

“The Power of God unto Salvation”
Romans 1:16
(Preached at Trinity, February 4, 2007)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As I stated last time, **Verses 16-17** state the theme of the entire Epistle. They are the most important verses in the entire letter. They tell us how a man or woman might be made right before God. It makes the full divide between Evangelical Christianity and Roman Catholicism. **Verse 17** to a great degree provided the fuel that fired the Reformation.
2. We began by looking at the first phrase. In the previous verses Paul had stated that he was a debtor to all men; he was obligated to bring the Gospel to all men.
3. Now he states in **Verse 16** – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”
There is a difference between being shamed for the Gospel and being ashamed of the Gospel. We live in a world where people are naturally turned against the Gospel. Bringing the Gospel to the lost will often bring shame upon us but it must never make us ashamed. We must follow the example of our Lord:
Hebrews 12:2 – “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
4. Why was Paul not ashamed of the Gospel? He gives the answer immediately. Because it is the power of God unto salvation.
5. This morning I want us to look at this phrase. It is the power of God unto salvation that kept the Apostle Paul pressing on boldly bringing the gospel to the lost and it will also keep us pressing on. I want to look at it from two aspects:
 - First I want to direct your attention to the word “salvation”
 - Second we’ll examine God’s great power in salvation.
6. What is meant by the word salvation? What does it mean to be saved? We often throw around theological words that can easily be misunderstood. Most people today do not understand what is meant by the Christian concept of salvation.
7. Usually when a person is in peril and in great danger he has a clear knowledge of his need.
 - If a man falls overboard and the ship is quickly sailing into the distance he screams for help. He is desperate and knows if no one hears him he will perish.
 - If a man is on the 10th floor of a burning building and the lower floors are engulfed in flames he hangs out the window and pleads for help. If he isn’t saved from the flames he will be consumed. He knows precisely his desperate need.
8. With Christian salvation, however, there is often a lack of clarity and the concept of salvation means different things to different people. For some it means a relief from emotional and psychological stress. For others it means a freedom from financial problems or physical weaknesses. For still others it means an escape from the fires of hell. What does the word salvation mean to you?
9. This morning I want to touch on this important subject so that you will be absolutely clear.

- I. First you need to be absolutely clear about what you are being saved from
- A. Adam was created holy
1. He had fellowship with God
 - a. He was able to come into the presence of God
 - b. He was able to understand God properly
He saw God as the infinite Creator worthy of all worship, praise, and obedience.
 - c. He saw God was the source of all goodness and his heart was filled with continual gratitude.
 2. Adam had the capacity to obey God, he had a heart's desire to obey God
 3. Adam was created with immortality
- B. Adam's sin had a devastating effect upon every aspect of his being
1. Adam became alienated from God
 - a. He could no longer approach God
 - b. He could no longer understand God – He feared God and saw Him as his enemy
 - c. He was no longer able to comprehend God's goodness and expressed no gratitude to God, no praise, no worship
 2. Adam no longer desired to please God fully
 - a. Adam's heart had become corrupt and sin and evil had become deeply engrained in his nature.
 - b. Adam loved himself supremely and loved to please himself
 3. Adam became engulfed in darkness. He was blind to spiritual truth. He could not find God but also lacked the desire to seek God. He was hopelessly lost.
- C. Because of Adam's sin he became guilty under God's righteous judgment
1. Adam was under God's wrath – this means God was angry at Adam
 2. Adam began to suffer under all the consequences of sin in this life
Sickness, disease, sorrow – the misery of a life apart from God. His labors became difficult. His foolishness brought continual grief.
 3. Adam came under the same condemnation as Satan and his angels.
Matthew 25:41 – “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”
 4. All of the consequences of Adam's sin were passed on to every human being.
- D. The greatest need of humanity is to be delivered from our sin
1. Salvation deals with the issue of sin
 2. This is the reason Christ came and lived and died – it is the essence of the Gospel.
Matthew 1:21 – “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
1 Timothy 1:15 – “This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

3. Unless a sinner sees the terrible pollution of his sin he will never seek God's salvation through Christ.
Mark 2:17 – “. . . They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”
 - a. If you see yourself as evolving and getting progressively better you will never see the need for a Savior. You will never cry out “save me!”
 - b. If you see yourself as a basically good person you will never see the great danger of your state and you will never cry out, “save me!”

