

I'M NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

ROMANS 1:16-18 • TV128A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5TH, 1980

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Transcribed, edited and published
APRIL 17TH, 2015

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Romans 1:16-18

“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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”

I'm asking you to open your Bible with me today to the book of **Romans**. I am going to be speaking from the **first chapter** of the book of **Romans verses 16 through 18**.

Now, the title of this message is: **“I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.”**

Paul writes in **Romans 1:16**: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation, unto everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”*

Now, the apostle Paul knew from experience the opposition which the Gospel encounters everywhere. Men hate the true Gospel of God's redeeming grace, especially, the religious and the self-righteous hate the Gospel of God's sovereign redeeming grace.

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Now, the Gospel of Christ, the true Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has no enemies quite like those who are endeavoring by their own efforts to find favor with God. You will find that those who hated Christ and who despised His message were not the Publicans and harlots but the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and religious leaders.

You will find today, that those who despise the Gospel of free grace are not found among the open, profane sinners of this world. They know that if they are ever saved God will have to do it. They know that if they ever receive mercy it will be sovereign mercy; they will not earn it and they will not work for it.

But those who despise the message of grace, the Gospel of God's grace in Christ, are the religious people who are endeavoring by their own efforts and by their own works and by their own obedience to certain laws, to find favor with God almighty.

The Scripture says: "*The preaching of the cross,*" when we say the preaching of the cross, we are talking about substitution; we are talking about effectual deliverance. We are talking about righteousness through the merits of Jesus Christ.

"The preaching of the cross is to them that are perishing, foolishness; (to the religious it is a stumbling block, an offense, and to the pagan it is sheer nonsense)." Paul said: "The gospel, the preaching of the gospel is offensive."

In **Galatians 5:11**, he said: "*If I preach works, then why am I persecuted? If I preach works there is no offense to the cross; (it's gone: but, if I preach the cross it is offensive to the natural man).*"

Now, what is there about the Gospel of Christ that makes it offensive to the religious man? What is there about the Gospel of redeeming grace that makes it quite offensive, that makes it a stumbling block, an offense to the natural, religious, man?

I will give you four things and I'm going to drive some nails here and I want you to listen to me just as carefully as you possibly can!

Paul said: "*I'm not ashamed of the gospel.*" He is talking about the Gospel of God; he's talking about the Gospel of God's grace. He's talking about the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and His sufficient, effectual, work. "*I'm not ashamed of it.*" Many people are. Paul said: "*I am not.*"

Here's the reason why men are ashamed of it; here's the reason why it is offensive:

First of all: The Gospel of Christ addresses all men as sinners!

The Gospel of Jesus Christ says that all men are sinners and that offends man's dignity. The religious person says: "We be not sinners." That's what they said to Christ; "*we be not sinners.*"

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Christ said, *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.”* Paul said, *“Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”* They said, *“We be not sinners.”* Then, those outside the church say; *“Well, we are not any worse sinners than the people in the church; we are no worse than they are.”*

Then, the people out in profanity and blasphemy and evil, they say, *“Well, we are not so bad; we’ve got some good traits.”* But, what does the Scripture say? The Scripture says: *“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:*

“All we like sheep have gone astray. We’ve turned everyone to his own way.” The Scripture says: *“To offend in one point of the law, (just one jot or tittle), is to be guilty of the whole law of God.”*

The Word of God says: *“What the law saith it saith to them who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. Your sins have separated you from God.”*

That’s the first point of offense. That’s the first stumbling block; the Gospel of Christ addresses all men as sinners, not good sinners, not pretty good sinners, not pretty bad sinners, but just sinners, they are all grouped, under one heading:

“There’s none good, there’s none righteous, there’s none that seeketh after God. They are altogether become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no not one.”

Why is the true Gospel offensive? I didn’t say that religion is offensive; the natural man is religious. I didn’t say that the average message of salvation is offensive, it’s not.

It tells the sinner what he can do in order to purchase salvation, what he can do in order to merit heaven, what he can do in order to merit God’s favor. But, the Gospel of Christ is offensive. It’s offensive because:

Secondly: The Gospel of Christ is learned by revelation!

It’s not by education, not by human wisdom; it is learned by revelation. It comes as a revelation of the Holy Spirit and that offends man’s wisdom. Oh how wise we think we are, how intelligent we think we are.

But, the Word of God tells us: *“The natural man receiveth not the things of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned (comprehended, or spiritually understood).”*

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a mystery. Religion is not a mystery. Free-will is not a mystery and antinomianism is not a mystery. Arminianism is not a mystery; the Gospel of grace is a mystery.

