

The Greatest Letter Ever Written

An Expository Journey Through the **Epistle of Romans**

Romans 1:16&17

5-The Gospel of Jesus Christ

March 19, 2023

Romans 1:16&17

16 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 Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Now to properly examine these two verses will require that we answer these seven Questions:

1. What is the "Gospel"?
2. What being "ashamed of the Gospel" looks like
3. How is Salvation brought about through the Gospel?
4. What place do "Faith" and "Belief" play in Salvation?
5. Why did Paul say, "**to the Jew first and also to the Greek**"
6. What did Paul mean by the phrase, "**For in it [the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith**"?
7. What did Paul mean when he said, "**BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**"?

1. What is the "Gospel"?

Etymology of the word, "Gospel"

The English word, "*Gospel*" originally came from a combination of two other Koine Greek words, "*eu*" (Good) and "*angelion*" (Message) to form a noun, "*euangelion*" and a verb, "*euangelizo*" (To bring or to announce Good News/Telling). In 382AD- the Greek noun, "*euangelion*" was translated into the Latin Vulgate to form, "*evangelium*". And when this word was taken from the Latin into the first *complete* English Bible by Miles Coverdale in 1535- the Latin noun, "*evangelium*" became the Anglo-Saxon word, "*God-spell*" (Good News; Glad Tidings)- which later evolved into the modern English rendition of "*Gospel*".

Also, the English words associated with the Gospel- like, "*Evangelist*"; "*Evangelism*"; and "*Evangelical*"- all come from the ancient Greek. The Apostles Matthew and John along with Peter's scribe, John Mark¹ and the Gentile Dr. Luke are known as the original four "*Evangelists*" because what they wrote about the Birth; Life; Ministry; Death; and Resurrection of Jesus the Christ became known as the four "*Gospels*".

¹ "*John*" was a common Jewish name. "*Mark*" was a Latin Roman name. So, it is possible that the writer of the **Gospel according to Mark** was a Jew named "*John*" (Hebrew: *Yohanan*; Greek: *Giannis*), who was called "*Mark*" by the occupying Romans.

Romans was written by the Apostle Paul in approximately 56AD- which makes it probably the ninth New Testament Book written. The other eight are:

- **James** (AD 44-49)
- **Galatians** (AD 49-50)
- **Matthew** (AD 50-60)
- **Mark** (AD50-60)
- **1Thessalonians** (AD 51)
- **2Thessalonians** (AD 51-52)
- **1Corinthians** (AD 55)
- **2Corinthians** (AD 55-56)

... so, by the time that the Apostle Paul wrote **Romans** (around 56AD)- Christians already had two written Records about the Life and Ministry of Jesus (**Matthew** and **Mark**); and six other Epistles. And the *global* Issues; or Topics; or the *universal* Truths that these six Epistles dealt with are:

James: The practical Ways in which the Gospel is lived out in the Lives of Believers

Galatians: The ancient Promises (Covenant) made to Abraham are fulfilled in Christ to the Believer

1Thessalonians: Jesus' Work delivers Believers from the coming Wrath of God in the "*Day of the Lord*".

2Thessalonians: Believers must hold fast to the sovereign Grace that rescued them in the finished Work of Jesus Christ

1Corinthians: The Gospel of Jesus Christ is relevant to every Dimension of Church Life

2Corinthians: There is Strength to the Believer in times of Weakness so we may persevere.

... so, in **Romans**- the Apostle defines just what the Gospel (that these other Books describe) is; what it does; and how it is to be administered.

So, just what *is* the "*Gospel*"? In a nutshell, the Gospel is:

The Good News that Jesus' sinless Life *fulfilled* the Requirement of the Law for absolute Obedience and moral Perfection. And Jesus' Death on the Cross *satisfied* God's Requirement for Divine Justice against all our Sins. The literal and physical Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead was the unmistakable Proof that those two Acts were in accord with God's Will and earned God's absolute Approval.

So, by trusting; hoping; embracing; or believing in Jesus- *personally*; and in His finished Work- and through "*turning from*" Sin (Repentance)- wicked rebels are forgiven of all Sin; and are made instantly Righteous and "*fit for Heaven*"- through the imputation of Christ's spotless Righteousness- by the Agency of Faith alone (Justified).

