



## Don't Be Afraid, Let Your Light Shine

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Romans 1:16 KJV*

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The days are growing darker and the "in your face" assaults on our Gospel are feverishly increasing. From Hollywood to the liberal news media outlets there is no shame in lambasting the Christian and the Christian doctrine. We are laughed at, ridiculed, persecuted, verbally assaulted, dismissed, challenged and the list goes on. Our doctrine has been watered down and compromised by false teachers in the name of tolerance. Yet it is the gospel of Jesus Christ that still saves, delivers and sets free. It is the gospel that penetrates men's souls and convicts them of sin and causes them to run to the altar asking, "What must I do to be saved?" It is the gospel that leads us to live a righteous and holy life. It is the gospel that saved you and me.

Paul wrote this letter to the saints at Rome while he was a guest of Gaius in Corinth while on his third missionary journey. He had been ministering in the midst of a city that was well known for its cosmopolitan culture and luxurious temples. It was a very rich city that had every type of cult that you could imagine, and it was also a moral cesspool. Some commentators believe that it was Paul's desire to visit Rome and instruct the saints in his doctrine. His objective was 1. to teach the fundamental doctrine of salvation in order to fortify them against the Judaizers, 2. to explain the unbelief of Israel and vindicate the faithfulness of God in His dealings with Israel and 3. to give practical instruction concerning Christian living in the society of his day. For in Paul's day, Rome was the seat of contemporary political power and pagan religion.

He begins this epistle by stating in his salutation that he was a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. This gospel was that concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord who descended from David according to the flesh (this shows his humanity)

and who was declared to be the Son of God with power through the Holy Ghost by the resurrection of the dead.

It was through God's mercy and grace that Paul was saved and called out of sin and set apart as an apostle to preach the gospel, for which he was obedient to the call. Likewise, it was also God's mercy and grace that allowed the Christians

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in Rome to be called of Jesus Christ and called to be saints; holy, set apart and sanctified.

He speaks of their faith in Christ and how it has been spoken of throughout the world and he asks them to be in prayer with him as he prepares to come to Rome that his journey might be prosperous. For he longed to see them and to have fellowship with them concerning the faith that they both shared.

Although he had not made it to Rome yet, He wanted them to know that he had purposed in his heart to visit Rome to receive support from them like he had from the rest of the Gentiles but was oftentimes hindered.

He then expresses his burden to get the gospel to everyone, whether to the Greeks who were refined and cultured; or to the Barbarians, who were strangers to the Greek language and culture; or to the wise, whether in handicraft, the affairs of life, the sciences or learning; or to the unwise, those that were unlearned. So, as much as was now in him, Paul was now ready, Paul was eager to preach the gospel in Rome also.

This leads us to our text verse, verse 16, where Paul

boldly declares that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Rather, Paul counted it his highest honor and glory to proclaim the gospel. So, why was Paul able to declare that he was not ashamed of the gospel? Right away I think about Philippians 3:1-14. Read it at your leisure. In verses 7-8, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. He also says in verse 10, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death."

If we go back a little further, we find that in Acts, chapter 9, it was while on a mission of destruction when God graciously saved him. We know it as Paul's Damascus Road experience. It was the power of God that confronted him and wouldn't let him go. It was the mercy and grace of God that humbled Paul and separated him unto the gospel. God wanted to use him to be a witness; for he had been chosen him to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles and the kings and the children of Israel. Such a change was wrought in

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*"If the gospel has changed your life, then tell it!"*

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Paul that when he went back to testify and preach Christ in Damascus, those that heard him were amazed saying, "Is not this he that destroyed them which called on his name?" This was a testimony of the power of God!

The same zeal that Paul had in persecuting the church was the same zeal Paul used in proclaiming the Gospel. There was neither fear nor intimidation. He held back nothing because Paul had the light of Christ and was compelled to preach the gospel to everyone. Paul, like David in Psalm 40:9-10, "preached righteousness in the great congregation and did not refrain his lips; he didn't hide the Lord's righteousness within his heart, he declared the Lord's faithfulness and his salvation; he did not conceal the Lord's loving-kindness and truth from the great congregation."

Paul recognized that the gospel of Christ, this glorious gospel, is the power of God and it was POWERFUL. It was dunamis power. It had power to save, to heal, deliver, to keep, to protect, to provide, to comfort. The power of God was able to draw Paul and to save him and change him. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:18 that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." Paul lived this firsthand.

Paul had been through feast and famine, trials and tribulation but in them all, Paul saw the power of God and the gospel at work. Neither ridicule, criticism, nor physical persecution could curb his boldness, and neither should it curb ours. Whether disputing with those in the Jewish synagogues or those devout persons in the marketplace, Paul's mission and ministry was to proclaim the gospel without apology.

2 Corinthians 4:6 tells us that "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." So, why should we be ashamed of this glorious gospel? Why should we be ashamed to speak boldly for Christ?

When we think of our own testimony, do we see the power of God at work? Does it compel you to be a witness? Has a change taken place in your life since Jesus came into your heart? If the gospel has changed your life, then tell it! As saints of God who are called to be seen, we must see to it that our message is acceptable to God and blameless before men.

This is our finest hour! We are on display; as the day and times grow darker, we must let the light of Christ shine brighter. When we talk about letting our light shine, back in Paul's day, candlesticks or lamps filled with oil were used for lighting purposes. Today, in modern times, the most commonly used light source is the incandescent light bulb. An incandescent light bulb is an electric light (when hooked up to a power source) that produces light with a wire filament (a very small piece of wire) heated to a high temperature by an electric current passing through it, until it glows or shines. As we let our light shine, as we proclaim the gospel we should function in the same manner. We should be so connected to Jesus Christ, we should have such a burning passion about sharing the gospel, sharing the Word of God (remember Jeremiah? – for him it was like fire shut up in his bones) that God's power flows through us and we begin to shine.

When we think about "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given"; When we think about how His name shall be called "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"; When we think about "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins", don't be ashamed, let your light shine.

When we think about how Jesus came that we might have life and it more abundantly; When we think about how Jesus is the light of the world and the only way; When we think about how Jesus said that He is the Resurrection and the life, don't be ashamed, let your light shine.

When we think about how he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; When we think about how Jesus said, “ It is finished” and then died on the cross, When we think about how Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb, don't be afraid, let your light shine.

When we think about “3 days later, early on a Sunday morning, the stone was rolled away”, When we think about “He is not here, He is risen”, don't be ashamed, let your light shine.

When we think about how He was seen of Cephas and the twelve: he was seen of above five hundred, then James, and

all of the apostles and then Paul himself as one born out of due time, don't be ashamed, let your light shine. When we think about how the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the dead in Christ shall rise first, When we think about we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, don't be ashamed, let your light shine. When we think about Genesis to Revelation and when we think about Jesus and all he has done for us, we are not ashamed and we're going to let our light shine.