II. Second, you need to be clear as to the extent of your salvation

- A. Salvation brings deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin
 1. Every sin brings us under the wrath and curse of God.
 We will see this from **Verse 18** to the end of the chapter.
Romans 1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”
Galatians 3:10 – “Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”
 2. Christ redeemed us from this curse by becoming a curse for us
Galatians 3:13 – “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:”
 3. This deliverance came by the atoning sacrifice of Christ upon the cross
 4. For many, however, their only interest in salvation is a deliverance from the penalty of sin – from the fires of hell.
 This is not true salvation
- B. True salvation brings deliverance from the power of sin
 1. Remember, lost humanity is held captive by sin
 - a. He willfully goes about serving sin and Satan
 - b. Sin holds him captive so that he cannot but sin
 2. True salvation carries with it transforming power – we are given a new heart – regeneration. We are enabled to live holy lives before God.
 - a. Jesus gave Himself that He might purify us a holy people
Ephesians 5:25-26 – “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”
Titus 2:14 – “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
 - b. God enables us to love and serve Him in holiness
 3. God has freed us from our bondage to sin – we are no longer its servants
Romans 6:18 – “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”
 4. Paul will deal with this further in **Chapters 5-8**

- C. Salvation brings deliverance from the pollution of sin.
1. Sin has corrupted the whole nature of the human being leaving us hopelessly corrupted
 - a. It corrupts our wills so that we will not serve and honor God
 - b. It corrupts our minds so that we cannot think correctly
 - c. It perverts our hearts so that we cannot love or fellowship with God. We simply do not want Him
 2. Salvation is chiefly about restoration – about being brought to fellowship with Christ
 - a. Calvin – “The whole purpose of the Gospel is that Christ be made ours”
 - b. The Christian is the one who loves this fellowship – he relishes it, delights in it.
 3. Are you satisfied in Christ? Is He your great reward? Are you still looking for something else? The person satisfied in Christ ceases looking for other sources of pleasure, happiness, joy, value
 4. Those who have been transformed in Christ now see Him differently. We know what it means to love Christ and to be loved by Him. It is a relationship—a union.

III. Third, you need to be clear as to the timing of your salvation

- A. We have been saved
1. Our Salvation is an Accomplished Fact
 - a. This is the nature of Justification by Faith
We’ll see this in **Chapter 5**
Romans 5:1 – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - b. Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to us
 2. Any Gospel that teaches that our salvation is something ultimately dependent upon the measure of our life or works is a false Gospel
- B. We are being saved
1. Our salvation is also a work in progress – We have been saved and we are being saved
 2. We can see this in Paul’s words in his letter to the Philippians:
Philippians 2:12 – “Therefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.”
 3. Sin is still active in our lives and God is delivering us from it
 - a. In Justification it is a one time accomplished fact – we stand in the righteousness of Christ. This is a holiness based upon our position in Christ
 - b. In Sanctification God is continuing His work of grace in our hearts and making us holy in heart and conduct. This is a progressive work.

- C. We will be saved – our salvation will be brought to completion – our final glorification.
1. There is a future aspect to our salvation
Romans 13:11 – “And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.”
 2. In this life we are still plagued by the remnants of sin. We still struggle with the imperfections of our flesh. We are longing for the day.
Romans 8:22-25 – “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. ²³ And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? ²⁵ But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.”
 3. The day is coming when this mortality will put on immortality
1 Corinthians 15:53-54 – “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Conclusion:

1. This is why Paul is not ashamed to preach the Gospel. It delivers the sinner from the guilt of his sin, from the power of sin, and from the pollution of sin.
2. Paul also boldly preaches the Gospel because it brings salvation here and now, it also brings a continuing work of transforming grace, and brings the surety of completion at the end.
3. We can carry the Gospel to the lost with boldness. We may be shamed by lost men who hate the Gospel, but we must never be ashamed.