... which is what people mean when they use the word, "*Saved*".

Now in Reality, the "*Process of Salvation*" actually began back in "*Eternity Past*" with the single "*Decree of God*"- and will continue into "*Eternity Future*"- as the justified soul is *united* with a glorified body- to worship God forever in exquisite Joy!

So, the Gospel is the “Vehicle”; the “Means”; the “Catalyst”; or the “Tool” that God uses to save; rescue; heal; or deliver His people from the Penalty of their own individual Sins (as well as the Original Sin of Adam)- which is His unquenchable, just Wrath. And there are at least five Characteristics or Attributes of this biblical Gospel:

- A. The Gospel MUST be *Defined*
- B. The Gospel MUST be *Preached to Everyone*
- C. The Gospel MUST be *Heard and Understood*
- D. The Gospel MUST be *Believed*
- E. The Gospel MUST be *Obedied*

... or not a single Sin will be forgiven and not a single soul will be saved.

A. The Gospel MUST be *Defined*

Galatians 1:6-9

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

If it is true that we are justified by what we “believe in”; what we “trust and hope in”; what we “embrace”; and what we “confess”; and NOT by what we “DO”- then What we believe in- matters. If it is true that lost Sinners are saved “BY” the Grace of God- alone; and if they are saved “THROUGH” the Gift of Faith- alone; and NOT by any good or religious Works that they might perform- then what they have Faith *in*- matters.

In other words- since God Himself set up Salvation in such a Way that unworthy Sinners are NOT forgiven and made Righteous by ANYTHING they can do for themselves- but lost Sinners are saved solely “BY” Grace and “THROUGH” Faith- then the “Object” of that Faith- is paramount. So, what is the Object of Faith in Salvation- as articulated by the Gospel?

The Person of Jesus Christ AND His finished Work

... so, there are two things:

1. Union with Christ
2. Trust/Hope that What Jesus did (and *continues* to do) is enough to facilitate the Forgiveness of ALL my Sins and to make me “fit for Heaven” (Righteous).

... and both of these are given to us “BY” the Grace of God; and both of these are appropriated to each person “THROUGH” the Gift of Faith; and both of these are *mandatory*- for us to possess eternal Life.

Hebrews 11:6b

... he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Romans 10:9&10

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

But because we live in a fallen World; and because there are so many, who seek to *pervert* the Gospel- by either “*adding to*” or “*taking away from*”- what the Apostles received directly from God- the Gospel **MUST** be defined. Today, there are many Teachings that all lay claim to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For example, there is,

- The “Social Gospel”
- The “Universal Gospel”
- The “Pragmatic Gospel”
- The “Oppressed/Justice Gospel”
- The “Prosperity Gospel”
- The “Kingdom/Dominion Gospel”

... for example, those deceived by what Joseph Smith taught- call the *Book of Mormon*- “*another Gospel of Jesus Christ*”.

In **Galatians 1:6**- Paul said there was, on the earth at that time- a “**different gospel**” that people were embracing. And that “different gospel” was causing all, who believed in it, to actually “**desert**” or “leave” or “abandon” the God Who was able to save them.

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;²

... but then Paul was quick to say that, since it is true that there is only one single Gospel- that this “different gospel” wasn’t really “Good News” about Salvation in Jesus at all- but a *distortion* of the real Gospel and something that would *disturb* them greatly.

which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

So, back in the mid to late 1st Century- there were people, who held themselves out as being Christians- who were either “adding to” or “taking away from” the Gospel that the Apostles had already given to the Church.

But it is important to understand that what those Additions or Subtractions did- was **NOT** to *improve* or *correct* the already received and articulated Gospel- but rather to simply create a

² It’s important to note here that Paul was NOT teaching that genuinely saved people can lose their Salvation. The people to whom the **Epistle to the Galatians** was written were already IN the Church- holding themselves out as being saved. And as they were deceived by “another gospel” that Paul talks about here- their Response to that false gospel was to “**desert**” or abandon Jesus Christ. However, those who were genuinely saved eventually repented and returned- while those who were never truly saved- may have become saved at some later point or remained deceived.

brand- new Religion- that was NOT Christianity- a “Man-made” fabricated Religion- that could not forgive a single Sin or save a single Soul. And by preaching this “other gospel”- saved souls became confused while lost souls remained Lost.

