

We Christians, can be so different to each other (just have a look around). We come in all different shapes and sizes – we come from different walks of life, and nationalities – all different ages and stages of life...

But physical and social differences aside, there is another, **glaringly obvious** difference between Christians.... Some Christians, are always really keen, to tell others about Jesus... And others of us – well, we're more like undercover agents – we almost need to be water-boarded – to even admit that we know Jesus...

And today, we're going to catch a little glimpse as to "Why that is."

These 2 verses we're studying today, are a series of statements, each explaining the previous statement.

- Paul tells us, that he's **eager** to preach the Gospel – Why?
- Because he's not **ashamed** of the Gospel – But, **why** isn't he ashamed of the Gospel?
- Because it is the **power** of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.... But, **why** is the Gospel the power of God for salvation?
- Because **in** the Gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed

Do you see the progression:

- I'm eager to preach the Gospel. Why?
- Because I'm not ashamed of the Gospel. Why?
- Because the Gospel is the power of God for salvation. Why?

- Because in the Gospel, the righteousness of God is being revealed.

That's the progression.

So, let's begin at V16. Paul is eager to preach the Gospel, because he's not ashamed of it...

Some people think, that when Paul said he's not ashamed of the Gospel, that was his way of saying that he's proud of it... But Paul usually says, exactly what he means. And if Paul is saying, that he's not ashamed of the Gospel, well that's exactly what he means – he's not **ashamed** of it...

But why would he say that? Why would he tell us that **he's not** ashamed of the Gospel? – I'll tell you why – it's because so many of us, are. Many of us, are ashamed of the Gospel.

And here's a few reasons why:

Firstly, the Gospel is **unbelievable**. For example: The first statement of the Apostle's creed: *I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.*

In our scientific age, that's unbelievable. Who wants to believe in a God. To many, it's absurd to believe there's a God, who created all of this out of nothing – they'd rather believe an even **more** unbelievable notion – that all of this happened by chance.

And then we ask them to believe God does miracles – That He covered the whole Earth with a flood. That He divided the waters of the Red Sea. That he made the walls of Jericho to

tumble down. That he spoke to the prophets through dreams and visions....

And then, what about Jesus Himself and salvation? We expect them to believe that Jesus (God's one and only begotten Son) was born (to a virgin). And we expect them to believe that Jesus grew up, and lived a perfect life, performed miracles, and cast out demons, that He healed the sick and raised the dead... And then, after He was crucified on the cross, He was raised from the dead... That's just incredible. Who in their right mind, would believe this stuff?

And we live in a world, who look upon what we Christians believe – (and what the Gospel proclaims), and to them it's nothing more, than a great big old fairytale. “And you honestly believe that nonsense?”, they would say.

And so the Gospel, can be so **unbelievable** (It's so incredible), that we might find ourselves, being ashamed of it... The Gospel is foolishness, to a world who is perishing... And some of us are so ashamed, because we feel that **if** we own up to it, others will think of us as, “foolish”.

A second reason, that some are ashamed of the Gospel, is because it's **offensive**. It's the message that tells the most upright person in society, that without Jesus, they are evil, and destined for hell (Now that's a quick way to offend someone).

The Gospel, is the message that tells us, that **none** of us are good enough – not one. It tells us that all of our good works, are never good enough, to make up for **any** of the bad things we've ever done. And so the Gospel is offensive. *The fact that before God, a professing atheist like Fred Hollows (who*

has done so many good deeds) is on an equal standing, with a rapist or a mass-murderer, is utterly offensive. For the Gospel tells us that we have **all** sinned, and we **all** fall short of the glory of God, and that we all need to repent, and follow Jesus, to be saved...

The Gospel is utterly offensive. And some of us are ashamed, to offend.

A third reason that some are ashamed of the Gospel, is that it's **exclusive**. Jesus said ^{John 14:6} **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** The Gospel is very exclusive. There is no other way to be saved. All other religions – all other (so called) gods, are not gods at all – they're demons pretending to be gods – trying to drag us away from the only one truth...

And so, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is exclusive.

But our world values **inclusiveness** and tolerance. And our political correctness means that we can **never** tell anybody else that **their** way is wrong....

And we're ashamed to tell other people "You're on the wrong road. You're going the wrong way..."

