

Romans 1 (Part 2): 8-17 - I Am Not Ashamed

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Romans 1. We're going to be picking it up here in verse 8. Paul writes, *"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. ⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you ¹⁰always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. ¹¹For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— ¹²that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. ¹³I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. ¹⁴I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. ¹⁵So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.*

¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."'" (ESV)

Stop there, please. Let's pray.

Open our hearts, Lord. We give our attention to You, our hearts and minds to You, that You might fill them. Teach us today. Speak to us today. And may we apply the things that we learn. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

We made the point last week when we started Romans that these are people that Paul had never met before. So he's writing a letter to a group of people that he was not personally responsible for in the sense of sharing the Gospel with them. But he's writing that they might be solidified in their faith.

We also brought out last week that they didn't have a Bible like you have a Bible. They had the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures written to the Jews. But there was so much there that they needed to know, and Paul wanted to bring them into a place of understanding. And that's what Romans is all about.

He begins this section with a commendation and what a commendation it is. Look what he says again in verse 8. He starts off by saying, *"...I thank my God*

through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith (he said) is proclaimed in all the world."

Of course, "*all the world*" means all the known Roman Empire at that time. But this is still a really big deal for someone to say that your faith is known far and wide! Paul had heard about what was going on in the church in Rome, and what he had heard was very encouraging. And he wanted them to know, I've heard about your faith. It's strong. It's vibrant. It's real. It's genuine.

You might think that's not that big of a deal. So they had strong faith, big deal. Yeah, but just remember where these people were. They were in Rome. You might expect a strong, vibrant church in Jerusalem, but Rome is the capital city of the Roman Empire and the capital city of a paganistic empire at that. And so, in the capital city of this pagan-filled empire, Paul says, I've heard about your faith. You're thriving.

That's interesting, isn't it? That we can thrive in the midst of a pagan atmosphere—that believers can actually grow in their faith in the midst of a pagan-filled atmosphere. I find that very interesting. It makes me think about our own lives. Of course, it brings up the natural question: Are we flourishing in our faith? Are you and I flourishing in our faith? And is it even possible to flourish living in the United States of America in 2015? Well, I think this passage proves that it is. It is possible.

You'd have to be living under a rock not to know that our nation is suffering from a very debilitating moral corruption right now. And like you, I am grieved, as grieved as anyone, at what is going on in our country, and how rapidly we're witnessing the deterioration of our society and stuff like that. And nobody, myself included, wants to see our country spiral down into the moral abyss that it seems to be heading in. I hate that it's going that way, and I think it's probably safe to say that you do too.

But I have to say something else. I'm also very concerned about the many voices that have taken the opportunity to rise up during this time of moral decline. I don't know if you're aware of it. I know you're aware of the moral decline, but are you aware of the many voices that are being raised right now to the body of Christ? Speaking to us—newsletters, emails, mass emails, websites that are going up, talking to the body of Christ about the world in which we live and how you should be responding.

And there's all kinds of things that are being said, and because of that, I think there's a lot of confusion. I think believers are largely confused about which voices to listen to, and what to follow, and so forth. So what should we believe

about what it means to live in a country like the United States of America in the midst of the moral decline that we are experiencing? What should we think?

Well, for starters, if we're going to look at this passage and learn anything from it, we're going to realize that what we've already brought out: It is possible to live in a completely paganistic society and to flourish in your faith. Do you guys know that as dark and as difficult as the United States is today from a moral standpoint, Rome was worse? And I'm not saying that in a way to excuse anything that's going on in our country, or even to suggest that we can't get to where Rome was. And we probably will.

But let me tell you something. Let me read a couple of quotes for you here. The ancient philosopher, I don't know exactly how to pronounce all his names—I think his name is pronounced Seneca, he called Rome, I quote, “*a cesspool of iniquity.*” And he's the man who lived there. And the ancient writer Juvenal called it, quote, “*a filthy sewer into which the dregs of the empire flood.*” Now those are a couple of quotes about Rome and the Rome that Paul was writing to these people in the midst of.

And what was he saying to these people in the midst of this city, this empire that was deteriorating so rapidly, so powerfully? He said, I've heard about your faith, and you're flourishing. The life of your faith is a beacon light in the midst of this depraved culture in which you live. Why do I bring all this up?

