



**Empowering People to Change the World**

**Not Ashamed**

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**We are recognizing the first and second Sundays of Advent, leading up to the birth of Christ...**

- **We remember the prophecies of Christ leading up to his birth**

**Prophecy**

Isaiah 7:14 *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a **virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**"*

**Fulfillment**

Matthew 1:23 *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*

**Prophecy**

Isaiah 9:6 *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: **and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**"*

**Fulfillment**

Luke 2:11-12 *"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."*

**Not Ashamed**

We are looking today at the theme of Romans

**Romans 1:16-17**

**Four Gospel Truths:**

- 1) The True Gospel renders no Shame.**
- 2) The True Gospel is the Power of God.**
- 3) The True Gospel is the Righteousness of God.**
- 4) The True Gospel is Released in Your Life through Faith.**

**Let's define *the Gospel*:**

Romans 1:1, Paul begins his letter informing the Romans that he is a bondservant, an apostle, separated to the "Gospel of God".

Romans 1:2-4, Paul tells us that the Gospel concerns God's Son Jesus Christ.

**Paul shares with us the bare bones, basic Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:**

***“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you...For I delivered to 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”***

**1 Corinthians 15:1~4 (NKJV)**

**The Gospel has three central facts that unleash God’s power:**

- 1) That the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross.
  - 2) That He was buried.
  - 3) That He rose from the dead on the third day.
- This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is simple but profound. It is straightforward but changes every area of our life.
  - Don’t talk about the peripheral unless it is a way to engage someone toward these three central issues.
  - The ethical teachings of Jesus are important, but that is not where the power comes from.
  - The moral instructions of Jesus are helpful, but that is not power.

**Versus 16-17**

**Four Gospel Truths:**

- 1) The True Gospel renders no Shame.
- 2) The True Gospel is the Power of God.
- 3) The True Gospel is the Righteousness of God.
- 4) The True Gospel is Released in your Life through Faith.

**Truth 1: The True Gospel Renders No Shame!**

- The Gospel can rid us of shame! We are forgiven; we are set free; we are not bound up by our lust, jealousy, envy, or pride.
- Yes, you are born a sinner. Yes, you are born an adulterer. Yes, you are born gay. But you can be born again!

***“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh,”***

**Ezekiel 11:19 (NKJV)**

- When you were born again, when you accepted Jesus into your life by faith, the grace of God gave you the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God transformed your heart.
- God did *open heart surgery* on you when you gave your heart to Him.
- God replaced your stony hard heart with “a heart of flesh”, a heart that was tender to Him.
- You have a “new spirit” living within you! The Holy Spirit has transformed your heart.

***“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”*** Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV)

- Not by the law, not by the letter, not by religion! That’s the old heart, the old way, the old dispensation.

**Saint Irenaeus wrote: “The glory of God is a man fully alive.”**

- You and I have no shame, but don’t be ashamed! A man getting free from shame is a man who will be fearless!
- **Jesus said, “*Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*”** Matthew 10:32-33 (NKJV)
- I really believe we don’t see more answered prayer and blessing from heaven because we are ashamed of Him on earth.
- Conversely, when you learn to be unashamed, no fear, in your witness for Christ you will experience the Lord’s presence and power in new ways all over your life.
- The worst thing about good people is that they are often such cowards.
- All of us love to *fit in*, not make waves.
- All of us have fear. We are fearful of standing out because we believe people will ridicule us or turn their back on us, but I have found that the opposite is often true—that people admire those who have the courage to step up and speak out.

- The world is constantly looking for men and women of conviction that are not ashamed of all that is Noble and True.
- Paul, if anyone had reason to be fearful and passive, it was him: beaten for his faith, hounded and hunted like a criminal, lost his family, a man who was hated by the people who once loved him....

For example, remember Peter, the bold and assertive leader of the twelve disciples could not handle the pressure, and was ashamed of His Teacher.

- Before a young servant girl in the circle of darkness, he was ashamed of Jesus and denied he knew Him three times.
- Before a crowd of onlookers who carried no swords or authority, Peter denied his Friend and Savior.
- Peter became a coward.
- When Jesus looked upon Peter after his denial, the Spirit of God brought true repentance to the heart of the erring disciple, and he went out and wept.
- Peter was ashamed of his shame!
- But look at the transformation of Peter from being a coward to being a bold witness.
- What changed Peter? The same thing that changes you and me today—it's the power of the Holy Spirit working through the power of the Gospel.

## **Truth 2: The True Gospel is the Power of God!**

- Power in the Oxford English Dictionary has eighteen major definitions.
- The Greek language has eight different words, all translated by one English word, *power*:
  - There is the word *kratos*, which means “to rule or have dominion.”
  - There is *exousia*, which means “power of authority, a permit.”
  - But, here in our text we have the word ***dunamis***, the word that scientists have adopted in our term dynamo, dynamite, and dynamic.
  - This is the power of the Gospel!