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Our Lord Jesus Christ said one day as He lifted his eyes to heaven: *“I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and thou hast revealed them unto babes, for even so Father, it seemed good in thy sight.”*

Our Lord said to Nicodemus, one of the smartest, one of the most intelligent Pharisees of his day: *“except you be born again, you cannot see, (comprehend, understand, discern; that’s what the word “see” means, comprehend, discern and understand), the kingdom of God.”*

The average person thinks that he can just open a Bible and read it and comprehend all that is written there through his natural wisdom and his natural intelligence. I am here to tell you that it’s not so.

“No man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him: even so; no man knoweth the things of God except the Spirit of God and he to whom the Spirit of God will reveal it.”

Christ said: *“No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the son will reveal him.”* And again our Lord said, *“No man cometh unto me except my Father which sent me draw him: As it is written in the prophets, they shall all be taught of God and every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me.”*

Now, this is offensive and that’s the reason I am saying that the Gospel of Christ is offensive to the natural man. It’s a hated message and it’s a hated doctrine.

Well, our Lord sent His disciples out and He said: *“now before you go; let me tell you, marvel not my brethren that the world hate you; it hated me before it hated you.”*

If you take the message of do-good-ism and the message of self-righteousness and the message of human works and the message of obedience to laws in order to merit, gain, or earn your way to heaven, nobody is going to despise you, nobody is going to hate you, nobody is going to turn you off.

But, if you take the message of free grace, the message of salvation by the merits of another, the cleansing by the blood of another, and righteousness by the obedience of another, in particular, the Lord Jesus Christ, you are going to be hated of all men.

It’s an offensive message. Calling a man a sinner, a lost sinner, is offending his dignity. Telling a man that he cannot by natural wisdom lay hold upon or embrace or find an interest in the things of God because Christ’s death is a mystery; is to offend his wisdom.

Are you with me? This is another reason the Gospel of Christ is offensive:

Thirdly: The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of substitution!

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This offends man's pride. The Gospel says: *"He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid on him and by his stripes we are healed."*

The Scripture says: *"Christ bear our sin in his body on the tree that we being dead to sin might live unto righteousness. By his stripes, (by his wounds, by his sacrifice), we are healed. He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

Paul said in **Romans 5:19**: *"By the disobedience of one, (representation in Adam in our stead), we became sinners, by the obedience of one (Jesus Christ) shall many be made righteous."*

This Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of substitution. Christ bore my sins that I might bear His glory. Christ bore my hell that I might enjoy His heaven. Christ bore my sickness that I might have His health. Christ bore my guilt that I might have His grace.

What does the natural man want? He wants something to do himself in order to be saved. His pride will not let him come to God as a beggar asking for bread.

His pride will not permit him to come to God bankrupt, seeking God's favor. His pride will not let Him come to God guilty, and guilty without one plea, except: *"Lord be merciful to me a sinner."* His pride will not permit it.

And when you go forth declaring that this grace is free grace and this mercy is sovereign mercy and this blood is applied by the will and sovereignty of God to whom He will, (plus nothing, minus nothing) you are going to have a fight on your hands.

Charlotte Elliott summed it up this way:

**“Just as I am
Without one plea
But that his blood
Was shed for me
Oh Lamb of God
I come to thee.**

**Just as I am
And waiting not
To rid my soul
Of one dark blot,**

**To thee whose blood
Can cleanse each spot
Oh Lamb of God I come.**

Just as I am

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**Poor, wretched, blind
Sight, riches, healing of the mind
All I need in thee to find
Oh Lamb of God I come.”**

That’s offensive. Paul said: *“I am not ashamed of the Gospel.”* I know it is offensive. It’s the offense of the cross.

I know it’s despised. Our Lord was hated; He was despised of men. *“He was esteemed not.”* Everybody who was anybody turned thumbs-down on Him because of what He preached.

It wasn’t because of what He did. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and was good to the poor. He went about doing good but they hated what He said because He said that the Gospel is “free grace.”

Fourthly: The Gospel of Christ is offensive because it is the Gospel of sovereign mercy!

What does the word sovereign mean? Well, somebody said that the meaning of sovereign is right in the middle of it: s-o-v-e-r-e-i-g-n, reign, sovereign, God reigns, and God rules.

The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of sovereign mercy. God said: *“I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”* In other words: God almighty owes no man anything; He’s not obligated to this human race.

Go back at the beginning, who fell first? Man didn’t fall first; there was a fall before Adam’s fall. There was the fall of Lucifer and the heavenly host who rebelled against God and fell.

You will read in the Scriptures that there’s no Saviour for the fallen angels; there’s no mercy for the fallen angels. There’s no provision for the fallen angels. In fact, plainly, Paul wrote in Hebrews: *“Christ took not on himself the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham.”*

So, there’s God’s sovereign mercy right there. He was pleased to pass by the fallen angels and reserve them according to Jude’s writings in the *“chains of everlasting darkness unto the day of judgment.”*

Go back to the Old Testament: *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Abraham found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”* The Hittites, the Amorites, the Philistines, the Persians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians; these people were not partakers of God’s mercy.

