

The Gospel and God's Righteousness (28)

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Romans 1:1-17

(Continuation from 02/21/16)

C. Paul's Boldness for Christ: Unashamedness of the Gospel, Romans 1:16-17

Romans 1:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ "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."

¹⁷ "For in it *the* **righteousness** of God is revealed from **faith** to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith."

1. It is the *good news* from God Himself (v.16).
2. It is the power of God to save (v.16).
3. It is the revelation of God's righteousness (v.17).

2. (Romans 1:16) Gospel— God, Power of— Salvation: Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God to save.

Romans 1:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ 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.

Note **four significant facts.**

1. The word "power" (*dunamis*) means the might, energy, force, and strength that is **within** God.
2. The word "salvation" must be understood and grasped by every person upon earth.
3. God saves all who believe.
4. God saves all nationalities, both Jew and Greek.

In verses 16-17, Paul uses four key words that are crucial to understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ: **power**, **salvation**, **faith**, and **righteousness**.

1. The word "power" (*dunamis*) means the might, energy, force, and strength that is **within** God. The power is "of God," of His very nature. As God, He is the embodiment of power; He possesses all power, that is, omnipotent power, within His Being. He can do and act as He chooses.

The point is this: God has chosen to use His power in a loving way by sending men the "good news," the gospel of salvation. Being all powerful, God could wipe men off the face of the earth, but instead He has chosen to give men the good news of salvation. This tells us a

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critical truth: God's nature is love. He is full of compassion and grace. He is the God of salvation; therefore, He sent the "gospel of Christ" to the world that men might be saved.

Power

for it is the power of God (1:16b)

Romans 1:16 (NASB)

16"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."

First of all, Paul declares, the gospel is the power of God. *Dunamis* (power) is the Greek term from which our word *dynamite* is derived. The gospel carries with it the omnipotence of God, whose power alone is sufficient to save men from sin and give them eternal life.

Paul reminded the church at Corinth that "For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (**1 Corinthians 1:18 (NASB)**), and "we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (**1 Corinthians 1:23-25 (NASB)**). What to the world seems to be utter absurdity is in fact the power by which God transforms men from the realm of darkness to the realm of light, and delivers them from the power of death and gives them the right to be called the children of God (**John 1:12**).

John 1:12 (NASB)

12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."

Ancient pagans mocked Christianity not only because the idea of substitutionary atonement seemed ridiculous in itself but also because their mythical gods were apathetic, detached, and remote—totally indifferent to the welfare of men. The idea of a caring, redeeming, self-sacrificing God was beyond their comprehension. While excavating ancient ruins in Rome, archaeologists discovered a derisive painting depicting a slave bowing down before a cross with a jackass hanging on it. The caption reads, "**Alexamenos sebethe theon**", "**Alexamenos adora dio**" "**Alexamenos worships his god.**"

In the late second century this attitude still existed. A man named Celsus wrote a letter bitterly attacking Christianity. "Let no cultured person draw near, none wise, none sensible," he said, "for all that kind of thing we count evil; but if any man is ignorant, if any is wanting in sense and culture, if any is a fool, let him come boldly [to Christianity]" (**William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975], p.21; cf. Origen's *Against Celsus***). "Of the Christians," he further wrote, "we see them in their own houses, wool dressers, cobblers and fullers, the most uneducated and vulgar persons" (**p.21**). He compared Christians to a swarm of bats, to ants crawling out of their nests, to frogs holding a symposium around a swamp, and to worms cowering in the muck!

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Not wanting to build on human wisdom or appeal to human understanding, Paul told the Corinthians that **“when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified”** ([1 Corinthians 2:1-2 \(NASB\)](#)). Later in the letter Paul said, **“For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power”** ([1 Corinthians 4:20 \(NASB\)](#)), the redeeming power of God.

Every believer, no matter how gifted and mature, has human limitations and weaknesses. Our minds, bodies, and perceptions are imperfect. Yet, incredibly God uses us as channels of His redeeming and sustaining power when we serve Him obediently.

Scripture certainly testifies to God’s glorious power ([Exodus 15:6](#)), His irresistible power ([Deuteronomy 32:39](#)), His unsearchable power ([Job 5:9](#)), His mighty power ([Job 9:4](#)), His great power ([Psalm 79:11](#)), His incomparable power ([Psalm 89:8](#)), His strong power ([Psalm 89:13](#)), His everlasting power ([Isaiah 26:4](#)), His effectual power ([Isaiah 43:13](#)), and His sovereign power ([Romans 9:21](#)).

Jeremiah declared of God, **“It is He who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens”** ([Jeremiah 10:12 \(NASB\)](#)), and through that prophet the Lord said of Himself, **“I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm”** ([Jeremiah 27:5](#)).

The psalmist admonished, **“Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast”** ([Psalm 33:8-9 \(NASB\)](#)). His is the power that can save.