- This is the same word for the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit. The same word used by Jesus,

***‘And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. ... But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:4-5, 8 (NKJV)***

Paul, with no army, a bound prisoner, a small following, and not a cent to his name, believed that he possessed the mightiest power in the world...the Gospel.

- The notion of power to the Romans was a sword and an iron yoke.
- But Paul possessed the power of an idea! Someone has said that “Thought is more powerful than all visible forces.”
- And it is true.
- The Gospel is more powerful than all other ideas! This is why it is banned in countries...this is why there are forces banning it from our public schools and increasingly from the public square...because they know...
  - Let us recognize it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be transformed!
  - Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he was transformed from being a fearful ashamed coward to being a fearless, bold, and winsome witness of the Gospel.

### **Truth 3: The True Gospel is the Righteousness of God!**

- This is truly where the power comes from; it is the righteousness of God.
- This is what frightens the atheists, the socialists, the communists: the righteousness of God.
- We are the ones who proclaim a standard of righteousness from the Book, the Bible.
- This is precisely what draws me to Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy—God articulates righteousness there.

- This is precisely what draws me to Romans—God is articulating righteousness.

**This is the verse that changed Luther's life, that gave us the Protestant Reformation, in 1515:**

- Luther found a notation from an ancient manuscript of Augustine defining the righteousness of Christ. Augustine said that when Paul speaks of the righteousness of God in Romans 1, it is not the righteousness by which God Himself is righteous, but the righteousness that He freely gives to those who put their faith in Christ.
- For the first time in his life, Martin Luther, whose conscience has been wounded by the burden of the law of God, understood the Gospel of Christ!

**What is this righteousness?**

- 1) It is sinners being made right before God.
  - 2) It is living right relationally—with God and others.
  - 3) It is living right morally—how to conduct oneself in society.
- The righteousness of Christ can be released into your life: for salvation, for living right relationally and morally.
  - But it's how you receive it that transformed Augustine, Luther, Wesley, and Billy Graham.
    - Billy Graham was a young energetic evangelist working with Youth for Christ in the 1940's and 50's, and he was even surpassed in effectiveness by another young man named Charles Templeton. But Charles Templeton began to question his convictions about the Gospel and gradually was pulling away from not only being an evangelist but also being a Christian. He was writing Billy Graham and challenging the veracity and authenticity of the Bible and the life, death, and resurrection of Christ...
    - But with each question: about Noah and the flood.
    - About the miracles in the Bible.
    - Billy Graham began to struggle. Henrietta Mears, the famed Director of Christian Education invited Billy to speak at Forest Home.

- He spent a great deal of time studying the Bible, and he kept seeing the same phrase pop up. “Thus sayeth the Lord... Thus sayeth the Lord...” While Billy Graham had always believed in the authority of the Scripture, this became the turning point as he realized in his heart that God’s Word is divinely inspired, eternal and powerful!
- One night at Forest Home, he walked out into the woods and set his Bible on a stump—more an altar than a pulpit—and he cried out: “O God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it for which I have no solution. There are many seeming contradictions. There are some areas in it that do not seem to correlate with modern science. I can’t answer some of the philosophical and psychological questions Chuck and others are raising.”
- And then, Billy Graham fell to his knees and the Holy Spirit moved in him as he said, “Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word—by faith! I’m going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word!”
- Billy Graham wrote in his autobiography that as he stood up his eyes stung with tears, but he felt the power and presence of God in a way he hadn’t in months. “A major bridge had been crossed,” he said.
- This was 1949, and what followed was the famous Hollywood Crusade that had been planned for 4 weeks turned into 8 as many Hollywood celebrities gave their lives to Christ.

#### **Truth 4: The True Gospel is Released in Your Life by Faith!**

##### **Look again at Romans 1:16-17**

**‘For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”’**

- Paul is saying in Romans, and the entire New Testament confirms, that it is:



- Not through following the Old Testament Law that justifies you—that would be YOUR works justifying you.
- Not through being a good person, living morally right that saves you—that would be YOUR works justifying you.
- Not through going to church, even just believing the right things—that would be YOUR works justifying you.
- No, it is by putting your TRUST IN CHRIST'S WORK that justifies you.

***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*** Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV)

**But you must repent or turn around from your sin and commit your life to Jesus Christ, to become His disciple!**

**When you put your faith in Christ:**

- You are born again spiritually through the Holy Spirit!
- Jesus comes to live in your new heart and your new spirit.
- You are *saved* and eternity with Christ begins.
- You are forgiven of all your sins—past, present, and future.
- You have a new heart and new mind—you can think differently now, live differently now, and you have access to intimacy with God.

As an example, while in college I came home and went to a wine and cheese party and met this girl. We began to talk, and she shared with me about her partying life at college. We instantly hit it off and I listened to her stories. But at the opportune time I shared how God had changed my life and gave my testimony...her entire demeanor changed, and she asked some questions. I invited her to attend a conference in Atlanta, she came for one day. And that day, I shared the Gospel with her, and she, her life to Christ...Her life was radically transformed and she started a Christian ministry on her campus.

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