

# DEVOTIONAL

WHEN IN ROME I // NOT ASHAMED  
MAY 16, 2021

GRACE  
FELLOWSHIP

**Discussion Starter:** What do you think it means to be ashamed of the gospel?

**Key Text:** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (Romans 1:16-17)

## Unashamed!

Adoniram Judson served as a missionary in Burma for nearly forty years in the 1800s. His work there alongside Luther Rice led to the formation of the first Baptist association in America to support missionaries. Judson endured great suffering and hardship in his efforts to take the gospel to the lost in Burma. For seventeen months, he was held captive in Ava prison for preaching the gospel—he was subjected to hunger, deprivation, and brutal mistreatment. For the rest of his life, he bore scars from the shackles on his arms and legs. When he was released from prison, he requested permission to enter another province to continue his ministry. His request was denied by the godless ruler who said, “My people are not foolish enough to listen to anything a missionary might say, but I fear they might be impressed by your scars and turn to your religion.”

The apostle Paul knew what it was to suffer for the cause of Christ. For the sake of the gospel, he had been smuggled out of Berea, laughed out of Athens, chased out of Thessalonica, imprisoned in Philippi, beaten five times, stoned twice, left for dead once, and shipwrecked! Yet, in our text, we see Paul boldly declaring, “*I am not ashamed of the gospel*” (v.16a). Christians were being persecuted in Rome, and perhaps Paul sensed that some of the Christians there were being tempted to be ashamed about Jesus and the gospel message. After all, it’s one thing to believe the gospel; it’s another thing to take the risk of preaching it to others.

**Discuss:** What do you think are some reasons a Christian might be tempted to be ashamed of the gospel?

## Two Reasons Why Paul Was Not Ashamed of the Gospel:

**The gospel is the power of God to change the lives of everyone who believes.**

“...for it [the gospel] is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (v.16b)

The word “power” in v.16 is the Greek word from which we get our word “dynamite.” Paul is saying that only the gospel has the spiritually explosive power to supernaturally change our lives from the inside out in profound and positive ways that we could never accomplish by ourselves (2 Cor.5:17).

God gave the message “to the Jews first” (v.16). They were His chosen people to be missionaries to the world and spread the good news around. But when they rejected the message as a nation, God turned “also to the Greek” (means the same as Gentiles—all non-Jewish people in the world) (v.16). Now the gospel belongs to everybody—Jews and Gentiles alike!

Anyone and everyone who puts their faith in Christ and his death on the cross for their sin will be saved—rescued from sin’s penalty and power—and welcomed into God’s forever family. History is marked by people from nearly every tribe and tongue whose lives have been transformed by the gospel. Paul is asserting that this is great news—there is nothing to be ashamed of!

**Discuss:** In what ways has the gospel—the power of God—changed your life?

**The gospel reveals that we are placed in a right relationship with God by faith.**

*“For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’”* (Romans 1:17)

The word “righteousness” in verse 17 refers to the position of the right-standing God gives the believing sinner who puts his faith in Christ. The righteousness of God brings us into a right relationship with God and treats us as if we had never even sinned. The gospel reveals this wonderful truth.

Human experience proves that we cannot obey God’s laws flawlessly. All of us have sinned and fall short of God’s perfect standard (Rom.3:10, 23). We are unable to bring ourselves into a right relationship with God through our own strength or goodness. But God did not give up on us. When we could not get to Him because of our sin, He came to us in the person of Jesus, who took our sins to the cross and died to pay our sin’s penalty. Then three days later, He rose from the grave so we could receive new life and be brought into a right relationship with Him.

The way we experience this gift of God’s righteousness is totally by faith—from first to last: “...*from faith for faith...*” (v.17). In verse 17, Paul refers to Habakkuk 2:4, “*the righteous shall live by faith,*” to emphasize that if you want to be right with God, you must live by faith in God. The entire gospel is great news—there’s no reason to be ashamed of any of it! Paul had great confidence in the gospel.

**Discuss:** What are some ways people mistakenly try to earn their way into a right relationship with God?

**Discuss:** How would you encourage a new Christian to have confidence in sharing the gospel?

**For Further Study:**

*What is the Gospel?* by Greg Gilbert

“What Does It Mean to Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel?” at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

Commentary on the Book of Romans at [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com)