Only Israel, God chose Israel. God was pleased to show mercy to Israel. Israel did not deserve God’s mercy any more than the Hittites, or the Amorites, or any of the other “ites.” But God said: *“I will show favor to you because of a covenant I made with your fathers.”*

Then you come to the New Testament and you will find the apostle Paul saying to the Gentiles in Ephesus: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath chosen us in*

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Christ: blessed us with all spiritual blessings according as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world."

That we of all people, heathen, pagan and outcast, *"foreigners, aliens, strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, that we might be holy, before him in love, having predestinated us to the adoption of children according to the good pleasure of his own will."*

If you will read **John the 1st chapter** you will find John writing: *"He came unto his own and his own received him not,"* (talking about the Jews); His own received Him not, (talking about Israel); Christ was a Jew, He was an Israelite. He came as the king of Israel.

He came as the fulfillment of Melchizedek the priest, of Aaron the priest, of Moses the prophet, of David the king. He came as a fulfillment of the tabernacle, the sacrifices, and all the types and furniture and pictures in the whole Old Testament but they received Him not.

He came to His own things. He came to His own people. He came to His own world *"and the world knew him not,"* and they rejected Him. But; listen: *"As many as received him (by faith) to them gave he the privilege to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; (now watch it) which were born."*

This thing of salvation is not a decision, a chance, nor a choice; it's a birth: *"which were born, not of blood (that is not of family inheritance), not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man; they were born of God."*

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (we beheld by faith, through God-given eyes the glory of Christ and by God given ears the voice of Christ)." "It's not of him that willeth, it's not of him that runneth; it's God that showeth mercy."

Salvation, my friend, is the gift of God. It's not the award of works presented. It's not the reward earned by the human race; it's the gift of God, the gift of God.

Now, preachers may attempt to present God as weak and helpless and defeated in the matter of salvation. They may try to present God's will and His purpose frustrated by human beings. I will tell you this: God's on the throne, *"He rules in the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of this earth and he giveth it to whomsoever he will."*

And our God is sovereign; He reigns and He rules. He said: *"Can I not do with mine own what I will? Hath not the potter power over the clay to make of the same lump, a vessel unto honor and a vessel unto dishonor?"*

My friend; God is sovereign in creation. He made this world, the heavens and the earth as it pleased Him, as He is sovereign in providence. Our Lord said: *"Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father."* He said: *"He numbers the hairs of your head."*

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God is sovereign in providence: *“All things work together for good to them who love God who are the called according to his purpose.”*

God is not only sovereign in creation and in providence but he is sovereign in salvation too: *“The foundation of God standeth sure having this seal: God knoweth them that are his.”*

Yes sir! *“He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth: He worketh all things after the council of his own will.”* And our Master said, *“All that my Father giveth me shall come to me.”*

So that's why the Gospel is offensive. That's four reasons. Paul says: *“I'm not ashamed of it; I'm not ashamed of this Gospel.”* It may offend man's dignity calling him a sinner. It may offend his wisdom, preaching to him that the understanding thereof is by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

It may offend his concept of free will to tell him that God is sovereign and it may offend his pride to tell him the blood of Christ is sufficient to save all for whom it was shed. But my friend; it's so.

Now, the amazing thing to me and I want you to listen for a moment; I want your undivided attention. Paul said, *“I'm not ashamed of this gospel.”* I'm not ashamed of it that God created man in His own image and man sinned and fell and death and darkness, judgment and sin came upon all men.

I'm not ashamed of that. I'm not ashamed to declare it; that's what the Book says. I'm not ashamed to declare that man rebelled against God and he had no hope and no ability of ever being restored except God show mercy.

I'm not ashamed to declare that God almighty purposed to save a people out of Adam's race. In fact; Paul said in **Romans**: *“If God had not left us a remnant according to election, we would be like Sodom and Gomorrah; (there wouldn't be even ten).”*

That's what Abraham pleaded wasn't it? *“Lord; if you can find ten down there, will you spare the city? I'll spare.”* He couldn't find any other than Lot who strayed therein.

I'm not ashamed to declare that Jesus Christ from the foundation of this world was the Lamb slain, for He was made our Representative. I'm not ashamed that He was designated, ordained, as our Surety, that He was anointed and appointed as our Saviour.

God set Christ Jesus apart to redeem a people and *“in the fullness of time”* He came down to this earth, the God-man clothed in human flesh and made of a woman, made under the law, as our Representative and He met the law and obeyed it in every jot and tittle as a human being.

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He sweated, He wept, He walked, and He wearied with His journey. He was hungry and thirsty and tired. He was under the law of the home and the law of the nation and the ceremonial law and the moral law, every law, every jot and tittle of man and God.