And then in verses 8&9- the Apostle gives what is one of the most frightening Condemnations found anywhere in the Bible when he said,

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

Now the English word, “**accursed**” comes from a Greek word (*anathema*; Strong’s # 331); which means: *an indissoluble Vow by God to punish and destroy*. So, this is a Damnation by God- *of which there is NO Forgiveness or Resolution!* So, what was it that was so terrible; so evil; so offensive to God that He will damn those guilty of it- without pardoning them?

... if we [the Apostles], or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you ...

... in other words, if ANYONE- even an Apostle or an Angel from Heaven- preaches; proclaims; teaches; or heralds a “gospel” that is “**contrary**” (opposed; incompatible; conflicting) to the one single genuine Gospel that the Apostles “have” (ALREADY) preached to you...

... he is to be accursed!

... and then to show how serious this really is- in verse 9- Paul *repeats* this powerful and frightening Warning. And that tells us at least two things:

1. The Gospel is so important to God- that it carries one of the strongest Penalties for perverting it found anywhere in the Bible.
2. The Gospel had already been defined

So, by the time that the **Epistle to the Galatians** was written (AD 49-50)- the Gospel had ALREADY been received by the Apostles from Heaven; written down; published; articulated, studied, and discussed; and had already been preached in the Region of the Galatian Churches (the central area of modern- day Turkey)- to the degree that people knew what it was.

Approximately 10-30 years after the **Epistle to the Galatians** was written- the half-brother of Jesus (*Judah/Judas/Jude*) was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write the Epistle that bears his name. And in verse 3- Jude gives the Church of Jesus a solemn Charge as to their *primary* Duty as a sovereign Creation of Jesus Christ:

Jude 3b

... contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Now the “**Faith**” in view here is NOT the Ability that each individually saved

person has- to believe and hope in Jesus. Jude is talking about *THE* Faith- the *Christian* Faith; or the orthodox Truths given to the Christian Church.

So, according to this “*Divine Charge*”- the Church has the ongoing Duty; the constant Obligation; and the unspeakable Joy; to teach; preach; believe; defend; and support; the Teachings of the Christian Faith- to such an extent- that what we have; what we believe and trust in; and what we hold dear- is the VERY SAME “*Body of Teaching*” that was “**once for all handed down to the saints**” by the Apostles of the 1st Century.³

This is the ongoing Search and Preservation of genuine “*Orthodoxy*” (Right/Correct Belief). It is also called, “*being Biblical*”.

But the Gospel goes on to say...

... now that a person has experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; been forgiven and made Righteous; and has been adopted into the Family of God- he now loves God and he loves the “**Things of the Spirit of God**” (1Corinthians 2:14). He has become a true spiritual Jew; is a child of Abraham; and an Heir of all the Promises of God- *including* eternal Life.

The Good News declares that this now “justified saint” has both the Power and the Desire to please God; and to live his Life in such a way that God Alone is glorified- *regardless* of what living that Life may do to him personally.

So, the Gospel also involves the “every-day” manner in which the regenerated; justified, and adopted Believer lives his Life. The Gospel declares that the Life of a genuine Believer is typified by his Worship of God. And this Worship is defined as:

“The ongoing Struggle (by the Power of the Holy Spirit) to be found humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of Scripture in his daily Life- all to the Glory of God”.

... so, the Gospel” is NOT limited as being merely the “*Vehicle*” that allows Lost people to be saved. But rather the “*Means of Grace*” that facilitates the Lost to be “Found”; as well as the “*Means*” by which the “saved” are *ongoingly* and *progressively* sanctified (made Holy)- all the Way to Glory!

B. The Gospel MUST be “*Preached*” to Everybody

Since the Gospel is the Good News that, through Jesus, Sins can be forgiven and unrighteous rebels can be “made fit for Heaven”- that Good News must be heard and understood by people. And the one single WAY that God has determined that people hear and understand the Gospel- is through the Act of “Preaching”.