Well, I think that there are some voices that would suggest to you and I in the midst of the depravity of the United States of America that the church is about to be extinguished. May I suggest to you, brothers and sisters in Jesus, that is not going to happen? Not that it's not going to create issues, not that it's not going to create barriers, not that it's not going to be a big fat bummer, but extinguish the church? I don't think so.

May I remind you of something Jesus said? Let Me put this on the screen for you. I'm going to quote this out of the old NIV. Jesus said,

Matthew 16:18 (NIV84)

...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

This is the Lord's way of basically saying, My church is unstoppable, and even death—and that's why the gates of Hades is a better translation than the gates of hell. The gates of Hades refers to death, and He's basically saying even death

won't stop it. It will not. It cannot be stopped. Satan will not overpower it, he will not silence it. It will go on.

That's not to say that we're not constantly to be alert about the works of the enemy and what he wants to do. We are. We're told that he's like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We're told to be alert. We're told to be self-controlled. We're told to be on our game as it relates to the work of the enemy and his attempt to silence us. And he will continue to attempt to do it. But he will never succeed in any totality (1 Peter 5:8 and Ephesians 6:11-13)

The church of Jesus Christ will not be brought under completely. There will always be a remnant. There will always be a bright shining light. And this passage here in Romans chapter 1 proves to you and I that you can live in a thoroughly paganistic society that is utterly depraved and dark and have a bright beacon-shining faith that even someone like the apostle Paul would write about and say, I've heard about you guys. You guys rock. This is amazing!

He's impressed. I like that! So, here's an interesting thing, historically speaking, one of the things that really bolsters the faith of the body of Christ is difficulty. Persecution. Challenging times. You know what makes us fat, lazy, and complacent? Good times. There you go. Isn't that just a fun thought?

The better life gets, the worse we become in our ability to shine our light. The worse society and culture becomes as it relates to morality and all those sorts of things, the brighter the light of Christ begins to shine because Christians begin to realize, man, I tell you, this place is going down fast. We need to live for Jesus like never before. We need to crank it up like never before.

And that's what happens. Some of the most incredible rejuvenations of the church that have happened throughout history are when the government and society begin to put more restraining pressure on the church. And the church just breaks out of those bonds and grows. It's craziness.

So anyway, I hope that you don't think that I'm saying that we should sit back and just let our culture hit the skids. I hope you don't hear me saying that, because I'm not saying that. That would be a violation of what it means to be salt and light in a depraved society.

But Christians, may I suggest to you that being salt and light is not necessarily getting legislation to pass, okay? That's not to say that you and I shouldn't be involved at some level in attempting to do that. I think we should vote, and we should vote according to the Word of God. I think that we should be involved in the political process of democracy in this country. I really do. I love this country, and I love how it's set up and all that good stuff.

But there are a lot of voices again out there that are suggesting to you and I that if certain things go certain ways, then we've just been one big fat failure. And they're just saying, well, hang on, because it's all downhill from here. Listen, that's not what I see historically. It's not what I see in the Word of God.

The fact of the matter is, what we are seeing in the United States of America right now is absolutely in keeping with prophecy. And what that tells you and I is this is not catching God by surprise. He's not sitting back going, goodness gracious, what is happening now in this world I created? And He's not wringing His hands and wondering what He's going to do about it. This is something He's been foretelling for a long time.

What you and I are seeing culturally and societally, this is prophecy unfolding before our very eyes. And you know what? Until the Lord comes and gets His church, it's going to keep going this way. That's what prophecy says.

Now, here's the paradox. You and I are supposed to stand in the light of the glory of God, and we are supposed to be salt and light in this culture. But just know this: We are not going to bring the return of Christ by creating some utopian society. I'm sorry, what Star Trek says is not true. It's not going to happen that way. That's what the Bible says.

We are to continue to move forward, and we are to continue to pray for our officials and our government representatives and so on and so forth. But we understand the direction it's going, and we've seen it in the Word of God.

And it's a challenge sometimes, it's even a temptation to think, well, God says it's going to go this way. Why don't we just sit back and say, bring it on? Well, again, that would be a violation of what it means for you and I to be salt and light. But let Me just say this: Even as it continues to slide downward, we can still be salt and light.

The people in Rome were doing just that, and Paul wrote to tell them so, you are living. He's saying essentially, in the most depraved society that we've seen up to this point. And you are salt. You are light. Your faith is vibrant. It is real. It is alive. And it can be seen from as far away as where I am. So Paul is commending them in this.

I like this. This is great. This is a great message that Paul's sharing with them and with you and I. So take heart, Christians. Take heart. I know that you're grieved about society. I know that you're grieved about the way things are going, but take heart. God is still on the throne. God is still the Lord of all, and He has seen this. He has foreseen it and He told it to us in the Word.

Here just several weeks ago, it was just before I left for vacation. The week after we finished the Book of Acts, I shared a message in continuation on the life of Paul and some of the things he wrote called, The Great Apostasy. If you weren't here and you missed that one, I would encourage you to get onto our website and check it out because, in that message, we talked about all these prophecies that were given related to the last days and the things that are said and so on. Grab a hold of that one, listen to it, and I hope it will encourage you.

But I want to get back just for a moment here, if I can, about this statement that he's saying, I've heard about your faith. I've heard about your faith. He says, I've heard about your faith. When was the last time you heard somebody talking about a church concerning their faith? Where did you hear about a church that is known for its faith? Makes me wonder, too, what people hear about Calvary Chapel and what things they say. Do you suppose they talk about our faith, or do you suppose they talk about the fact that we're paving our parking lot? I hope it's not the latter.

How about the people in your neighborhood? Are you known among your neighbors as someone with faith? You know, when they talk about you, do they talk about somebody? Wow, they have faith. They might say it in different ways, but are you known as someone with faith—a vibrant, growing, life-giving faith, right?

Those are important questions, I think, to probably ask ourselves. Paul goes on now here—look again—he goes on to say, *“For God is my witness (verse 9), whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing, I mention you always in my prayers. (He's constantly praying for the people in Rome.) asking that somehow, by God's will, I may now at last succeed in coming to you.”*

And then he tells them in verse 11, he says, I've been trying to get there for a long time. He says, I just really, really have been trying to get to see you. It's my goal, my heart, my desire. I want to come that I might impart—here in verse 11—that I might impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.

Paul—remember what he said about spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians? He talked about spiritual gifts, and he said that the gifts of the Spirit are given for the greater good, right? (1 Corinthians 12:4-7) It's not so that you and I can feel good about ourselves. It's not so that we can exercise a spiritual gift and feel spiritual or look spiritual in someone else's eyes.

Spiritual gifts are given so that we might be encouraged one with another. You know, our worship team got up here today, and they have gifts from the Lord. But instead of sitting home and just playing their instruments and singing in a

closet, this is it—they came out here to do it so that they might share them with you.

And I hope that you've come today with a similar idea—to come and share what God has given you with other people, that you might be able to strengthen them. But notice Paul doesn't just come to strengthen others. He says in verse 12, *“that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith...”* Right? I like that.

The apostle Paul—and we think about the apostle Paul as this just strong, incredible guy that just went around strengthening people wherever he was—but he says to the church in Rome, I've been praying about coming to see you guys. I've been working on planning it for a long time. It just hasn't happened yet, but I'm trusting and praying that God's going to bring me there, and build up and edify.

I like that. That's good stuff because it reminds us that Paul didn't just travel to set up churches and teach and encourage people. He went around and gathered with the body of Christ for what he could get out of it too.

And the reason I bring that up—well, first of all, would you be surprised to learn that I show up here on any given Sunday morning or Wednesday evening or whatever because I need what you have to offer just as much as perhaps you need what I have to offer? Would you be surprised to learn that I need you? I need your prayer. I need your encouragement just as much as you need mine and you need others.

I do that. I actually come because I need to be here—not just because I pastor the church, which would make sense for me to be here, obviously. But I'm here because I need to be here. Do you know that I find it encouraging to be here? I mean, encouraging in the Lord. I walk away after a Sunday—just ask my wife. I usually drag in here like something the cat brought in, seriously.

It's like, I'm up till midnight studying and then get up early on Sunday morning, and I'm dragging in here. And by the time I'm done with two services, I'm jazzed because I'm encouraged by you guys. And I'm encouraged by the Word, and I'm encouraged by the fellowship and the prayer. It's encouraging.

I hope you're encouraged too. I hope you've come to receive, and I hope you've come also to give. I hope you've come so that your spiritual gifts might be used to encourage others, even as you are receiving the blessing of the spiritual gifts of others. And I think that's an important thing that Paul is saying here.

And then check out verse 14—I like verse 14, I got to tell you. He says here, *“I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians* (your Bible may say, non-

Greeks, which and then he says), *both to the wise and to the foolish.* ¹⁵ *So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.*”

Now let me just explain to you very quickly before we talk about what this means. When he refers to Greeks, he's talking about the educated people among the Gentiles. It's the upper class of Roman society. Remember, this is Rome, which took over the Grecian culture, but they were still called Greeks from the standpoint that so much of Grecian culture still existed within the context of the Roman Empire. But then he refers to barbarians or non-Greeks, and that would refer to the lower class, the uneducated people.

But Paul says here about these people groups, he says, I am obligated to both of them. What does he mean by that? What does it mean when Paul says, I'm obligated to both Greeks and non-Greeks, or Greeks and barbarians? It's like, let's stop and think about this for just a minute.

All right. So the key to understanding this statement is in one single word. It's in the word, obligation. I have an obligation. What does it mean to be obligated? It means that someone has given you something or done something for you, and now you're in their debt, right? You're obligated. When you go and work your job for however many hours you do, you fill out your time card, you hand it to your boss, and your boss is obligated to pay you the money for working.

An obligation is something that is owed. Paul says, I'm obligated to both the Greeks and non-Greeks. Now you have to ask yourself the question: What did these people do to Paul or for Paul that he's now obligated to them? Well, it's not, that's really not the point. What he's really saying here is, I'm obligated to Christ, and in so doing, I'm obligated to you.

What Paul is really saying here is that he is in debt to Jesus for a price that he can never repay. And this goes along with what he said last week when he said, or he called himself a bondservant or a bond slave, a *doulos*. Remember last week, he said, I am a slave given over for life to the service of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1).

And so now he's speaking to the people in Rome, and he says, *"I am under obligation..."* Now it's a joyful obligation, but an obligation nonetheless. I am obligated. I think that's amazing. Arguably, one of the greatest men in history, and certainly the greatest apostle, never got over the fact that because Jesus Christ bore his sins on the cross, he would be forever indebted to Christ with his life, this God who saved him.

And when you finally come to terms with all that Jesus has done for you and all that He has given up, it's a wonder why more people aren't saying this very same thing today. I am obligated to Christ.

Think about the many things that we consider ourselves obligated to. We obligate ourselves to a bank to pay back a loan. We obligate ourselves to the credit card company. We obligate ourselves to the utility company when we use their services to pay them back for those things. We obligate ourselves to people from time to time. Sometimes it's by borrowing something, and we say, I owe you one. They do you a favor, and then you say, hey, thank you, I owe you one, I'm obligated, and so forth.

But what does it say about our understanding of what Christ did for us on the cross that so many people today seem to feel no obligation whatsoever to Christ? I mean, what does it say about our understanding of what He did for us on the cross that so few people echo this sort of sentiment today, that people aren't all going around and saying, I am totally obligated to Jesus? Yeah, I'd love to make plans for the future, but I'm obligated to Jesus, and I'm going to just go where He says go and do what He says to do.

We don't usually feel that obligation. In fact, we feel pretty free, for the most part, to just make our plans, do what we're going to do, go where we're going to go, whatever we want. It's like my life, and we'll even say it that way. It's my life, God gave it, it's my life. I'll do with it as I please, whatever.

And yet, if we really stop and think about it, like Paul, obviously, he was thinking about what Jesus had done for him on the cross, we begin to realize, you know what? I owe Him my life. I owe Him my very existence. I owe Him every breath, every scrap of energy, and so forth. That's a foreign thought.

Let's just confess that here right now, shall we? And everything that the modern culture is attempting to convey to you here in the United States of America is that you owe yourself, right? That the only person you owe is yourself—to be happy, to experience pleasure, to have all of the wonderful things that life offers. You deserve it, in fact. And that's what is preached to you and I over and over. And don't think we haven't heard it. And don't think we haven't incorporated it into our lives, right?

