

Ashamed of the Gospel?

Read: Romans 1:16-17

As I ponder these two well known verses, I have to wonder at my own failing in declaring the gospel message of Jesus Christ. I'm not talking about when I'm in the pulpit where I strive fervently to declare gospel unashamedly and without apology. I am speaking about my everyday encounters with those around me. Did I faithfully proclaim to others the good news of Jesus Christ, especially when I could see that they needed to hear it so desperately?

Had it been that I was "*ashamed*" of it? It is a question that I ponder as a reminder of my own weaknesses and shortcomings and my lack of faith when come this area in my life. But let's consider further what does the apostle Paul means by being "*ashamed*." Does this word imply unbelief, or doubt about the salvation that is through Jesus Christ alone? Or is there something more to it? We might understand its meaning in light of what we learn from the apostle's discourse beginning in verses 18 going through to Chapter 3, verse 18.

We see from Chapter 1, verse 22 that the unbeliever will declare himself wise, being wise in his own conceit, in his own opinion (see also, Romans 12:16). And in his rejection of the One True Living God, he makes for himself gods, worshipping the creature rather than Creator. He makes idols that he believes will save him from the "wrongs" in this life, according to his definition of "right" and "wrong."

The Jews, on the other hand, make their boast in being teachers of the "*law of righteousness*." And boast "*in God, knowing His will and approving the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law*" (2:17-18). But they fail miserably in keeping the law (vs. 21-24), not having a circumcised heart (2:29).

When the unbeliever speaks with authority and is accepted by his peers as one who is full of wisdom, but speaks contrary to the Word of God (God's revelation of reality – of the way things He has made them and how things really are), do you shrink away in fear being intimidated by their great boasts of knowledge and wisdom? When a Jewish person or a self-righteous person boasts of his righteousness in the keeping of the law, do you shy away from boasting of the righteousness of Christ, in His death and resurrection? (See also, 1 Corinthians 1:30-31.)

Those of you who profess faith in Christ, you must not be ashamed of Him who saved you. He alone atoned for your sins, purchased you from the bondage of sin, the devil, and the world. He alone by His Spirit and Word preserves you and protects you; and provides for your every need (Romans 8:32). Therefore, we must show our thankfulness to Him for His many blessing and out of love for others to speak out and declare that salvation and righteousness is in no other than Jesus Christ. These benefits of salvation and righteousness merited by Christ belong

to all who embrace them by faith with a believing heart; that faith that is the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:8-9). He washes us clean with the blood of Christ, shed for sinners, like you and me, and making alive from dead in our trespasses and sins (Titus 3:5). But that is not all in the work of salvation by the Holy Spirit. The righteousness is imputed to the believer and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, born again person is given a new heart, turning his heart of stone to a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 3:24-27), giving him the will and the strength to live to Him for His glory until the end.

Beloved in the Lord, let our boast be in Christ alone so that He is gloried (1 Corinthians 1:31) – there is no shame in that, is there!!

Let this be our prayer, “O Lord, grant me the will and strength to boast of You in what You have done for me, through Your redeeming work on the cross for all who belong to You. Let me have courage to stand fast and not fear, before proud and boastful men – to declare to them Your salvation, which is by grace through faith in You alone so that I might be able to say with David, *“I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly”* (Psalm 40:9-10) Amen!!