A fourth reason that some may be ashamed of the Gospel, is because it's seen as being **irrelevant**... It's like we're trying to sell a product that nobody wants to buy.

It's like trying to sell a mechanical adding machine, in a world saturated with smart phones, that do far more.

We live in a very comfortable society, where death is a long way off, and the Gospel's the last thing that people want to worry about. And to them, it may seem totally irrelevant. And even the very best evangelists, might share the Gospel with 50 people, and get not one, single positive response. And we give up. We're ashamed of it. Because it seems irrelevant.

And so, some churches **change** the gospel. If people aren't looking to get right with God – if submitting to the Lordship of Christ seems irrelevant for them, well HEY, we'll teach them about other stuff:

- We'll teach them how to get their finances on track
- Or how to have a more fulfilled marriage
- Or how to have satisfaction in their career

And so, some are ashamed of the simple Gospel message, because they feel it's irrelevant.

Fifthly, some are ashamed of the Gospel because it's **insignificant**. Less and less people, attend church, every year. Christians are well in the minority. We're like the odd-ones-out... And that shouldn't surprise us. Jesus said: ^{Matthew}

7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

And sometimes we're ashamed of the Gospel, because it puts us in the minority. And it's easy to be ashamed of something, when you're in the minority...

When I was a student at Ag College, and all my mates were going off to get drunk for the weekend, I was very much in the minority. And young people, in your late teens to your early 20's, it will become very evident, that to follow Jesus – to live by the Gospel – will put you in the minority... And it's very easy, in a situation like that, to be ashamed of it.

And so it happens, that even Christians become ashamed of the Gospel.

- It's unbelievable
- It's offensive
- It's exclusive
- It may seem irrelevant
- It's insignificant (we're in the minority)

And we feel ashamed.

And my, how **easy** it is, to be ashamed of the Gospel...

“Well, y-y-yeah I-I sorta am a Christian – I go to church and stuff....”

If we take an honest assessment, “Have we been ashamed of Jesus?” “Have we been ashamed of the Gospel?”

Jesus said:

Luke 9: 25

... what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him

will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory

That's pretty scary hey? I don't want Jesus to be ashamed of me. Do you? If we disown Jesus, He disowns us¹. And so we'd better not be ashamed of Jesus.

And Paul wasn't. He said, "I'm not **ashamed** of the Gospel"

On many occasions, when Paul preached, and he was laughed out of town; He was mocked; He was ridiculed; He was beaten; He was arrested... But still, he wasn't ashamed of the Gospel. When he was in jail, he would preach in the jail. He wasn't ashamed.

But **why** wasn't he ashamed of it? Because the **Gospel**, is the **power of God to save**.

The Greek word for "power", is δύναμις - the word from which we get our word "dynamite". The Gospel is dynamite. It's powerful.

And this is where we come to the crux of it. If I truly understand the **dynamite power** of the Gospel, I won't be ashamed of it... It's powerful. It's amazing. It's awesome. It is the **power** of God, to save.

Mankind can build power stations and racing cars, and enormous mining equipment (of tremendous power) On ANZAC Day, we saw an FA18 fly down our river, and then up in the air like that. 16.8 tonnes, driven by

100,000 horse powerⁱⁱ, capable of a top speed of over 1900km/hr – wowh, how powerful is that?

Science learned, decades ago, how to split the atom, and how to even produce power (that we cannot harness) with the fusion of hydrogen atoms, in a hydrogen bomb....

But mankind can never produce the power that is required, for salvation – that’s something that only God can do. Man cannot raise the dead. And science would say “We just need more technology”.. But it’s not technology that’s lacking – it’s power – the power to save....

The Gospel, is the power of God to save. And not just a few special people. The Gospel is able to save absolutely everyone. The same power, that raised Jesus from the dead, is the power that can save anyone.

- There is no people-group on this earth, who are beyond the power of the Gospel to be saved.
- Missionaries have taken the gospel, right across the globe. And nowhere, is there a country or a culture, or a village, or a family, where no one can be saved.
- There is no sinner, who is too **bad**, to be saved.
- There is no one, who is so despised or rejected, or alone, that they are beyond the saving power of the love of God.