And then we read this statement by the Apostle Paul where he says, I'm obligated. And we read it and we cock our head and go, what? What's that all about? And the reason it's so foreign to us is because we've lost sight of the cross and the impact on our lives in such a way as to cause us to think, wow, what He did for me, I now owe Him my life. These gifts that He's given me, I have to use them for Him. I'm obligated, right? Because of what He did.

He gave everything. He laid down His life. So is there anything I'm going to say to Him, no, I won't do that. You can't have that time, that, this or that, that gift.

I'm not going to give that back. Can any of us honestly say that with a clear conscience?

So here's the question that you and I have to ask: Am I living my life as if I am in debt to Christ? As if I have a debt that I can never repay? Am I living my life that way, or am I living my life differently?

Now, the last two verses of this section are among the most powerful, and here's how it goes verse 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 (or gentile).¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."* A quotation from Habakkuk.

By the way, these last two verses here that we're going to be looking at today are considered to be the thesis verses for the entire Book of Romans. In other words, what that means is if you took these two verses and just thought about them and meditated on them and really developed them, this is the book of Romans. This is what he is going to develop in the coming chapters.

The essence of these two verses are now going to be expanded by the apostle in the following chapters. And it tells us some things about what Paul—how Paul thought about the Gospel, because that's the focal point of what he's talking about here. He said, I'm not ashamed of the Gospel. Well, see that, you may or may not make that statement with the apostle Paul, depending on what you believe the Gospel is and what it is to you and so forth.

Well, what did Paul think the Gospel was? Let's talk about that for just a minute, because we could all sit here all day long and go, well, what do you think the Gospel is? And we could just talk until we're brain dead and hear everybody's opinion. But I want to know what the apostle Paul considered the Gospel, because that's probably going to teach me and give me some insights into what really the answer to that question is.

Well, Paul actually wrote about it when he wrote to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 15, look at this verse: He says,

1 Corinthians 15:1a, 3b-4 (ESV)

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you... that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you (right, here it is)...that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

Now does that sound to you like a set of beliefs? Because it does to me, in a sense. And these are the kinds of things that we've turned into what we call doctrine, and then we'll recite them and we'll say, this is my statement of faith. It's the tenant of my faith. And I'm—and here it is.

Can I just suggest to you that the Gospel was not a set of beliefs to the Apostle Paul? I mean, per se, as much as it was his understanding of historical factual events. The Gospel to him was an event that really, truly happened, and he believed that it was a powerful event. Okay.

Notice when he says here, I want to remind you of the Gospel I preached to you. And then he starts talking about things that happened. He's not talking about doctrinal statements. He's not saying, well, let's get into the dynamics of understanding the wording of this statement here. No! He's talking about things that happened historically, right?

Things happened: Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, and then He was buried, and then He was raised on the third day. Those things happened, and that's the Gospel. It's the good news. Those are events.

And then he tells us why he's not ashamed of those events. Look with me again in verse 16. Here's the first of the two reasons he gives: “...(First of all,) *it's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...*” I want you to notice, people, that it is not the power of man.

It is the power of God unto salvation for those who believe. You know why I like that? Because when we think about the power of man, that's what we—it's that, that's religion.

Religion is man-made rules and regulations and ceremonies, and you've got to do this and you've got to do that and you can only pray through me, and if you want to confess your sins, you've got to do it through me. And then come up with all these rules and all these things, and here's what you've got to do, and I've got a list as long as your arm of things you've got to do. That is the power of man, and that is what we call religion. And it can't save anybody.

I love how Paul says here, “...*I'm not ashamed of the gospel because, (first of all), it's the power of God for salvation...*” And the reason I like that is because it reminds us that it's not about what you can do. It's about what He did. Right?

You guys get that. I mean, you understand what I'm saying, right? Listen, getting saved is not about being a good person or living a good life or doing good deeds. That's the power of man. The Gospel is the power of God. In fact, let me show you another passage, and I'm going to quote this again out of the

NIV. This is from Romans chapter 5, a preview of coming attractions. But look what Paul says,

Romans 5:6 (ESV)

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

What position were we in when Christ died? A powerless position. What does that mean? It means you couldn't do anything to save yourself, right? You were completely weak.

