

Why the Gospel Matters (Romans 1:1-17)

One Simple Point: The Gospel Matters Because It is Powerful Enough to Change Us

Jesus Storybook Bible: "It's not about keeping rules! Paul told people. "You don't have to be good at being good for God to love you. You just have to believe what Jesus has done and follow him. Because it's not about trying, it's about trusting. It's not about rules, it's about grace."

Leon Morris: "The Gospel is not advice to people, suggesting that they lift themselves. It is power. It lifts them up...When the Gospel enters anyone's life, it is as though the very fire of God had come upon [them]. There is warmth and life in his life."

Martin Luther (16th century): "I labored diligently and anxiously as to how to understand Paul's word [in Romans 1:17], where he says that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. I sought long and knocked anxiously, for the expression "the righteousness of God" blocked the way, because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore I did not love a righteous and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant.....Then I grasped that the righteousness of God is that righteousness, by which through grace and sheer mercy, God justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before "the righteousness of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven.