***Proud of the Gospel
RO05-01***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 1 as we come to the key passage in the book of Romans with the famous and dramatic 16th verse. We'll begin at Romans 1:14.

Paul, as you know, in this context, has expressed, the fact that he is eager to take his ministry of evangelism to Rome. As he writes this letter from Corinth, he is free to go west, and to go to Rome, and to fulfill his dream and his duty. However, as we have seen, in spite of warnings through various people, and to himself directly from God the Holy Spirit, Paul decided instead of going west to go east, and thus to Jerusalem. Paul, on the advice of the Jerusalem pastors, when he did arrive, agrees to act out a form of legalism, part of the Law system. He was doing this in order to accommodate himself to Jewish prejudices. The result was a riot, and Paul was put into prison. And for the next four years out of the last five years of his life, he lost his freedom. Two years were spent in jail in Caesarea; and, two years in Rome. He finally arrived in Rome as a prisoner, but minus his freedom. This act of spiritual reversionism on the part of the apostle Paul resulted in the discipline of this imprisonment. However, as always, God turned it into blessing?

Paul wanted to come to Rome because he wanted to gain some divine good production, he tells us, through his teaching of Bible doctrine. So, verse 13 says, "Now, I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come onto you, but was presented thus far, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other gentiles. He had his opportunity at that point in time, and he set it aside. He made a mistake that God had to resolve into a blessing, but a mistake which cost him four years of freedom. He did not move in the right direction. However, this has not, at this point entered the picture. So, he speaks with enthusiasm, anticipating what he looks forward to in the center of the Roman Empire.

So, picking the story up at verse 14, we read, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." Paul wants to come to Rome because he is under obligation, he says, to do so. He has something to pay off to the people who are in Rome. He has divine viewpoint information. This includes not only the gospel, but all the major basic doctrines that constitute Christianity. You will remember that it is to the apostle Paul that the unique revelation was made concerning the full blossomed truth relative to the church age, and to the church body itself.

**Purpose**

So, he begins with the statement, "I am." In the Greek, it's the word "eimi." "Eimi" is a statement of status. It is his present condition. He understands what his mission in life is, and he answers the question with this verb as to who he is. Every now and then somebody comes along and says, "My problem in life is that I don't know who I am," meaning, "I don't know why I'm here; what I'm supposed to be doing; where I'm going; or, what it's all about." The apostle Paul, with this verb, immediately declares to us that he knew very well who he was; where he was going; and, what he was supposed to be doing.

**Debtor**

Every one of us as believers sooner or later has to identify what our duty is in the Lord's plan of the ages. We have a particular duty in respect to other people, and this knowledge as to who we are is gained only as a result of the intake of Bible doctrine into our own souls. Paul identifies himself here as being a debtor; that is, one who is under obligation to another person for a debt that he is obliged to pay off. This comes at the end of the Greek sentence. In our English sentence, it comes at the beginning: "I am debtor." In the Greek, it comes at the end, which is a point of emphasis. This is the key feature of this verse – that he is under obligation to the people of Rome.

He identifies that obligation in terms of Greeks and barbarians, by which he means all nations. The Greeks, of course, spoke of gentile nations and represented culture and civilization, whereas the barbarians spoke of just the opposite. They were the foreigners, the uncivilized gentiles, so to speak. Paul's mission was to all nations because all of them were unbelievers.

He also says that his mission is to the wise and to the unwise. That refers to the various classes of people in the nations of the world. Some are educated, and some are uneducated and lacked understanding. But whatever a person's status in life was, and whatever nation he lived in, the apostle Paul had a divine commandment and a divine obligation to take a piece of information to them which he had; namely, the gospel, and what he elsewhere calls the full counsel of the Word of God – the whole gamut of doctrine.

So, Paul, having received the full information from the Lord Jesus Christ concerning the age of grace, was particularly under the sense of duty to give this information. He had the complete picture. He knew how the church age contrasted with the Law age. There are a lot of people who haven't learned that yet today, but Paul knew it directly from the Lord Himself. Consequently, he was able to be used by the Holy Spirit to write most of the New Testament Scriptures. He understood the distinctives of the church age. This knowledge placed the sense of obligation upon him toward the gentile world that he refers to here.

Then, in verse 15, we have the debt declared to us. He says, "So," and this is the Greek word "houtos." "Houtos" is just a little word that says, "Here's a conclusion coming up." That's what he means by "so." "As much as in me is" means "as far as I am concerned." And he adds the words, "I am ready," meaning, "I am willing." In the Greek, there is no verb. There is no "I am." Therefore, it makes it very pungent and very crisp. Paul says, "So, as far as I am concerned, I'm ready." It's an idiomatic construction. It's very elliptical, but it's very strong when you read it in the Greek. He was ready to do what? He was ready and willing to undertake the journey to Rome, and the involvement of witnessing with testimony that would be involved there, and again, the dangers that were going to be involved with him as a believer, and particularly because of who he was here under the very noses of the Caesars.

So, we may translate this in this way: "Thus the readiness on my part," because he viewed himself as a debtor. So, whatever the cost to himself, what he's saying is that he was ready to pay the price.

He was indicating really an insatiable desire to communicate the Word of God. And this is a sign of a teacher. I don't care know what realm of teaching you may be in (whether it's in spiritual or just academic subjects), the sign of a teacher is having prepared (having gathered up information), you have a compulsion and an eagerness to get up before the class and then to start teaching and instructing. One of the sure signs that you don't have the gift of teaching in any realm is that you're not eager to get up and do it. If it's a chore, it's not your gift, and particularly in the spiritual realm (in spiritual things), the eagerness to instruct is a strong sign that you have a communicating gift.

**Good News**

So, Paul needs only the Holy Spirit's timing, and he needs only the Holy Spirit provision. He is ready to go: "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel." The word "preach" is the Greek word "euaggelizo." "Euaggelizo" is a word that means "to proclaim good news." It means to sound off like the courier making an announcement before a group of people. He explains what he is ready to do when he gets to Rome – what he feels is his duty in Rome. That is to proclaim a message that he calls good news.

**Eternal Rewards**

It is in the aorist tense, which means at the point in time, which is what the aorist represents (when he arrives in Rome). It is middle, interestingly enough, in the voice, because that indicates that he is going to be personally benefited as the result of proclaiming the gospel. How? He will be benefited because they are going to be people out there who are going to be evangelized. Of all the people in Rome that he speaks to, and along the way that he speaks to, some of them will believe, and some of them will not. But they will all have been evangelized. Of those elect who do believe, he will receive eternal rewards. It will be a benefit to him because of divine good production. "Euaggelizo" is a very specific word. It's infinitive, and it means this is the divine purpose. This is the purpose indicated for which he is doing this.

**Apostle**

This is: "To preach the gospel to you; namely, Christians and unbelievers in Rome, also." He adds the word "also," which is the little Greek word "kai," that you're acquainted with, which simply is an indication that he has done this many times in many other places. Nor does he lack places at which to preach yet. He has his hands full all over the Roman Empire. He's been in the ministry for many years. There are many churches that have arisen under his care. And because he has the gift of apostleship, that means he has supreme authority over every church. This is not like a pastor-teacher who has authority only within one local church. Paul, as an apostle, had authority, particularly over these churches that he had founded all over the Empire, and for that matter, over all the churches. Consequently, he comes with plenty of background, and from many other churches to whom he has ministered.

**Paul is Ready**

"So, I'm ready, as far as I'm concerned, to preach the gospel; to announce a form of good news to you people, believers and unbelievers, who are in the city of Rome, the center of the New Testament world.

**Not Ashamed**

Then in verse 16, he explains why he is ready to do this. As you know, about five years after he wrote this, he died for this very thing. This is what cost him his life. His readiness to preach the gospel and his readiness to preach it in Rome led to his being beheaded. This is what led to his execution under Nero. But even at this time, there was a hazard to himself personally that was involved, such as Christians in communist countries everywhere are constantly being faced with. But Paul said, "I am willing to run all of these risks." Why? He says, "For." Again, we come up with the word "gar," which is a signal word introducing a reason for what he has just said. What he says is that he is not ashamed ("epaischunomai"). "Epaischunomai" means just exactly that: "I am not ashamed."

**The Duty of Every Believer**

It is present tense, which means that he's declaring something to us that he is never ashamed of on any occasion. It's the constant situation of his attitude. It is middle, meaning this is a credit to him. He personally benefits by not being ashamed of the gospel. And I want you to start drawing this in now to your own situation. What Paul is reflecting to us in this passage here comes right down home to us. I hope you will not excuse yourself because you don't happen to be an apostle, or because you don't happen to view yourself as an evangelist. What Paul is declaring to us in these verses is the pattern of life which is the duty of every believer. And you could have said every one of these things that Paul said. You too are a debtor to Greeks and to barbarians. You too are a debtor to the wise and to the unwise. You too should be ready to say, "I'm ready to preach the gospel, whatever it is that it falls to my lot to preach it. That is simply within the circle of the world that you move in, and not necessarily in some foreign country, but in the area of the work I'm doing; in the area of the school I go to; the area of the social life I lead; and, so on.

Paul says, "I am not ashamed," which now brings the question of our own attitude. It is personally of great benefit to a person (that's what the middle voice means here) not to be ashamed of the gospel. Paul is not ashamed of this doctrine we call the gospel. He is ready to proclaim it. But he is not saying that he has no reason to be ashamed of his converts. That's a very important thing, because Paul had very good reason to be ashamed of his converts on more than one occasion. All you have to do is read the book of Galatians, and you have a prime example of how an apostle was extremely ashamed of what the people had done consequent to his enlightenment of them in the gospel. The churches that he had established and the abandonment of those churches in Galatia of the grace principle and their wholesale stampeding toward legalism was very humiliating to the apostle Paul.

So, it is important to notice for yourself in your own ministry that God does not expect you not to be ashamed of the people that you have instructed in the Word of God. As a matter of fact, Paul does not even say that he is proud of himself, or that he is not ashamed of himself, because he's going to have good reason. No sooner is this letter all from Corinth than he is going to look back and see that he has good reason to have been ashamed of himself as he recognizes the revisionism in his soul that caused him to go to Jerusalem instead of Rome at this point.

**We Must Put our Eyes on the Lord rather than on People**

But Satan's device is to get our eyes on ourselves and on other people rather than on the Lord. That's the point I'm trying to make. For you to try to determine the value of your ministry by putting your eyes on people or putting your eyes on yourself is the kiss of death to Christian service. You will be a patsy in the hands of Satan from the moment that you swing your eyes from the Lord. You're going to repeat Peter's experience of walking on the water, and while his eyes were on the Lord, all went well. But the minute he turned and looked at the waves and got his eyes off the Lord, down he went. This is as inevitable as the fact that night must follow day. The worth of your ministry in the Lord's work is in the Bible doctrine that you are putting out. It does not have its value because it originates from you. The gospel message itself would be just as valuable if it came from the devil as if it came from a very godly Christian. The value lies in the information that you're giving, not in what you are, or what anybody else is that may be listening to the information that you're giving.

Once you get your eyes on people relative to the value of your Christian service, Satan will neutralize you, and he will divert you then to a substitute in the way of an emotional expression. He will bring some other emotional expression, because now you have your eyes on people, and you want to see results. You want to see reactions. You have your eyes on yourself, and you want to see reactions. Therefore, you will revert to the emotional domination of the soul in order to bring that out.

There's a great deal of preaching which, if you are a discerning Christian, and you are listening, you can very quickly spot the fact that the preacher is playing the emotions. He is saying things, or using illustrations, for example, that are going to move the emotional structure within a person's soul, but will not feed that soul with the Word of God. It's a great temptation to want to impress people that you've had a wonderful meeting, and that you preach the very magnificent sermon, because their emotions were moved even though you left their mentalities just as blank and poverty-struck on some particular fact of truth (of divine viewpoint) as when they walked in. So, it's not the fact that you're not ashamed of people or that you're not ashamed of yourself, but you are not ashamed of the information you're giving.

**Arrogance**

This is comparable to the arrogance that sometimes you will hear people express about preachers. They'll say, "Well, you can just listen to a preacher, and you can tell when he's filled with the spirit when he is speaking." That is the epitome of arrogance. The only thing you can tell is whether the emotional cockles of your heart are flapped by what he says. That's what you can tell. All you can say is that what he is saying moves my emotional type. That's all you can say. But the value of the information, and whether God the Holy Spirit is going to use it, depends on what is said, not on who says it, or on who listens to it.

**Good News**

For this reason, Paul makes it very clear when he says, "I am not ashamed," that it is of the gospel (the "euaggelion"). There you have the good news. That's exactly what this Greek word means. It is our precious word "gospel," and it means good news. It is the good news about how a sinner can go to heaven when he dies. That's good news. It is the good news of the fact that the penalty for our sin has been paid by Jesus Christ in His death on the cross.

That's what 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 declare to us: "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." There you have the basic core of this good news. This is the good news – that a holy God is going to treat you and me as sinners in grace.

**Martin Luther**

For this reason, Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us, "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." It was verses like this that transformed a man like Martin Luther, who had spent so many years trying to gain God's favor. Then when he realized that it was a matter of the grace of God giving him something, that's what made him so immovable. There was no one so negative as Martin Luther.

I have to smile when I hear people accuse Christian sometimes of being so negative. What they mean is that they are negative toward what is wrong, and so much of society is wrong that it doesn't fit very nicely to be negative. You have the same trouble with the Ten Commandments. Moses was terribly negative. He was just as negative as he could be. He only got two of them positive, and one of them is inverted, and it comes out negative anyhow. So, he didn't do very well. But what was he doing? He was telling what God had said. And God is extremely negative toward what is wrong.

This is the good news that salvation, or eternal life, is secured simply by believing that good news: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." A divine curse, as a matter of fact, rests upon any corruption of this gospel, or any distorting of it in any way.

Paul had a lot of trouble with the Galatian Christians, and one of the things they were doing was corrupting the gospel. For that reason, in Galatians 1:8-9, Paul says, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed." The apostle Paul even includes himself. He said, "If I were to come back to you and give you another kind of gospel than the gospel of the grace of God; if I were to talk to you in terms of social action improvement, don't listen to me. Right away you may know that something is wrong, and just put me under the curse (the judgment) of God."

**Slavery**

This is interesting because, as you know, Rome was filled with slaves. The empire was filled with millions of slaves. And you would have thought that the apostle Paul would have gone and championed against the issue of slavery, but he didn't. Immorality was rampant in Rome. The killing of infants was commonplace. They didn't have abortion. They just killed a child after it was born. This was widespread. You'd think that he would have spoken out against that immorality. That wasn't his message.

There was economic injustice in Rome. But that was not his message. There was brutality in the arena as the gladiators (slaves, in effect) were brought into the arena and forced to stand before the emperor and say, "We who are about to die salute you." Then they would sit there as you would sit at a football game until one gladiator destroyed the other before your eyes. But he didn't speak about that.

**The Gospel is Literal**

The gospel is based on a historical fact. As someone has said, if you walked up to the cross and ran your hand on it, you could get a sliver in your finger. That is what the liberal mentality rejects today – that the gospel was an historical event.

The debate the other night that you heard on radio with Mrs. O'Hair pointed out that very fact. She challenged that Jesus Christ was ever a historical character. When it was called to her attention that there was Josephus; that there was Tacitus; and, that there was Suetonius – non-biblical writers, all of whom had referred to Jesus Christ, she just dismissed it. Those were meaningless remarks. She is dismissing that there is a historical Jesus that walked the streets of Palestine.

However, what we are talking about is good news because there is a historical Jesus. We are told that there is a historical Jesus on the authority of the New Testament itself. Part of the Bible authenticates itself with the prophecies such as we looked at recently, of the destiny of Babylon, and the destiny of Tyre, and how in detail those things were fulfilled. It is not possible that this should be a matter of chance.

**It is the Power of God unto Salvation**

So Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." The words "of Christ" are not in the Greek. It simply says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel," though, of course, it is the gospel of Christ: "For it is the power of God unto salvation:" "I'm not ashamed of the gospel." This is a deterrent, obviously, to most gospel witnessing.

**The Gospel is Embarrassing to Most Christians**

Why do most Christians never really have the experience of talking to an unbeliever concerning his soul? Why do most Christians very seldom ever find themselves in a position where they are actually explaining the gospel? The primary reason is they're ashamed of it. The main reason we don't talk is because the gospel is a personal embarrassment to us. The implications of the gospel are a major deterrent in our witnessing. We are intimidated most of all by our relatives. They are the toughest ones to face up. Many times even parents within a family will find it difficult to see that their children know the gospel, and that they have been witnessed to relative to the gospel; let alone people that are beyond the circle of your own immediate family.

There's a smug sophistication in a spiritually disoriented society that makes us silent because we don't want to be laughed at. You can see if you listened to that debate, that a debater like this Mrs. O'Hair was very adept at making the gospel look ridiculous – making an affection and a devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ just seem absolutely inane. For that reason, she could make a remark like: "To read the Bible is to dismiss it. To read of its prophecies is to dismiss it." She is an ignorant woman who walks in spiritual darkness, and therefore could not even begin to understand the Word of God if she tried. That's what you must understand when people laugh at you. Just remember that they are going to repeat the experience of Lazarus and the rich man. They're going to play the rich man's role out all over again. But thank God you're going to play Lazarus's role. You're going to be there on the winning side. So, what is it if you are laughed at?

Witnessing has to begin with the filling of the Spirit, which is the result of the confession of known sins. Then you have the boldness and the courage to face the unbeliever.

**Religion**

One of the most powerful deterrents, of course, to witnessing is religion. People have religion. You have someone who's a friend who goes to a nice big church. You know that what he experiences is religion – pure, cold-blooded religion. Every kind of inducement is given to him in order to get him to move to do something so that God will be pleased with him. And he's trying to build up points with God.

It's hard for you to go up to that person and to even bring up the subject as to whether he's saved or not. You feel it's almost insulting to suggest to him that here he is a church member, and he may be headed for an eternity in hell. You're going to have to learn that, while you may not want to insult people, it is better that you should run that risk now than to have let them passed off into eternity without at least a warning. You have the information, and they do not. Unless they have the information, they can never get to heaven.

So, what are you afraid of very frequently is being rebuffed. And the unbeliever will drive you into silence just because he's going to reject you. But so what if you are rebuffed? The sooner you learn that this is part of the occupational hazard of being a child of God, the sooner you get on with the witnessing business.

Satan's monumental deception, of course, is that witnessing is the business of the professional minister. So, all the Christians sit back, like people in the stands, and they cheer him on as he's down there on the football field doing battle for the Lord's work. You may think that that's funny. I heard of a minister on one occasion, not so far from here. A person met him and talked to him on the street. The result of the conversation was that the person was looking for God. The question was, "How can I be saved?" Do you know what he said to him? He said, "If you'll come out next Sunday night to church, I'll preach the best gospel sermon you ever heard," and then he walked off and left him.

What that minister was reflecting was that he himself had picked up a bad habit. He picked up the habit of viewing himself as the agent of the gospel. And that is a rather secondary area of ministry for a minister. A pastor-teacher in a local church, first of all, and primarily, has the job of feeding the flock. The Bible keeps punching that again and again. That's the job. And when the flock has been fed, then we have witnesses multiplied over and over who can get out there and do the job. But Satan comes along and says, "Christians, please encourage your pastor to be a great witness from the pulpit for the Lord."

So, he preaches, and there are no unbelievers there. There may be a few of them, but most of the unbelievers are out there washing their car. They're down at the laundry. They're down at the grocery store. They're out on the golf course. But the last place on earth that they are is in church. Thus, Satan has hoodwinked us and pulled off a fantastic con game on us even when we would not be ashamed of the gospel. No, the job of witnessing (of what Paul is saying here) is you, and I, on an equal level.

We have read to you the letter of Christians who are just south of the border of us, and the door for them to speak the gospel is closing on them. You know that if you lived in Russia, and as a parent, you taught your child a Bible verse, or you explained the gospel to that youngster, and he went to school and gave it away, you would immediately end up in prison because that's breaking the law in Russia. That's violating the law of not permitting a child the freedom of choice in religion. You have imposed a viewpoint upon him. And yet, we have freedom now – for how long remains to be seen. If what we've been listening to in training union comes anywhere near being correct, it's not going to be very long at that. But now we have freedom, and yet most of us tend to be ashamed of just witnessing, and ashamed of telling people the gospel.

**Witnessing**

The first step has to be must understand the gospel. You have to know what it is. The second step is you must understand what people must do with that gospel, which Paul is going to explain to us here in a moment. Then you have to have the filling of the Spirit as the foundation and base of courage for your operating in that witnessing work.

**The Gospel is the Power of God**

Paul says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Why not, Paul? "For." Again, we get back to the word "gar," a little keyword again, showing us that something is going to be explained – here, why he is not ashamed. Again, he says, "It is." It's the Greek word "eimi." That is a status of his mentality: "It is the power of God." And the world "power" is "dunamis." Of course, you can very readily see the relationship to the words "dynamite" and "dynamic" and so on. All of these are words that speak of power. There are many different words in the Greek New Testament concerning power. This one is a particular word that has to do with inherent power. It is inherently part of the gospel that it is a powerful thing. Salvation, in other words, is the hardest thing that God had to do for us. For a holy God to commit a sinner to come into heaven – that was the toughest thing. And the Lord solved that. Why would we not trust Him for everything else down the line? We started with the most powerful thing of all – the gospel itself. We trusted God for this. Everything else should be easier.

**Salvation**

"It is the power of God." He is the source: "Unto." And the Lord "unto" is the Greek word "eis," which means "in reference to" or "for the purpose of." What is the purpose? "Soteria," or "salvation." This is preservation from the lake of fire and eternal death. The Passover lamb, of course, was an example of this. On the tenth of the month of Nisan in the Jewish calendar, a lamb was brought into the house. He was penned up so that they could observe him to ensure that there was no blemish on this little male animal. The children could play with him, and they enjoyed having him. But on the 14th of Nisan, this lamb had to die. This illustrated the fact that while Lord Jesus Christ walked the dusty roads of Palestine, He was the perfect God-man. But His life was of no significance relative to our salvation until He hung on that cross and died for us spiritually, and died for us physically. Until then, we had no basis for salvation.

**A Divine Provision**

So, this was a divine provision, but it was a divine provision for the disease. It was not a provision merely for the symptoms. It went to the heart of the problem; namely, our spiritual death, of which Romans 5:12 speaks to us. No amount of human good can solve the disease of the sin that we are born with. It takes an inherent, powerful thing; namely, the gospel to do it – the fact that Christ died; He was buried; and, He rose again for us.

**Salvation Past**

As you know, the gospel is in three phases. We've looked at this before and I'll just briefly mention it. The gospel is in past time, which means that we have been freed from the penalty of sin. That is the internal condemnation in the lake of fire. That's done. You can't ever go to hell. Even if you should change your mind and blaspheme Christ, and reject Him, you can't ever change your direction. They will drag you into heaven kicking and screaming if necessary, but you will not be able to change your direction. You are secure.

You'll go in with a great deal of loss of fellowship and reward under those conditions. But in the past tense, salvation was completed. You have this in Romans 3:23.

Also, by the same token, if you have not received Him, you remain lost. If you have not received Him before you die, there is no return.

**Salvation Present**

Then there is salvation in the present tense. That is, we are saved now from the controlling power of sin. This is done through the filling of God the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:14). It is the intake of Bible doctrine into our souls that builds a spiritual maturity structure that enables us to be victorious over sin. You will never conquer sin by making determinations of your will, or plans, or resolutions. It will only come as doctrine builds that spiritual maturity structure with its five facets.

**Salvation Future**

Then there's the future tense, which is saved from the very presence of sin, and the very expression of it in your being (1 Peter 1:3-5), so that everything you do is absolutely perfect.

This gospel, of which Paul says he is not ashamed, which is the power of God unto a salvation in these three tenses, is to everyone. No one is excluded.

**Believe**

Then here we get to the kicker. How do you get it? After you have told the person the gospel, what do you do with it? The keyword is believe "pisteuo." The word "pisteuo" means to trust – to depend on the word of some authority. That's what faith is: trusting the authority of the Word of God – of what God has said. The word "believe" means faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. That's why your faith has value. Your faith has only value relative to the object in which you place your faith. Please notice that it is not the opening of your heart's door to Jesus Christ. It is not inviting Him into your life. Those phrases are deceptive because they cover up the key factor, which is "pisteuo:" believe; trusting; and, taking God at His Word. An unbeliever can get all kinds of notions from the idea of opening the door of his heart to Christ, which incidentally comes from Revelation 3 which has to do with restoring yourself to temporal fellowship through confession of sin, and is not applicable to salvation at all.

Also, it is not to be simply covered over with a word like "receive." I have heard evangelists say, "Oh, believism is not enough. That is not the thing. The thing that we need is to *receive* Him as your Savior," and then they will promptly proceed to quote John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the children of God." Then they stop. And I've heard this on national television, and I'm waiting for the rest of the verse, but the rest of the verse never appears, because are punching on the idea of *receiving* Christ. Well, the immediate question is: how do you *receive* Christ? And the rest of the verse tells you how: "Even to them that believe on His Name." But if they read the rest of the verse, it would wreck their whole sermon. So, they just take the first part. Receiving is believing. That is the only way you can receive Christ. It isn't repenting. It isn't confessing. It's believing the gospel. That's critical.

The apostle Paul goes to the heart of the Roman Empire and this is what he says before he gets there "I am not ashamed of the message I'm going to bring you, which is a message of inherent power to anybody who will ..." do what with it? Who will believe it. Now that, dear friend, is grace in its finest expression.

**The Soul**

Here's how it works. You have a soul. The soul consists of the mind; the emotions; and, the will. This constitutes your immaterial being. There's a perceptive side to the mind and a directive side to the mind. You hear the gospel. This gospel comes into your perceptive mind. Somebody explains the Word of God to you. Ordinarily, when you're a believer, you have another thing which is a human spirit (a living human spirit). Every piece of divine viewpoint information goes from the perceptive mind, and when it's hit by faith, which is believing that information, whether it's a pastor teaching you a point of doctrine on any subject or the gospel being explained, then that's transferred to the human spirit. But in an unbeliever, there is no human spirit. Therefore, there is no place to cycle the information because it then cycles up to the directive mind, and that's what determines a person's actions. Everything you do in life is on the basis of the deciding part of your mind as the result of doctrine that is in there, or that is not in there. When doctrine is in there, you have an enlightened part of this directive mind. When doctrine is not in there, you have a darkened part of the mind. Then you act like all the worldlings act. And then your decision-making is on the world's basis.

**The Living Human Spirit**

Here's what John 16:8-11 tell us. (You can pursue them further on your own.) God the Holy Spirit comes into the picture at this point, and the information is taken from the perceptive mind by the Holy Spirit. He brings conviction; you put it to faith; and, then he puts it directly into your directive mind so that you can exhale faith toward Jesus Christ. That is the first exhale you make as a believer. First you must inhale. You can never exhale until you inhale. No baby is born exhaling. He's born inhaling, and then he exhales. And it is inhaling the gospel into the perceptive minds. When we believe it, God the Holy Spirit transfers it to the directive mind, and you breathe out faith in Jesus Christ. Then your human spirit comes alive, and then the cycle is set up for the intake of divine viewpoint.

You have to understand this so that you will know how to witness. You will know that you're talking to a perceptive side of a person's mind who is spiritually dead, and therefore can't understand a Fig Newton's worth of spiritual things. And God the Holy Spirit, therefore, should be asked, as per John 16:8-11, to perform this convicting work, and then the individual can go positive or negative. If he goes positive, he breathes out faith toward Christ. If he goes negative, it dies at that point.

The extent of this message that Paul is going to bring, he says, is: "To the Jew first," meaning that historically it went to the Jew. No Jew today gets to heaven unless he receives Christ, and transfers over into the Christian category of humanity: "And to the Greek," meaning the gentile. No gentile gets to heaven today unless he transfers over into the Christian category. All of humanity is in one category or another.

So, Paul says, "I'm ready. I have the information. I'm eager to go. I'm ready to evangelize in Rome, as I have done in other places." The question for you and me, of course, is: how ready are we to do the same job? People don't have to appreciate you when you bring them the information. They don't have to appreciate your witness, or you personally, in order to be saved. The witness just has to know his duty, and he has to know the doctrine of salvation, and what a person must do with it; namely, to believe it. People are not going to be helped because you give them some emotional treatment; because you sympathize with them; or, because in some way you are just going to love them. That's Satan's talk. Just loving people will never get them into heaven. Just sympathizing with people and the problems of their sin will never get them to heaven, any more than just loving a believer who's out of fellowship is going to get him squared away. Sympathizing with him is the worst thing you can do sometimes with a person who is off-beat in spiritual things. The thing that's going to help is going positive to doctrine. But how will you do that? Only after you have received the truth.

You have it. It is within your hands, as it was in the hands of the apostle Paul, to give the information, which is the key to opening the door to heaven.

Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the inherent power of God unto salvation. A holy God permits a sinner into heaven, and still remains just Himself. This is to everyone who will trust in this gospel message and the person of Christ of whom it speaks. Whether you are in the category of Jew or gentile in humanity, the way to heaven is open, providing that some Christian comes along and gives us the information. May God help you and me to search out the opportunities this week to do exactly that.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

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