

Paul's Attitude Toward The Gospel

By Jack Thompson

In Romans 1:14-17, we hear the great apostle Paul speaking, *"I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."*

The apostle Paul is the greatest evangelist in all the history of the church of Christ. No man preached the gospel with more power than he. This familiar text reveals why Paul was such a successful preacher. It reveals both his attitude toward sinners and toward the gospel.

Paul felt himself a debtor to all the world. Hear him again, *"I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."* He endeavored to preach the gospel to all because he felt indebted to all, to give them the gospel. This is the way every Christian should feel. Today, those among us who are Christians owe the gospel to the world. A stewardship of the gospel has been entrusted to us. Listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:17, *"For if I do this of mine own will, I have reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me."* We, too, must be faithful to our charge. Someone brought the gospel to us and we should be interested in taking it to others. We should desire to share Christ with the world, and if we really love our Lord, we will share Him with others. We are not only saved to serve, but we are saved to save others, and unless we feel indebted to the world we will not please Christ. We, as Christians, are members of Christ's church, and the supreme mission of the church is to preach the gospel to the whole world. The Christians in the first century went everywhere preaching the word and we should do the same today. Paul said, *"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."* If we feel this same sense of obligation, we will try, at all times, to reach others with God's saving message.

Paul said, *"So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel."* Paul was a successful evangelist because he was always ready, day or night, summer or winter, in city or country, to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus. And we, too, should always be ready to do just that. Peter said to Christians, *"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."* (1 Peter 3:15) If we are what we should be, we will be ready to speak a word for Christ all the time, wherever we are, and to whomsoever we meet. But, isn't enough to preach, we must be ready to preach THE GOSPEL. That and only that!!! To preach the gospel is to give book, chapter and verse for all that we teach and practice. We are not at liberty to speak less than the gospel; nor to speak more than the gospel.

Many preach other gospels than the one revealed in the New Testament, and Paul condemn such preaching in Galatians 1:8, *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."* Woe unto us, then, if our preaching is not in harmony with the Bible!

Paul was not only a debtor, who stood ever ready to preach the gospel, but he was not ashamed of the gospel. Remember the first verses we read stated, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."* All through his preaching career, Paul had shown himself courageous on behalf of the gospel. He was not ashamed of it, nor was he afraid to preach Christ. He stood before each and all in the presentation of the truth of the gospel. Often in his preaching, Paul met with criticism, opposition, yea, even persecution. He was beaten, stoned, abused over and over, but he continued to preach the gospel of Christ Jesus. He stood before jailers, governors and kings and taught the same message. All through his life he preached the gospel and he was never ashamed of it, nor did he ever compromise it. We, too, in the days in which we live, need to stand boldly for the gospel and preach it without fear or favor. We need to rebuke sin, expose error, reprove the sinner, and so preach Christ crucified that many may be led to the Cross! God forbid that we compromise the gospel, that we refuse to preach it, or that we be ashamed to stand up and proclaim it anywhere and to anybody.

But, there were reasons why Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ! He says that the gospel *"is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth,"* and for this reason he was not ashamed to proclaim it! Paul would have been ashamed of the doctrines and commandments of men, nor would he have had the courage to preach the philosophies and traditions of men! But he was not ashamed of the gospel because it was God's power to save men. It is God's power--it is divine power-- and to be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of God. Let us preach the gospel. For in preaching it we are presenting God's power to men!

Another reason that Paul gives for not being ashamed of the gospel, is the fact that in the gospel God's righteousness, or His system of justification, is revealed. Paul said, *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith."* How could Paul be ashamed of the gospel when it alone reveals God's righteousness, God's offer of mercy and pardon to the sinner? It is through the gospel, or "good news" that one learns of God's mercy; of the coming of the Son of God into the flesh and His death on that cruel cross for the sins of rebellious man. It is through the gospel that one learns of God's love. It is through the gospel that salvation is offered to man. But the gospel saves only those who believe in the facts of that gospel: That Christ suffered and died for our sins; That He was raised from the grave, and has ascended unto the Father to make intercession for those who believe and obey him.

This, my friends, is our hope today. We can put our faith in Christ crucified with the assurance that God will save us, that He will graciously pardon us. That is, if we are willing to accept the terms of the gospel, the commands of our Lord and Savior. Jesus said, *"Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24)*. Christ also said, *"Except ye repent, ye shall die in your sins" (Luke 13:3)*. Jesus also said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16)*.

My friends, that is the gospel. You, too, must believe in Christ, repent of your sins and be baptized for the remission of sins. We need to hear the gospel, believe the gospel, and obey the gospel. Then, having been born again, thus becoming a child of God; to live a righteous life of service in the kingdom of our Lord and Master. Let us never be ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of god unto salvation and in this gospel is revealed God's desire and means of our salvation.