Isaiah 61:1-3

1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

³ This is genuine “*Apostolic Succession*”

3 To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.

Matthew 11:2-6

2 Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples

3 and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"

4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see:

5 the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

6 "And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."

Matthew 24:14

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Mark 1:14-15

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

... so, these four elements of the Gospel should be preached:

1. The Time is fulfilled (Jesus fulfilled Old Testament Prophecy)
2. The Kingdom of God is "at Hand"
3. Repent of Sin
4. Believe the Gospel

Mark 16:15

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Luke 3:16-18

16 John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

17 "His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

18 So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.

Luke 20:1&2

1 On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him,

2 and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?"

The Acts 8:25

So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

The Acts 8:40

But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.

The Acts 14:5-7

5 And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them,

6 they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region;

7 and there they continued to preach the gospel.

The Acts 14:21&22

21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

The Acts 16:9&10

9 A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

10 When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Romans 1:9&10

9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,

10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.

Romans 1:15

So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Romans 15:18-21

18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

21 but as it is written, "THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND."

1Corinthians 1:21

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

1Corinthians 9:14

So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

2Corinthians 11:7b

... did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

2Corinthians 10:14-17

14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ;

15 not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you,

16 so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another.

17 But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.

Galatians 3:8&9

8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

Hebrews 4:2

For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ (Good News) is the very BEST News in all the world- but ONLY to those who believe and repent of Sin. To those who hear the Gospel but who do NOT repent and/or believe- the Gospel is the WORST News they could ever hear and is a Death Sentence to them.

Philippians 4:15&16

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

1Thessalonians 2:9

For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

1Peter 1:12

It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look.

The English words, “**preach/preached/preaching**, etc..” come from a Greek word, (*keerusoo*/Strong’s #2784) that means: to herald; proclaim; or announce- *authoritatively*. So, the Preacher is to act as a “*Herald*”, who has been sent by the King, to announce his Arrival; or to give Instructions from the King to the people. In this capacity- the Herald has the Authority to proclaim the Message from the King. So, the Message the Herald gives- is to be understood as being a Message from the King himself.

Now many say that “*Preaching*” is nothing more than “*anointed Teaching*”; or “*emotional or energized Teaching*”. So, to them- Preaching is just “*Teaching with more Volume*”. But it goes further than that. Preaching is “*Expositional Worship*”. So, it is the worship of God through the *heralding* of God’s Word to God’s people. That means “Preaching” *could* be defined as: The *Invitational* and the *Exhortational* Proclamation of biblical and theological Truth. And conversely, “*Teaching*” *could* be defined as: The *Explanation* and *Explication* of biblical and theological Truth. So, both “*Preaching*” and “*Teaching*” deal with the very SAME two Subjects or Commodities:

1. Biblical Truth
2. Theological Truth

... so, the main difference between “*Preaching*” and “*Teaching*” lies in:

1. The Mode
2. The immediate Goal

“**Preaching**” involves biblical and theological Content- selected and presented in a “Mode” of “*Heralding*”; “*Announcing*”; or “*Proclamation*” with the *immediate* Goal being that of “*Invitation*” (Believe!) and “*Exhortation*” (Repent!).

“**Teaching**” involves biblical and theological Content- presented in a much more *detailed* and *systematic* Way- for the Purpose of “*Explaining*” and “*Unpacking*” complex Issues; the Details of how they connect; and the Implication they make.

Now there is certainly some Overlap between Preaching and Teaching but there is also important Distinctions between the two.

God’s Elect

Now it is true that the ONLY people who will be saved- are those who have been chosen by God for Salvation (from before the Foundation of the world).

Ephesians 1:4-6

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

... and the Bible calls these people, “*God’s elect*”.

But it is very important to understand that this does NOT mean that those whom God saved are “better” people than the others. They aren’t. In fact, it might be true that the “non-elect” may even be “more moral” or even “less sinful” than the Elect. Those in Hell are NOT “worse” than those in Heaven. And those in Heaven are NOT “better” than those in Hell. That has NOTHING to do with why God chose to save His elect.