In fact, that word, powerless there is actually translated as weak in some of the other modern translations. And that's a good word too. When we were weak, in other words, unable to do anything to save ourselves, He came and saved us. That's why the Gospel is the power of God.

Oh, there are so many people living their lives today, trying to impress God by being good, by trying to live a good life. We just got to live a good life. You just go ask people. Just go, be bold and ask people that you work with, or go to school with, or whatever in your neighborhood. Ask them, how does a person get to heaven? And 9 times out of 10 you'll hear, well, we just got to be good. Just live a good life, live the best life that we can, and just hope against hope that God is going to, when He weighs in the balance all the things we've ever done, that we're going to come out, and the good is going to outweigh the bad.

Ahh! Makes me tired just talking about it, doesn't it you? Because that's the power of man for salvation. But the Bible says, well, we were hopeless while we were weak. Well, we were powerless. That's when Christ died for us. That's the power of God. And by the way, that's good news.

And then the second reason Paul says he's not ashamed of the Gospel. Look at verse 17. We'll close out with this. He says, *"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed..."* In the Gospel he says the righteousness of God is revealed. It's shown. What's he talking about? What's he saying? Is he saying God's righteousness is revealed? No, God doesn't need the Gospel to show His righteousness.

You can look at creation and see His glory and righteousness and holiness. It's the righteousness of people like us in the Gospel, God's righteousness is revealed. It's the righteousness that He gives to people. It's that right standing that He gives with people.

Somebody might come up to you and say, how can I be right with God? I have this sense that I'm just at odds with God. How can I not be at odds with God? I want to be right with Him. I want to have a relationship with Him. I don't want things to be bad between God and I, how's that possible?

Well, in the Gospel, it's revealed how that's possible through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God, when we put our faith in that, God imputes righteousness or right standing. It's by faith, not by works.

So in the Gospel, see Paul, Paul was particularly thrilled by this because he was raised a Jew and not just any other Jew. He was raised in a Pharisaical tradition, and became a Pharisee himself. And so for him, righteousness was all about how you do the law. It was doing the law. It was keeping the law. Keep the Sabbath, keep the food laws, keep the washing laws, keep all the traditions of the elders. And then you will be considered righteous.

And Paul was tickled pink to find out that in the Gospel, God revealed how people can really truly be right with God. And that is by faith, in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

And so he says, you know what his summary of that is? Oh man, I'm not ashamed of that. I like it. I'm not ashamed at all to tell you that you don't have to earn God's favor by being good. I'm not ashamed to tell you this, that it's by faith and so forth.

Since we're going to end here with this idea of not being ashamed, let me just end with the words of Jesus Himself. And this, we'll just maybe end our thoughts with this. Because He says,

Luke 9:26 (ESV)

...whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

...whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, (he says) of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Paul says here, I'm not ashamed of my God. I'm not ashamed of the Gospel. I'm not ashamed of His word. I'm not ashamed of His plan. I'm not ashamed of anything related to Him. And the question that you and I need to ask ourselves

this morning is how do you feel about the whole process when you're telling somebody that you believe in God, that you believe that the Bible is true?

I mean, do you hold back from saying that? Because maybe you're ashamed. Are you ashamed of His Word? Well, there's a lot of pressure today on Christians, isn't there? To back off on our belief in the Word of God. Yeah.

Because certain scientific sorts of things have supposedly come into play that have put great pressure on you and I to believe that you really do believe that God created the world and they didn't just crawl out of the slime pit, and evolve over billions. Really? That's what you, that's what you believe?

And there's a huge pressure today. Huge, particularly on young people to say, well, I don't know, let me... It's very difficult. And yet Jesus is the one who said, *"...whoever is ashamed of me and of my words."*

And Paul is very proudly declaring, I'm not ashamed to follow Christ. I'm not ashamed to be His servant. I'm not ashamed of the Gospel that He presents to mankind. I'm not ashamed of any of it.

And I think you and I need to just make a determination in our hearts that I'm not going to be ashamed either. It's the power of God for salvation, and it reveals the righteousness that He gives for those who put their faith in the work that His Son did on the cross.