

FOUNDATIONS OF TRUTH

The Reason for the Gospel

Romans 1:16-32

INTRODUCTION: As a church, we are reading through the New Testament together, although not in the typical order of the books. We just finished Matthew, and this week we started the book of Romans and read the first five chapters. If you have not begun to read with us, I invite you to join us. We are reading at most a chapter a day.

As Paul journeyed through Asia, Macedonia, and Greece on his missionary journeys, he longed to go to Rome. Eventually God would send Paul to Rome, but before that happened, Paul wrote them a letter. While he was in Corinth on his third missionary journey, he wrote to these Roman believers

Romans 1:1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God

Apostle means one sent out.

Paul says, “God has sent me out to declare the gospel of God.”

Paul completes his greeting, tells them how much he wants to come see them in Rome, and launches into his theme: The gospel of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:16–17

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ For in it the righteousness

of God is revealed

from faith to faith;

as it is written,

*“The just shall live
by faith.”*

I call this descriptive outlining. I simply put words or phrases that describe a previous word underneath the word being described.

Romans 1:16–17

For I am not ashamed (**Not ashamed of what?**)

of the gospel of Christ,

(Why not?) for it is the power of God

(Power for what?) to salvation **(Salvation for who?)**

for everyone who believes,

for the Jew first

and also for the Greek.

¹⁷For in it **(the gospel)** the righteousness **(Whose righteousness?)**

of God is revealed

(that) from faith to faith;

as it is written,

(What is written?) *“The just shall live*

(How shall they live?) *by faith.”*

I show you this to help you as you read through Romans especially, but you may find it helpful in more of the letters. Paul often writes in long sentences, and one sentence may be several verses long; and they can get hard to follow.

So the first time I taught Romans verse by verse, I did this on every verse in Romans. It is not hard, and it does not take long to do. I find it really helps me to follow what Paul is saying.

Now if this is just confusing to you, just forget it. But for those of you who like to dig in the Scripture, I find this to be a useful tool.

Now, let’s turn our attention back to the text itself.

Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ...”

These two verses present the thesis of the Book of Romans. This is what the letter is all about, which is the reason this book carries such value spiritually. Nowhere is the gospel explained more fully, more clearly, than in the book of Romans. Nowhere are more questions answered that are raised about the gospel than in Romans.

Paul was beaten, imprisoned, stoned, mocked, ridiculed, and derided for preaching a gospel that centered upon the cross. It was a stumbling block to Jews; it was foolishness to Gentiles. But Paul never changed a jot or tittle of the message. He was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because only that true gospel had the power of God to bring salvation to everyone who would believe.

The Greek word for power is the root from which we get our word “dynamite.” It is not man’s power which is inept and ineffectual. It is God’s power that alone can accomplish salvation.

In beginning to talk about this gospel, the first thing he tells us is why the gospel is needed. The answer is the rest of the chapter, verses 18-32.

This passage – Romans 1:18-32 may be the most hated passage in all of the New Testament, because it talks about the wrath of God. Folks, we need the gospel because of the wrath of God. And Paul tells us

I. THE WRATH OF GOD IS REAL.

Romans 1:18 For **the wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

The word wrath means an established, determined indignation to sin as opposed to a fleeting, emotional, or uncontrolled anger. The wrath of God flows out of the holiness of God. The whole of Scripture declares the reality of the wrath of God.

- God pronounced a death sentence on Adam and Eve and cursed the world in which they lived as a result of their sin.
- God destroyed all mankind except Noah and his family because “every intent of their heart was only evil continually.”
- God confused the language of sinful men building the Tower of Babel and scattered them across the face of the earth.
- He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah,
- Pharaoh and his armies,
- and even sent His own children into exile because of their sin.

Neither is the wrath of God confined to the Old Testament. The New Testament does not mask the severity of God's wrath nor mute its proclamation.

- Jesus warned of fiery hell (Mt. 5:22)
- and told people it was better to have a limb cut off than be cast into hell. (Mt. 5:28-29)
- He described the rich man who went to hell. (Lk. 16:19-31)
- During the tribulation, the undiluted wrath of God will be poured out upon the earth in the bowl judgments.
- And when Christ returns in all His glory, the Bible says that "He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God."

Far too many people say, "Oh, I just want to hear about the love of God."

Well, my friend, I would rather hear of the love of God and talk about the love of God also. God is love, and there is so much to be said about the bountiful love of God.