God seeks to be the ONLY one who is glorified in Salvation. And so, God set up Salvation in such a way that it doesn’t matter how sinful a person may or may not be. God chose to save His elect, “before they were born” and “before they did anything “Good” or “Bad” (**Romans 9:11**)- so that Salvation will be *entirely* “BY” God’s Grace (alone) and will be appropriated to each individual *solely* “THROUGH” Faith (alone). So, Man CANNOT do ANYTHING to make himself “attractive to God. God chose to save His elect based on His own Divine Prerogative. And Salvation itself is NOT “BY” humanly engineered Works- not even Good, Moral, religious Works.

So, we CANNOT *earn* Salvation by ANYTHING that we do for ourselves; and God is NOT *obligated* to save anyone. That allows for Salvation to be based ONLY on Grace and Mercy and Faith. This allows for God to receive ALL the Glory while Man receives ALL the Benefit.

But even though all of that is true- we don’t know whom God has chosen. So, we have to preach the Gospel to *everyone*. We have to work with *everyone*; pray with *everyone*; and call *everyone* to believe and to obey the Gospel.

Mark 16:15

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

C. The Gospel MUST be *Heard* and *Understood*

The Acts 8:27-35

27 So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship,

28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH.

33 "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH."

34 The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?"

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

God has chosen that the Gospel should be preached. And that means that people MUST hear the Gospel that is preached. And part of *hearing* the Gospel is *understanding* what they are hearing. NOBODY is saved *accidentally*. NOBODY is *fooled* into being saved; and NOBODY trips and falls into Salvation. As the Gospel of WHO Jesus is; and WHAT Jesus has done- is heralded- people MUST comprehend it. It does no Good for us to preach- if the Message preached is not heard and understood. And that means that the Gospel may have to be preached and explained over and over and over again- until a person has comprehension as to what it means.

The Details surrounding WHO Jesus is- are some of the *deepest* and most *profound* Truths in the entire Bible. A Being Who was WITH God and Who WAS God (**John 1:1**)- is NOT a simple Issue. A Being Who is both *fully and truly* God and *fully and truly* Man- is NOT a simple Issue. Jesus being the second Person of the triune Godhead is NOT a simple Issue. Jesus being born of a Virgin and living a perfectly *sinless* Life- is NOT a simple Issue. Jesus periodically manifesting His full and true Deity; while manifesting His full and true Humanity at different Times- is NOT a simple Issue. And the Proof that this is true- is in the literally tens of millions of people, all over the world, who have been deceived by one or more of the Heresies concerning the Person of Jesus Christ.

Much of modern Evangelization teaches that we should simply "hit the high points" about Jesus; and then when we "smell blood in the water"- we should get people to "pray the Prayer". But if it is true that people MUST *hear* and *understand* the Gospel- then I would suggest that this would take more time and more explaining than what modern Evangelization classes would let on. How much Truth about Jesus does a person need before he can be saved? I don't know. But we should desire that people have MORE than the "*bare Minimum*" anyway. I personally believe that the main Reason why people only give small bits of Truth about Jesus to

Lost people- is because that is ALL that the saved people normally have. The Reality is that in-depth Teaching (and Preaching) about ANY biblical Truth- went “out of style” many decades ago. And the level of Ignorance in the average church member today about serious and fundamental Truth- is appalling. It is truly the great Scandal of our Day- that God’s people no longer know what God has said. And the biggest culprit is the insulting Truth that, as far as most people today are concerned- the Bible is just boring.

But NOBODY is saved if they don’t understand what the Gospel teaches. And so, if we care about the Lost at all- then we need to learn what the Gospel is- so we can properly and fully articulate it to those we meet.

D. The Gospel MUST be *Believed*

The Acts 15:7

After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.

The Acts 16:31&32

31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.

Romans 3:20-23

20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 4:1-13

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

One of the most important Reasons WHY the Gospel MUST be Understood- is because unless the Lost person BELIEVES the Gospel- he will NOT be saved. So, the Comprehension of what the Gospel is and what it puts forth- MUST become clear enough to the individual- so that he will willfully *believe* it; embrace it; and so, he will *trust* in what the Gospel declares; and so, he can *hope* in the Promise that the Gospel makes.