Isn’t that great? Isn’t that wonderful? No one – not one single person, in this whole wide world, is that far gone, that they can’t be saved...

But sadly, not everybody **will** be saved. The Gospel has the **power** to save everybody, but not everybody will be saved:

Only those who believe. Only those who submit themselves to Jesus, as their Lord, and believe, will be saved...

Why? Most **other** religions teach that you have to **earn** your salvation. Why can't I earn my salvation??? ... Because that's not the Gospel.

If I could earn my salvation, that wouldn't reveal the righteousness of God – that would reveal self righteousness, wouldn't it.... And self-righteousness is ugly... - yeah??? Why is self-righteousness ugly? Because ultimately it's false... If I try and present you with a self-righteous Michael, it's a lie.

If any of you are under any illusion, that Michael Brumpton is righteous, well you just have a word with my wife after church, and I can assure you, she'll very quickly strip away, any illusion of self-righteousness, that I've ever been able to muster up...

You see, self-righteousness is ugly, because it's false; it's hypocritical; and it's self-glorifying. But the righteousness of God, is a different kettle of fish altogether. It's real; It's true; and it glorifies the only one who **should** be glorified – it glorifies God

Whenever the Gospel is proclaimed, the righteousness of God, is being uncovered – it's being revealed. The righteousness of God was revealed once and for all, at the cross, on which Jesus died... But every time, the Good News of the Gospel is

preached, the righteousness of God is beingⁱⁱⁱ revealed over and over again.

It is a righteousness that comes **from** faith, **for** faith.... In fact, **"The righteous shall live by faith."**

Now, I can't fully explain this (in one sermon). Paul took the whole book of Romans, to explain what it means for the righteous to live by faith. And over the next few months, we're going to learn more about this, but for now, here's a little appetiser:

V17 says: ¹⁷ 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."**

Now, to Paul, "faith" means to "believe in" and "trust in" Jesus Christ, as Lord and Saviour.

That means we come to the realisation that Jesus is Lord. He is God; He is Master; He is Ruler. I am but a slave. And part of this realisation is: "In the past, I've tried to live my own way. I've taken Him off the throne, and I've had myself on the throne. I've tried to achieve my own righteousness. And I've failed... My self-righteousness did not achieve glory – it was ugly.

And The Lord Jesus Christ, says "Believe in Me as your Saviour."

In the righteousness of God, at the cross, the Lord became my saviour.

If I was walking along the river bank, and I saw somebody drowning in the river, and I had the ability to save them, would I be “righteous” if I didn’t save them? Of course not. Saving that person would be a righteous act.

And the Lord our God, had the ability to save us. We cannot save ourselves. But the Lord our God, could. And because Jesus Christ has saved us, He has demonstrated His righteousness.

And it’s totally **His** doing. We’re saved **by** faith. **For** faith – to **live** by faith...

Alright, He has done the work. So when we **believe** in Him, and **trust** in Him – as we repent of sin, and **self**-righteousness, He forgives us; He washes us; He cleanses us; He takes away all of our **un**righteousness; and He gives to us, the righteousness of God.

Now, I hope that’s enough for a brief explanation. But over the next few months, we’re going to learn more about the righteousness of God.

So, let’s be “**eager**” to preach the Gospel.

St Francis of Assisi, is wrongly quoted, as having said
"Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words."^{iv}

Has anybody ever heard that quote? It’s quite common. But he never said it.

Anyway, that quote **can** be used in a good way, “*to suggest that Christians talk about the gospel too much, and live the gospel too little.*”

But most often, when I’ve heard it quoted, it’s been used as an **excuse**, for not sharing the **message** of the gospel.... Being a disciple of Jesus, means that we must not be ashamed of the Gospel.

- We should be **eager** to preach the Gospel. Why?
- Because we shouldn’t be **ashamed** of the Gospel. Why?
- Because the Gospel is the **power** of God for salvation. Why?
- Because **in** the Gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed.

From faith. For faith.

Questions:

ⁱ Matthew 10:33

ⁱⁱ <http://www.roadandtrack.com/new-cars/car-comparison-tests/reviews/a18787/extreme-machines-boeing-fa-18f-super-hornet/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Moo, D.J., 1996. *The Epistle to the Romans*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

^{iv} <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/mayweb-only/120-42.0.html>