

Romans 1 (NIV)

***16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”***

Some have labeled these verses as the “theme verses” for all of Romans. These verses explain why Paul is so eager (see v. 15).

- Are we eager to share the gospel or ashamed of it?

In August of 1513, a monk lectured on the Book of Psalms to seminary students, but his inner life was nothing but turmoil. In his studies he came across Psalm 31:1: *In Thy righteousness deliver me.* The passage confused the monk; how could God's righteousness do anything but condemn him to hell as a righteous punishment for his sins? The monk kept thinking about Romans 1:17, which says, *the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.”* The monk went on to say: “Night and day I pondered until... I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. Therefore I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise... This passage of Paul became to me a gateway into heaven.” **Martin Luther** was born again, and the Reformation began in his heart.

Verse 16: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*

*For I am not ashamed*

Ashamed: guilt, shame, embarrassment, remorse.

Church in Rome may have been tempted to be ashamed because:

- Poor people were Christians; Jesus was a poor carpenter.
- Romans despised the Jews.
- Worship someone who was crucified on a cross.

We are not to be ashamed of the gospel or bring shame upon the gospel.

- How can we bring shame upon the gospel?

- How often do we hide the gospel?

Luke 9:26: *“Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”* –Jesus

2 Timothy 1:8, 12: “*So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God... That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.*”

*of the gospel,*

- What is the gospel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Why is it truly good news?

*because it is the power of God*

Greek: *dynamis*; where we get our word for dynamite, but...

- What does dynamite do? It destroys.
- What does the gospel do? It restores.

Therefore, it is better understood to mean possession of controlling influence.

2 Corinthians 13:4: “*For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him in our dealing with you.*”

Since the gospel has God’s power behind it, it is more than information or advice.

“Power is mighty potency, an effective, transforming force and ability.” –Moody Commentary

1 Corinthians 1:18: “*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.*”

*that brings salvation*

Salvation: delivered or preserved from harm; deliverance from God’s present wrath (v. 18) brought about by sins.

- Why do we need to be saved?

From Scofield Reference Bible: The Hebrew and Greek words for “salvation” imply the ideas of deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness: “Salvation” is the great inclusive word of the Gospel, gathering into itself all the redemptive acts and processes: justification, redemption, grace, atonement, imputation, forgiveness, sanctification, and glorification. Salvation is in three tenses.

1. The Christian *has been saved* from the guilt and **penalty** of sin (Luke 7:50; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15; Ephesians 2:5, 8; 2 Timothy 1:9) and is safe.

- When were you “saved”?

2. The Christian *is being saved* from the habit and dominion of sin (**power**) (Romans 6:14; 8:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 2:19-20; Philippians 1:19; 2:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

- What specific sin is God saving you from? Consider sharing a God-story.

- What are you still struggling with?

3. The Christian *will be saved* at the Lord's return from all the bodily infirmities that are the result of sin and God's curse upon the sinful world (**presence**) (Romans 8:18-23; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44), and brought into entire conformity to Christ (Romans 13:11; Hebrews 10:36; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 3:2). Salvation is by grace through faith, is a free gift, and is wholly without works (Romans 3:27-28; 4:1-8; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8). The divine order is: first salvation, then works (Ephesians 2:9-10; Titus 3:5-8).

- What are you most looking forward to in glorification?

*to everyone*

Regardless of name, social location, ethnicity, or any other human distinction.

Offered to all people on the same basis. For all because all need saved.

- Can you think of anyone that is excluded from the word “everyone”?
- What is the human requirement?

*who believes:*

Believe (Webster, 1828): 1. To credit upon the authority or testimony of another; to be persuaded of the truth of something upon the declaration of another, or upon evidence furnished by reasons, arguments, and deductions of the mind, or by other circumstances, than personal knowledge. When we believe upon the authority of another, we always put confidence in his veracity. 2. to expect or hope with confidence; to trust

Behave or believe? Belief is the only requirement for salvation. This is different than sanctification.

*first to the Jew,*

From Middletown Bible Church's Study Guide on Romans 1:

Acts 13:46: *"Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: 'We **had to** speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.'"*

Had to = It was necessary. It was absolutely essential that the gospel go to the Jew first. Why?

1. Because salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22). The Savior Himself was a Jew. Since salvation is of the Jews it is only fitting that the glorious message of salvation should go FIRST to the Jews.
2. The gospel had to go to the Jew first because Christ came into the world for the purpose of saving "His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). "His people" is a clear reference to the people of Israel. It was only fitting therefore that the message and blessings of salvation should first to Israel.
3. The gospel had to go to the Jew first because it was the Jews who were given the Hebrew Scriptures (Romans 3:1-2; 9:4). They of all people should have recognized the promised Savior and should have acknowledged Him as the Christ, the Messiah of Israel. It is not strange, therefore, that it was Paul's custom to go into the synagogues of the Jews on the Sabbath day and reason with them from the Scriptures, showing them clearly that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah. God sent the gospel to the Jews first because they should have been the FIRST to recognize the Christ of the gospel as the One who was promised afore in the law and the prophets.
4. The gospel had to go the Jew first because God wanted to show that He was a gracious God. Did the Jews deserve to hear the Gospel first? They were the ones who rejected and crucified their Messiah. They should have been the last to hear. In fact, they did not deserve to hear at all. They rejected their Savior but God did not reject them. How gracious God was to reach out first and foremost to the undeserving Jewish people. When Israel's sin was greatest, God's grace was greater.

Romans 1:16-17  
Scott Maxon's Notes

*then to the Gentile.*

Praise God the gospel has come to the Gentiles!

Verse 17: *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”*

*For in the gospel*

*the righteousness of God*

Righteousness: legal rectitude that satisfies the moral requirement of God's character  
a righteousness God demands and provides.

- Why can God demand righteousness?
- How does God provide righteousness?
- What is the difference between “made” righteous and “declared” righteous?

We don't need to change before God accepts us. We just need to believe!

2 Corinthians 5:21: *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

*is revealed*

known publicly

*a righteousness that is by faith*

Faith: strong confidence in, reliance upon

We are blameless before God, not based on our works, but on Christ's!

*from first to last,*

saved by faith (eternal life) and live by faith (day-by-day)

- In what areas do you struggle to live by faith?

*just as it is written*

*“The righteous will live by faith”*

Righteous: person characterized by righteous actions and morals

Righteous (Webster, 1828): Just; accordant to the divine law. Applied to persons, it denotes one who is holy in heart, and observant of the divine commands in practice; as a righteous man. Applied to things, it denotes consonant to the divine will or to justice; as a righteous act. It is used chiefly in theology, and applied to God, to his testimonies and to his saints. The righteous, in Scripture, denote the servants of God, the saints.

“Individuals who love Him [Jesus] want to please Him by loving those He loves. We delight to be His ambassadors to the lost, His hands to the needy, His voice for the oppressed, and stewards of the creation He made for all people. We rejoice that His family extends beyond human boundaries of race, region, class, and culture, and we delight to love accordingly.” –Bryan Chapell

Bottom Line:

- The God of this universe is willing to accept us as His own simply through our faith.
- Justification reminds us that our standing with God is by grace and that thankfulness should be the hallmark in all our dealings with Him.