



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 22

Gospel- Power of God to Salvation

Romans 1:16-17, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

Paul has concluded his opening statement, which has two parts.

- Part one has to do with the gospel of God, the content of the gospel.
- Part two has to do with Paul's own personal representation of that gospel.

Romans 1:1-7 is the first part.

Romans 1:8-15 is the second part.

Apostle Paul has discussed his message.

He also has discussed himself as the messenger.

The whole epistle is really an expansion of **Romans 1:16-17**.

Paul has been endeavoring to contact his audience. He has been endeavoring to make a connection, to get the people's attention.

Having got their attention, he establishes his thesis.

Paul faced death itself for the gospel, but never once did he become ashamed of Christ. He would face anybody, anytime and preach Jesus Christ.

I am not ashamed of the message and the reality of Christ crucified for sinners and raised with power and saving all who trust in Him.

Why not?

Because the gospel is the power of God for unto salvation to everyone who believes.

This is the same way that Jesus overcame feelings of shame when he was shamed for the gospel.

Jesus looked to the joyful triumph of his cross and resurrection. Paul looked to the joyful triumph of the gospel in eternal salvation.

The gospel alone brings forgiven sinners to everlasting joy.

Nothing in the world can do this except the gospel of Jesus Christ. Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam they do not have a Saviour who can solve the problem of separation from a holy God through sin, and offer sinners hope by grace and not works.

Only one message saves sinners and brings them safely into the presence of God: the gospel of Jesus Christ. It alone is the power of God unto salvation.

Therefore, Paul would say.

- we suffer,
- misunderstood,
- shamed but do not be ashamed.

Because the message of God's saving work in Christ is the only final triumphant message in the world.

- Short-term pain.
- Long-term gain.

For the joy set before you, for the salvation that only the gospel can gain, take up your cross, follow Jesus and despise the shame.

Gospel of Christ is that it is the power of God.
The good news about Jesus Christ has power.

The Greek word is ***dunamis***. We get our word “dynamite” from it.

Paul has in mind the fact that the gospel of Christ carries with it the omnipotence of God. The all-powerful God is behind it, operative in regenerating a person.

Men would like to change.

All advertising that goes on in the world is based on one presupposition, and that is people want things different than they are.

They want to look better, feel better, think better, have better experiences.

They want to change their life.

Basically, people want to change their life. There is an appeal to that because that is a basic human drive. Deep down inside people, they really want things to be different, but they are utterly impotent to change things.

Jeremiah 13:23, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*

You have just about as much chance to change your heart.

Men are impotent.

- They cannot do a thing about what they are.
- They cannot change anything.
- They may make a few reformations here and there and operate a little differently, but real changes never happen.

Matthew 22:29, *Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.*

Jesus said that to the religionists of His time.

You do not even know the power of God.

You do not know what power is.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to change men, to take them from sin, from Satan, from judgment, from death, and from hell.

Men try other things to change them. The Bible says that some men believe they can be changed by doing good works, the deeds of the law. But the Bible says the deeds of the law cannot save.

The Bible says the flesh cannot save.

The Bible says the church cannot save.

The Bible says religion cannot save.

Acts 4:12, *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

Only the power of God can change people. There is no other way.

Romans 5:6, *"When we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly."*

Man is impotent, cannot change himself. He is utterly trapped and unable to do a thing about it.

Romans 8:3, *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son"*

God was able to do.

In other words, you can take man and even give him good standards, and give him good rules, and good principles, and he cannot change himself. It cannot be done. That is the frustration of man.

James 1:18, *"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."*

In other words, what man cannot do for himself, God can do for man.

1 Peter 1:23-25, *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*²⁴ *because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away,*²⁵ *But the word of the Lord endures forever."* Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

So, God's Word can do what we cannot do for ourselves. That is the basic principle of the gospel. Man is sinful and unable to remedy his condition.

The gospel, then, becomes a force.