What we mean when we say that the Gospel MUST be believed- is that the *essential* Truth that the Gospel teaches MUST be accepted as being Truth and embraced as being “Non-negotiable”. Anyone who denies the essential Truths of the Gospel is NOT saved. They are yet in their Sins. The essential Truths of the Gospel include:

- Who Jesus is
- What Jesus has done
- Justification by Faith alone
- Bearing godly Fruit after Justification

E. The Gospel MUST be Obeyed

The Gospel puts forth two Requirements on all people:

1. Repent of Sin
2. Believe the Gospel

... so, those two Requirements: Turning away from what the Bible describes as Sin; and believing; hoping; trusting; accepting; embracing the essential Truths of the Gospel.

Matthew 3:2

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Mark 1:14&15

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Mark 6:12

They went out and preached that men should repent.

Luke 13:1-5

1 Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate?"

3 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

4 Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?"

5 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

The Acts 3:19

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

The Acts 17:30&31

30 Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,

31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

The Acts 26:19&20

19 "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision,

20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.

2. What being "ashamed of the Gospel" looks like

Romans 1:16

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 Greek.

The Apostle writes infallibly here that he is NOT ashamed of the Gospel. And then Paul gave us the Reason why he was not ashamed of the Gospel:

... for [because] it [the Gospel] is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

So, what does it mean to “be ashamed of the Gospel”? One of the most common ways that this “ashamedness” exists today- is when people try their best to either *minimize* or outright *eliminate* the Demands that the Gospel makes on people in order to be saved. Remember what God (through Paul) said about this from **The Acts 17:30**:

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,

Now while it is true that genuine Repentance includes “Sorrow”- simply “*being sorry*” or saying they are “sorry” about a particular Sin is NOT genuine Repentance. Look what the Apostle taught about this from **2Corinthians 7:4-11**:

4 Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.

5 For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.

6 But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.

8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it— for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—

9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

Here, Paul teaches that there are two different Kinds of Sorrow:

1. The Sorrow *that is according to the will of God* (verses 9b&10)
2. The Sorrow *of the world* (verse 10b)

...and the Sorrow of the World- “**produces Death**” (verse 10b); while the Sorrow that is according to the will of God- “**produces a Repentance without regret- leading to Salvation**” (verse 10a).

Genuine Repentance has to do with a “*Change of Mind*”; that results in a “*Change of Heart*”; that ends with a “*Change of Behavior*”. And it is this “*Change of Behavior*” that facilitates being “ashamed of the Gospel”.

So, when some, *who say they are saved*- come to realize that this Requirement to have this visible, tangible, and measurable “*Change of Behavior*”- *might* cause the one they are preaching the Gospel to- to become offended or discouraged- they will either never bring this biblical Requirement into the Discussion at all- or they will so *minimize* it that it becomes

irrelevant. And by doing this- they are proving that they are *ashamed* or *embarrassed* at what the Gospel absolutely DOES require.

And the end Result of this “*Ashamedness*” is that the one who is hearing the Gospel doesn’t know that God *requires* him to change the Way he lives his daily Life- so that his normal daily Life glorifies God alone. So, “being saved” is *cheapened*; it is *altered*; it is portrayed as nothing more than some “Addition” to his Life- rather than the *End* of his Life and the birthing of a brand- new Life that exists for one Reason:

To Glorify God

So, “being Ashamed” of the Gospel has to do with any Effort to minimize or eliminate or change or alter the Demands that Jesus makes on ALL who will be saved- such as:

Luke 9:23-26

23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

25 For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Matthew 10:24-39

24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.

25 It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!

26 "Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

27 What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops.

28 Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

32 "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

33 But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW;

36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. [Micah 7:6]

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

39 He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

Any Effort to alter or change or soften or minimize the Demands of Jesus concerning Salvation- is an Effort birthed in being “ashamed of the Gospel”. We must remember that the ONLY Hope for lost people is that they hear the Gospel; understand the Gospel; and obey the Gospel (repent and believe). So, if we preach “another Gospel” to them- out of the Fear that they might get offended at all that Jesus expects from them- we are cutting them off from the ONLY Means by which they can be saved.

And this is *why* the Apostle Paul was so rigid in his Condemnation of *anyone* who would try to change the Gospel.