He didn't offend in one point; He was a perfect man. He was doing these things for the people He represented. He went to the cross and there was laid upon Him our guilt and filth and sin and He paid for it; He paid it in full:

**“Jesus paid it all
All the debt I owe,
Sin has left a crimson stain
And he washed it white as snow.”**

And He died on that cross under the charge of our sins, under the just charge of all condemnation of our guilt and He was buried and rose again. God raised Him from the dead having accepted His sacrifice and His sin offering.

He ascended to the right hand of the heavenly Father and triumphed in victory having conquered His foe and He sat down waiting until all of His sheep shall be brought home, until all the elect shall be called, until every redeemed person shall have been brought to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ.

And He's coming back again. Paul said, "I'm not ashamed of that; that's good news and that's free grace."

But what amazes me; this is what amazes me, no matter how unscriptural, no matter how unscriptural and how ridiculous a religious system is, the natural man is not ashamed of it.

In other words, we will take a religious leader and we will dress him up in a funny hat and we will put a robe on him, and gold and silver, and precious stones, and all of these things and put him out in a parade carrying some kind of symbol and people will follow him and they will bow down in front of him.

They will kiss his ring and he can put his hands on them and bless them. He claims to be the vicar, the representative, the substitute of Jesus Christ. They can do all of these things and people are not ashamed of that.

It's utterly ridiculous but they are not ashamed of it. No matter how ridiculous the ceremony is, no matter how ridiculous. We burn candles, we put food out "the day of the dead" down in Mexico believing that the spirits of the departed will come and eat it. Folks aren't ashamed of that.

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We go through all of this rigmarole in the name of God no matter how ridiculous a doctrine is. I attended a mass one time (in Mexico) for “the dead in purgatory” and people brought their money to give to pay to get people out of purgatory.

No matter how ridiculous that is it's not in God's Word, yet people are not ashamed of it. No matter how ridiculous the tradition is people will leave off meat on a certain day of the week.

They will spend a certain five days during the week doing without something that they didn't care for anyway and believe that God almighty is impressed with that.

How in the world can anyone believe that the God of heaven and earth cares whether I eat beans or what we eat on Friday or whether I give up this that or the other? *“God looks on the heart. It's not that which goeth into the mouth that defileth a man it's that which comes out of his heart.”*

And yet, no matter how ridiculous the doctrine, no matter how ridiculous the tradition, no matter how ridiculous the ceremony, no matter how ridiculous the system; men are not ashamed. They will go along with it, they will brag on it, they will put big newspaper ads about it, they will write magazine articles about it, and they will follow it.

But let a man come along and tell the truth about man and the truth about God and the truth about Jesus Christ and all hell breaks loose and all of the venom and fire and anger of the mob is vent upon him and people are ashamed to be identified with him.

Our Lord said this; now listen to me, in **John Chapter 5**: *“I am come in my Father's name and you receive me not.”* Let another come in his own name, doing his own thing; he can come over here from a foreign country and sell flowers and claim to do all these things and you will make a millionaire out of him.

Let him come in his own name. Let him come claiming the power to forgive sin, claiming the power to pray people out of hell, claiming the power to heal bodies, claiming the power to take people to heaven, claiming with power to do all these things and folks will follow him just like so many sheep, you know.

They will just follow him just like the pied piper. They will believe anything you say. They will make him a wealthy man. They will send him millions of dollars just to build a school or a hospital or feather his own nest or buy anything he wants.

He can wear jewels and diamonds and rings and tell a lie on God and people follow it but they are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Paul said: *“I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God unto salvation (and it is the only thing that will save).”*

A lot of things will make you religious but only Christ can save. A lot of things will give you a good feeling but only Christ can save. A lot of things will give you a system to bow to but only Christ can save because only Christ can honor, effectually, every attribute of a holy God.

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You see, my friend; God cannot save anybody at the expense of His law, His righteousness, and His justice. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ reveals the righteousness of God, the holiness of God, and the love of God.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ makes us acceptable in the eyes of our Father because; listen to the next verse: *“I’m not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; it’s the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew, to the Greek, (to the black, to the white, to the old, to the young, to the rich, to the poor, to the intelligent and to the unintelligent).*

The gospel of Christ is the power of God; Christ is the Saviour. He’s the Redeemer because in the gospel of Christ *“therein is the righteousness of God revealed, (the holiness of God, the justice of God revealed in Jesus Christ).”*

Here’s what I do; I don’t point you to me, I can’t save sinners. I can’t heal; I can’t give you what you need and I don’t point you to the church or the denomination. I don’t point you to a system of doctrine.

I point you my friend, back yonder to Calvary’s cross where Christ died, to the right hand of God where He sits as our Mediator praying for us, assuring us of God’s favor, not according to who we are or what we’ve done but because of who He is and what He did and what He’s doing and what He shall do as our Representative!