The word ***dunamis*** is throwing the emphasis on the force rather than the process. It is the power in the sense that God is the source of an incredible power, a limitless power that can transform lives.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25, *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*¹⁹ *For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."*²⁰ *Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*²¹ *For since, in*

the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Again, the same emphasis.

So, it is true that we are born of God and converted by means of hearing the powerful word of God, the gospel.

The Gentiles used to laugh at the Christians. The pagans in Rome and Corinth mocked them.

The key principle of their own religion was that their gods were basically indifferent. That they just were there, and they could not care less. They were apatheia, apathetic, detached, remote. The idea of an incarnation of God was utterly ridiculous to them.

Around Rome some archaeologists have found interesting things. On the **Palatine**, which is one of the seven hills of Rome, they came across a caricature from the Christian era. It depicts a slave, and a slave is bowing down before a cross.

It says underneath this drawing, *“Alexamenos worships his god.”* Crucified on the cross is a jackass. Now that tells us a little bit about the attitude of the Romans at that time toward Christianity. They thought it was ridiculous and foolishness.

Somewhere around the year **178 A.D. Greek Philosopher Celsus** wrote a bitter attack on Christianity. He said that the Christian view was, “Let no cultured person draw near. Non-wise, nonsensible, for all that kind of thing we count evil. But if any man is ignorant, if any is wanting in sense and culture, if any is a fool, let him come boldly to Christianity.”

He further wrote, “we see them in their own houses: Wool dressers, cobblers, and fullers; the most uneducated and vulgar persons.”

He said Christians are like a swarm of bats.
They are like ants creeping out of their nests.
They are like frogs holding a symposium around a swamp.
They are like worms cowering in the muck.

Celsus also said, “Christians worship a dead man.”
Foolishness.
It is foolishness.

“But to us who are saved it is the power of God.”
The world laughs at us, they mock us. But we know better.

Paul visits Athens, Greece in Acts 17 and he preaches to them in the Mars hill.

People presented their philosophy and presented papers, but hardly few people believed.

Paul departs from there and comes to Corinth.

Acts 18:1-2, *After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. ²And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.*

1 Corinthians 2:1-5, *And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. ²For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

I have personally seen the message of the cross had transformed thousands of people in my lifetime. Let the world say what it will, the evidence is in and the cross transforms us.

1 Corinthians 4:20, *For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.*

The biggest thing in my life is to know that God uses me as a channel to change people for time and eternity. It is incredible!

Take my own life. I have certain weaknesses in my own life that I struggle with all my lifelong and I cannot really seem to do much about them. I have limitations in my mind. I have limitations in my physical body. I have limitations in my perceptions. I cannot do anything for them, and yet God uses me to be the tool to change someone's total being. Incredible. That is the power of God.

So, behind the gospel is the power.

How much power is behind the gospel?

The Bible says God has great power.

Psalm 79:11, *Let the groaning of the prisoner come before You; According to the greatness of Your power Preserve those who are appointed to die;*

The Bible says God has strong power.

Psalm 89:13, *You have a mighty arm; Strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand.*

The Bible says God has glorious power.

Exodus 15:6, *“Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces.*

He has mighty power.

Job 9:4, *God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?*

He has everlasting power.

Isaiah 26:4, *Trust in the Lord forever, For in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.*

He has sovereign power.

Romans 9:21, *Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honour and another for dishonour?*

He has effectual power.

Isaiah 43:13, *Indeed before the day was, I am He; And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?”*

He has irresistible power.

Deuteronomy 32:39, *Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.*

He has incomparable power.

Psalm 89:8, *O Lord God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.*

He has unsearchable power.

Job 5:9, *Who does great things, and unsearchable, Marvellous things without number.*

He has power.

Jeremiah 10:12, *He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.*

Jeremiah 27:5, *'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me.*

Psalm 33:8-9, *Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. ⁹For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.*

By the same powerful command, the Lord maintains the universe.

Behind each miracle in the Bible there is the power of God. God can part the sea. God can bring food from heaven.