Galatians 1:6-9

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

3. How is Salvation brought about through the Gospel?

Romans 1:16a

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation...

As we have seen, the New Testament is clear that preaching the Gospel is the one, single “*Means*” that God has chosen to save those who believe. Yet, here- Paul says that the preaching is the Gospel- is “**Foolishness**”.

In What Way is the Preaching of the Gospel, “Foolish”?

1Corinthians 1:21

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

So, why does Paul call the preaching of the Gospel, “**foolishness**”? It is NOT because there is something foolish about the Gospel itself. Rather Paul is teaching how Lost people see the Gospel. And that is why he taught this in **1Corinthians 2:14:**

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Now the “natural man” refers to the person who is Lost. And Paul teaches here that the person who is Lost **“does not”** accept something. Now the phrase, “does not” has to do with “willful volition”. It refers to a Choice. And Paul says that the person who is Lost DOES NOT **“accept”**- he does not *embrace*; he does not *believe*; he does not *trust* or *hope* or find Joy and Peace in something. Well, what does the person who is Lost NOT accept?

... the things of the Spirit of God ...

So, what are the **“things of the Spirit of God?”** They are those things that are “birthed” or “brought forth” or “initiated” or “given” by God the Holy Spirit- like Salvation and Church and the Bible and Heaven and Righteousness.

So, the person who is Lost DOES NOT “accept” Salvation; he DOES NOT “trust” in the Church; he DOES NOT “believe” the Bible; he DOES NOT “hope” in the Promise of eternal Life; he DOES NOT “find any Joy or Peace” in Righteousness.

Okay, but WHY does the person who is Lost NOT accept those things? Paul said,

... for [because] they are foolishness to him ...

There is that word, **“foolishness”** again. So, what does “foolishness” mean? The word that was translated into English as “foolishness” comes from a Greek word (*moeria*; Strong’s # 3472) that has to do with: *something that is absurd; senseless; or insane*. This word has to do with: *something that no normal thinking rational person would embrace*. He would ONLY see that something as being worthy of nothing but utter Contempt.

So, this is NOT the silly, light-hearted kind of Foolishness. This is something so patently ridiculous that it deserves NOTHING but to be rejected out of hand- precisely because it is so absurd. So, there is a Hostility associated with this word. And that means that the person who is Lost- rejects the Gospel- *passionately*; he actually *hates* the Gospel; *despises* the Gospel; and has NOTHING but utter Contempt for the Gospel.

Now that would be Bad enough. But Paul went even further in the last part of this verse when he said,

... and he cannot understand them...

Now the first part has to do with willful Volition. But this second part has to do with Ability and Power. Paul says here that the person who is Lost CANNOT- he DOES NOT have either the Power or the Ability to understand the **“things of the Spirit of God”**- which includes Salvation.

But why doesn’t the person who is Lost have the Ability to understand the **“things of the Spirit of God?”** The person who is Lost has a Brain; he has cognitive reasoning Capabilities. He can put Thoughts and Concepts together. So, if he had the skill- he could build a bridge or a jet or invest his Money. He has the Ability to raise his Family. So, why can’t the person who is Lost understand the **“things of the Spirit of God?”** Paul tells us in the last part of the verse:

... because they are spiritually appraised

Now the word, “**appraised**” has to do with the Ability to determine the Value or the Worth or the Importance of something. So, the Value and the Worth and the Importance of the “**things of the Spirit of God**”- is ONLY determined by the Spirit of God Himself. And the person who is Lost does NOT have the Spirit of God abiding in himself. So, he has NO Ability; NO Power within himself that would enable him to assign a Worth and a Value and an Importance to the “**things of the Spirit of God**”. So, the “things of the Spirit of God” which should have the highest degree of Worth and Value and Importance in our minds and hearts- have NO Value; NO Worth; and NO Importance and remain something that is so patently Ridiculous- that it merits or deserves NOTHING but utter Contempt. And so, unless God does something to the person who is Lost- FIRST- he will remain Lost and will NEVER be saved.

