and dynamite. The gospel is God’s power to destroy sin and hard hearts. It is also the powerhouse that builds up those who believe. How have you seen God’s salvation power change your life and the lives of others? How are you sharing this powerful good news with others?
3. “The Righteousness of God.” The Gospel reveals to sinners how they can be right with God. A believer’s life of faith begins at the moment of salvation and continues as they grow to become more like Christ, and will be complete when they stand before Christ. This is what is meant by “faith from first to last.” By quoting Habakkuk 2:4 (“The Righteous Will Live By Faith”) Paul reinforces the truth that believers are saved and live by faith. If we have truly received the righteousness of God then we should live like it! This right-living does not come from human effort but as a gift of God. Are you trying to live for Christ in your own strength? What are some ways you can increase your faith and trust in the Lord?