

**Introduction:**

- *"For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life.""* (Romans 1:16-17, NLT)

**I. The Theme of the Letter 1:16-17 ...GOSPEL!**

- A. These two theologically power packed verses have four clauses contained in them, each building upon the one before it. Many argue a narrow theme out of these two verses: just shall live by faith. Righteousness by faith, Power of God for salvation. To choose one is to miss the letter. We must see a much broader understanding to Paul's Gospel!
1. Paul's joy and pride in the message of the Gospel 16a. This is why he is eager to preach. vs 15. If you reverse Paul's negative, *"I am not ashamed"* to be positive it would say, *"I have complete confidence"* Also the language tense that is used in 16a implies a change in focus of this letter.
    - a) From here on we hear no more of Paul's ministry and very little of the Romans.
    - b) The style of writing 1:1-15 and 15:14-ff forms a frame of Paul's Gospel treatise.
  2. This pride Paul has for the gospel comes from the fact that the gospel contains and delivers God's saving power to all who believe. 16b is therefore the "why" of Paul that he is not ashamed or that he has complete confidence in the Gospel.
    - a) This NT message is grounded in OT word of a God who is personal and comes in power to those who believe.
      - (1) *"But I have spared you for a purpose—to show you my power and to spread my fame throughout the earth."* (Exodus 9:16, NLT)
      - (2) *"You are the God of great wonders! You demonstrate your awesome power among the nations. By your strong arm, you redeemed your people, ..."* (Psalm 77:14-15, NLT)
      - (3) It is a gospel that delivers/saves. And we are not just saved from something but saved to...God!!!
        - (a) *"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."* (Romans 3:23, NLT) Saved from sin restored to glory!
        - (b) *"We were given this hope when we were saved..."* (Romans 8:24, NLT)
    - b) "the availability of God's "power for salvation" for "all who believe." This phrase occurs four other times in Romans (3:22; 4:11; 10:4, 11), in each case with particular reference to the breaking down of barriers between Jew and Gentile." NICNT Romans, Moo. *"He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups."* (Ephesians 2:15, NLT)
- B. Why the gospel brings salvation is explained in 17a. It makes visible God's righteousness based on faith. It is the uncovering of God's redemptive plan in history.

1. The content is Jesus Christ, Son of God in Power sent to save!
2. It is to all who believe! "Believe" is not to a set of doctrines but to the person of Jesus Christ!
3. 17b provides scriptural confirmation for this connection between righteousness and faith.
  - a) From start to finish the Word - tells us the depth of this Gospel and just how powerful it is. It is not by 'works' but based on our relationship to Jesus.
  - b) First to the Jew then to the Gentile.
  - c) The righteousness of God. This phrase is used only in the letter to the Romans therefore signaling once again the importance to this letter.
    - (1) Luther's personal spiritual struggle ended with his realization that God's righteousness meant not "the righteousness by which he is righteous in himself but the righteousness by which we are made righteous by God." Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (p. 71). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
    - (2) The righteousness of God can be seen as a new standing imparted to the sinner who believes!
    - (3) The Gospel manifests the saving action of God!!! This would be consistent with OT theme in Psalms and prophets.
    - (4) Paul uses righteousness in Romans several different ways. What we need to know tonight and for the future is this: **The common characteristic is righteousness and faith are connected!** Every time.
    - (5) Most of the time righteousness is a gift given by God to the one who believes. It therefore becomes a relational status. God brings people into right relationship with Him!
- C. This understanding of righteousness gives the Roman Christian
  1. A starting point with Paul's language
  2. It brings together both the divine activity of God and the receptivity of the believer.
  3. It highlights the end result the process of justification in the believer as righteous.
- D. Paul closes by quoting Hab 2:14 "*The just shall live by faith.*"
  1. He speaks in a rhetorical way so as to say, "that faith, and nothing but faith can make us righteous!"
  2. The meaning of Hab 2:14 = \*\*\*Faith is the key to ones relationship with God.
  3. "the OT concept, in verses like Gen. 15:6 and Hab. 2:4 especially, shares with NT "faith" the quality of absolute reliance on God and his Word rather than on human abilities, activities, or assurances." Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (pp. 78-79). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

## Conclusion

- Next Wednesday I will spend the whole time on the word 'righteous'. It is critical to understanding of Paul's letter to the Romans.