And so, when Paul wrote the phrase,

... God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

... in **1Corinthians 1:21**- he was NOT denigrating the Value or the Worth of the Gospel itself. Paul was merely teaching how the person who is Lost- “looks at” or “sees” or “understands” the preaching of the Gospel. He sees it as being so patently Ridiculous- that it merits NOTHING but utter Contempt.

Now the way that this verse (**1Corinthians 1:21**) is worded- shows us that the person who is Lost not only sees the Gospel itself as being patently Ridiculous- but also the Vehicle by which the Gospel is given to the people: Preaching.

So, there is NOTHING in the mind and heart of the person who is Lost but utter Contempt for the Gospel itself- but there is also this same Disdain and hostile Rejection of the “preaching” of the Gospel as well. And that is why the person who is Lost will not only mock and reject and be hostile against the Message (Gospel)- but that innate Hostility will spill over toward the Man who preaches the Gospel as well.

How Does Something so Despised Save the Lost?

Okay, but if it is true that the person who is Lost holds both the Gospel and those who preach it in utter Contempt- how is ANYONE saved through this Method? Why would God choose the Method that is the MOST despised on earth to save His people? In other words, how does this work? How does preaching the Gospel bring about the Salvation of the Lost? And the Answer to this Question is the SAME Answer as to why God does EVERYTHING He does? This Way brings

God MORE Glory than any other Way- and THAT is WHY God chose it. God has determined that He will receive MORE Glory through the “**foolishness of the Message preached**” to save His people than He would by any other Way.

You see, with all their supposed Wisdom- Mankind has NEVER been able to approach God and know and love Him- using their own physical and mental Intellect. The Reality is that the ONLY thing that *increases* in proportion to the accumulation of more human Knowledge- are Man’s Problems- and NOT any Solutions! By anyone’s Measurement- Knowledge has increased over the last Century- *exponentially*. And yet, along with this breathtaking Increase in

Knowledge- we also see an *exponential* rise in Hatred; Misunderstandings; Conflicts; Wars; Crime; along with huge Increases in both mental and family Problems. And those Issues are increasing- NOT merely in raw Numbers, but also in their Extent and in their Severity!

And this proves the Point that the more Man looks to *himself*; and the more Man *depends* on himself- the *worse* his Situation becomes. There is a direct Correlation between the Dependence of Man's own increased Wisdom and the amount and the intensity of his Problems.

And this is by Design. God set this up on Purpose. This is all part of God's Plan, as the Words, spoken through the Wisdom of God indicate. You see, when creating Man- God wisely set it up in such a Way that Man could NEVER come to know Him (or love Him) by or through the Wisdom of this fallen World. And that means that, fundamentally, Man CANNOT solve his own Problems because he *refuses* to recognize or acknowledge the Source of his Problems- which is his own Sin.

And neither can Man truly or fully solve any of his main Problems- because that requires Salvation- which is entirely a sovereign Work of God. Hear the Words of Jesus from **Matthew 15:17-20**:

17 Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?

18 But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.

19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

20 These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

Man's own personal sinful Nature is the root Cause of ALL of his Problems- yet no Man can change his own Nature. And even if human Wisdom might be able to periodically *recognize* the Problem- it does not have the Power to fix it.

But God DOES have the Power to recognize Man's root Problem and to fix it- eternally! God was well-pleased through the Foolishness of the Message preached to save those who believe. He chose to use that which the world's Wisdom counts as Moronic; Ridiculous; Silly; and Foolish- to save those of the world, who would simply believe.

Now the verb, "**believe**" here implies complete Assent to all the Truth of the Message that is preached or heralded. And that Message is the Gospel. And for those who have been made willing to exchange their *own* wisdom for His- God offers Transformation; Regeneration; and new spiritual Life through the Power of a sovereign Savior- Who lived a sinless Life; died a vicarious (substitutionary) Death; and was raised up from the Dead on the third Day. This "**foolishness**" is Mankind's only Hope.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain
until now, but some have fallen asleep;
7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;
8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

So, after he got the Attention of his readers by explaining the Purpose of his Writing and then introducing himself (**Romans 1:1-15**), Paul now gives the main Focus of this entire Epistle. These two verses (16&17) express the primary Theme of the entire Book of Romans, and they contain the most life-transforming Truth that God ever put into the hands of fallen Man.