But I would also rather talk

- about birth more than death
- about health more than sickness
- about triumphs more than tragedies.

But that does not mean that tragedy, sickness, and death are not real. And if my preference to talk about other things leaves me unprepared to deal with these realities of life, then woe is me.

The wrath of God is indeed unpleasant to consider, but let us not be deceived.

It is very, very, real.

God's wrath is not selective nor partial. Because God is altogether holy, God's wrath is against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Ungodliness indicates a **lack of reverence for God, a lack of devotion to God, or a lack of worship of God**. Jude records the words of the ancient prophet Enoch who proclaimed that the Lord would come to execute judgment on all the ungodly for all of their ungodly works, deeds, and words against the Almighty.

Unrighteousness is almost a synonym for ungodliness, **but unrighteousness focuses on the result** and the action whereas ungodliness focuses on the heart attitude. Ungodliness always leads to unrighteousness, and unrighteousness is always the result of ungodliness.

Both come under the heading of “sin,” and all are guilty. The only thing God hates is sin, but sin always brings the wrath of God.

And then the Holy Spirit through Paul says,

II. THE WRATH OF GOD IS DESERVED.

Romans 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who suppress the truth in unrighteousness**, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Suppress the truth in unrighteousness can be rendered **constantly are suppressing the truth by persisting in their sin.**

The problem is not that men and women know nothing of God and truth; the problem is that they hide the truth from themselves and others because they love sin. Jesus said,

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

Through the evidence left by the creation of the world, God reveals His existence and power as God to every man and woman, everywhere in the world, and across all of time.

Are any of you watching the National Geographic Series “One Strange Rock” hosted by Will Smith?

Now, Will Smith says that he is a Christian, but you know that National Geographic has no Christian leanings. Yet this show documents many of the very unique things about our planet. It is certainly presented from an evolutionary point of view. In fact, referring to the atmosphere of earth that sustains all of life, showing in this picture as the thin blue line around our globe, Will Smith says it may well be the only place in the universe like that!

Friend, the words of Paul written to the Romans are more understandable and believable today than ever in the history of mankind.

For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

From the absolute impossibility of the existence of DNA without an intelligence greater than anything we know, even in our modern age to write the code and cause the design of everything living to be produced accordingly and to function by it.

To the design of biochemical machines working inside human cells making products, storing and transporting them, burning energy, producing waste and disposing of it, all exhibiting design we are just beginning to understand but cannot come close to reproducing.

All of this was done by God and exists so that we could see His handiwork in the things He has created and we can know that He exists.

Folks, the problem is not the lack of evidence. The problem is just as Jesus described.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

Therefore,

Romans 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who suppress the truth in unrighteousness**, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, **so that they are without excuse**,

They suppress the truth in unrighteousness, and are without excuse. And then he adds,

Romans 1:21 because, although they knew God, **they did not glorify Him as God**, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and **their foolish hearts were darkened**.

Thus every sin ever known and practiced in the history of mankind arose and spread through the race. Not that every person did them all; but every person did some of them. And he lists them: homosexuality, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

Folks, the wrath of God is real, and we all deserve for it to fall upon us. And that is why we need the gospel.

III. THE GOSPEL IS THE ONLY SALVATION FROM THE WRATH OF GOD.

The gospel says that even though we are without excuse for our sins, Jesus loves us enough that He went to the cross and died in our place.

The gospel says, that **He rose from the dead, proving He is the Son of God** who has the power to forgive us, cleanse us, save us, and transform us.

Today, Jesus offers to forgive our sins and give us eternal life with Him if we will

Romans 10:9 if you **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead**, you will be **saved**.

Jesus told us this is the only way. There is no other way!

Who are we who rightly deserve for the wrath of God to fall upon us to demand that there be another way?

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through Me!

That is why we need the gospel, every single one of us.

But each of us are not the only ones that need this gospel.

- Our family members need it. Our friends need it.
- Our neighbors need it. People in our city, our state, all across our country need it.
- People all around the world need it.
- They are all deserving of the wrath of God, and it will most certainly fall upon them. And the only thing that can save them from it is the gospel.

CONCLUSION:

1. Do you need to believe the gospel today?
2. Who do you need to tell the gospel to?
3. Where does God want you to go to share the gospel? I still need people to go with me to Brazil in July.