Miracle after miracle show His power. But I really believe the greatest expression of His power is found in His power to save, to transform people, to change their nature, their time, and their eternity.

Psalm 106:8-9, *Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, That He might make His mighty power known. ⁹He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; So He led them through the depths, As through the wilderness.*

The New Testament presents the same power.

Matthew 28:18, *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

- ✓ He had the power to cast out demons.
- ✓ He had power over sickness, every illness, to heal.
- ✓ He had power over the universe to provide for the needs of the people.
- ✓ He had the power to still the storm, the power to walk on the water.
- ✓ He had power over death.
- ✓ He called Lazarus out of the grave.
- ✓ He gave life to the dead son of the widow of Nain.
- ✓ He gave life to the daughter of Jairus.
- ✓ He raised Himself from the dead.

But most of all, He had “the power of God unto salvation.” He had power to save.

Application:

- 1. The power of the gospel is freeing us from being ashamed of the gospel.**

The gospel has the power to make converts, why would that solve the shame problem?

Lots of religions make converts. Lots of different religious and secular movements win people over to their faith.

When Paul said that the gospel has such a powerful effect that you do not have to be ashamed of it, did he simply mean that it does what other religions do?

Win converts?

No.

Jesus triumphed over shame by looking at the future joy that was set before him as he died.

This is what Paul has in mind in **Romans 1:16**. You do not have to be ashamed of the gospel because it does not just make converts it saves those converts utterly.

It brings them to final safety and ever-increasing joy in the presence of a glorious and holy God forever and ever. This is what makes us bold with the gospel and not that it can make converts.

The only truth in the world that can really save people forever and bring them to everlasting joy with God.

2. Salvation is future-oriented.

The final triumph of the gospel in bringing believers to eternal safety and joy in the presence of a holy and glorious God is that the phrase “for salvation” or “unto salvation” has this future-oriented meaning elsewhere in Paul and other New Testament writers.

2 Thessalonians 2:13, *But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,*

Now, here, salvation is not just what happens at conversion, which leads to sanctification, but salvation is what comes later “through sanctification” and is in the future.

In other words, salvation is the future triumph that brings the saint into God’s presence with everlasting joy.

2 Corinthians 7:10, *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

Paul speaks to Christians who are already converted and saved but need fresh repentance for their sins.

Hebrews 9:28, *so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

1 Peter 1:5, *who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

It is not conversion. It is the last great work of God to rescue us and bring us to safety and joy in his presence forever.

3. Ongoing belief is the condition for this salvation.

The final triumph of the gospel in bringing believers to eternal safety and joy in the presence of a holy and glorious God is that ongoing belief is the condition for this salvation.

Paul's point here is not that the power of the gospel creates faith, but that, for those who have faith, the gospel brings about salvation.

So, the point is not that the gospel is the power for conversion to faith. The point is that the gospel is the power to bring about future salvation through a life of faith.

The tense of the verb “believe” here is crucial. It signifies ongoing action, not just the first act of faith when you were converted.

1 Corinthians 15:1–2, *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

Faith that does not persevere is a vain and empty faith. James calls this as dead faith. (James 2:17, 26).

4. Gospel is for believers, not just unbelievers.

Paul wants to preach the gospel to believers (not just unbelievers).

Romans 1:15, *So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.*

Then he gives the reason: “for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to all such believers.”

The reason Paul is not ashamed of the gospel is that it is the only truth in all the world that will not let you down when you give your life to it in faith. It will bring you all the way through temptation and persecution and death and judgment into eternal safety and ever-increasing joy in the presence of a holy and glorious God.

All the other “gospels” in the world that win so many converts will fail you in the end.

Only one saves from the final wrath of God and leads to fullness of joy in his presence and pleasures at his right hand forever.

Therefore, there is no need to be ashamed of it, no matter what others say or do.

How eager we should be to speak this gospel to believer and unbeliever alike.

Do you feed your faith day by day with the promises of this triumphant gospel?

We should never entertain the thought of being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God.