

Series: Romans
Title: Reasons I Am Ready
Text: Romans 1: 16-18
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Romans 1: 14: I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. 15: So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

What made Paul ready to preach the gospel in such a large, idolatrous, city as infidel Rome? Paul knew the gospel is hated by natural man.

The means itself is foolishness to men: God using one sinner to preach to other sinners.

The subject is shameful to natural man: God's Son took a human body, a sinless man born of a virgin, born into poverty.

Isaiah 53: 2:...he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. 3: He is despised and rejected of men;

The message is hated by natural man: ruined by the fall, the sinner unable to contribute, God choosing and passing by whom he would, Christ dying on a bloody cross as a substitute, being born-again of the Holy Spirit.

The people God saves and uses to preach are shameful to men. Christ passed by the Sanhedrim and the school of Gamalial to call uneducated fishermen to preach his gospel. Christ passed by pious Pharisees and scribes to call harlots and publicans, the poor, the lame, the helpless.

1 Corinthians 1: 26: For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

Paul knew the great majority hated Paul's gospel.

The Jews—Acts 21: 28: Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

The Gentiles—Acts 16: 20: saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21: And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

The Roman authority said—Acts 28: 22: ...as concerning this sect, [this cult] we know that every where it is spoken against.

Natural man rejects a *small* number believing *God's word* but regenerated men reject the *multitude* believing *man's word*. Christ said,

Matthew 7: 13: Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

All this is true in our day. Sinners' cast the same reproach in our teeth. Why?

1 Corinthians 2: 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

So why was the apostle Paul so ready to preach the gospel at this mega city full of citizens that were ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Paul makes four statements declaring why. Each statement begins with the word "*for*":

- **1) Romans 1: 16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:**
- **2) For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**
- **3) 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**
- **4) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;**

Proposition: Paul was ready to preach the gospel because the preaching of Christ crucified is the only way perishing sinners shall be saved.

“FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST”

The apostle Paul said this to embolden God’s saints then and now. Since believers are sure to suffer persecution, since there is carnal sinful flesh still in every believer, there is a very real danger of being pressured into being ashamed of the gospel. I realize, “*Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*” (Rom 10: 11) God will not allow his people to fall away in shame. But God’s people still need to be warned.

2 Timothy 1: 7: For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8: Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

Paul gave God the glory for him not being ashamed. He told Timothy, it was *the power of the gospel* that made him not ashamed.

2 Timothy 1: 10:...our Saviour Jesus Christ,...hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 11: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12: For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 13: Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14: That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. 15: This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16: The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: 17: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found *me*. 18: The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

Romans 5:5: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

That is why Paul said,

Philippians 1: 19: through...the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ 20: According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

So Paul was ready to preach at Rome because he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Are you ashamed of the gospel? Those who are not ashamed believe on Christ, confess Christ, identify with believers in support of the gospel and we are not ashamed to tell perishing sinners 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”

“It” is the preaching of the gospel of Christ—Paul said, “*I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome*”

Christ declared—*Isaiah 61: 1: The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek*

Together with “preaching”, “the power” is the subject—“*Christ himself and him crucified*”.

In addition, the power is “*the Voice of God*” speaking into the heart—*Isa 52:6: [Christ said] Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.*

When it says, *the Gospel of Christ is THE power of God unto salvation*—it declares that all other means are excluded to save his people. Paul said,

1 Corinthians 1: 17: For Christ sent me not to baptize, but *to preach the gospel*: not with wisdom of words, lest *the cross of Christ* should be made of none effect...21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it *pleased God* by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe.

By this means God produces the end result purposed from the beginning—*the salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to Gentile.*

“*To everyone that believeth*” does not mean that the sinner enables the gospel to be powerful by his believing. We believe because the Living Word, the incorruptible seed, has been planted within by the Holy Spirit of God.

James 1: 18: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth,...

1 Peter 1: 23: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24: For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Likewise, all growth in grace is *by the power of the gospel*, the same as our conception. God does two things in the sinner through the preaching of the gospel. He brings to nothing our own wisdom and understanding:

1 Corinthians 1: 18: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19: For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

A few verses down, Paul says, ‘ye see your calling brethren.’ Here he says the same: look around in his church at those called by God.

1 Corinthians 1: 20: Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22: For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Does he mean that God choose the gospel to bring our wisdom and our self-seeking to nothing? Exactly—

1 Corinthians 1: 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Secondly, God uses this means is “*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*” (1 Cor 2: 5)

1 Corinthians 2: 1: And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3: And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4: And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Remember, God’s word to Zerubbabel?—“*Not by [man’s] might, nor by [man’s] power, but My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.*” (Zech 4: 6)

In our text, the word “power” is “dunemous”—the gospel is *the dynamite* of God unto salvation.

“*The same power of God*” it takes to give a sinner life and make us believe on Christ is *the power of God* it took to raise Christ from the dead.

Ephesians 1: 19:...the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.

It not only makes us willing to believe on Christ, *but also makes us willing to identify with God’s people and makes us not ashamed to suffer for Christ’s sake.* Paul told the Thessalonians,

1 Thessalonians 2: 13: For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it not as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 14: For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews: 15: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us;

Brethren, do you know how encouraging this is to you and me? God said, “*My word shall not return unto me void but shall accomplish the thing whereunto I sent it!*” As God enables, all we do is preach the gospel of Christ. God makes the saving revelation unto his people by his power!

“FOR THEREIN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED FROM FAITH TO FAITH: AS IT IS WRITTEN THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH”

The gospel is a mystery hidden from men. *The righteousness of God* must be revealed by God.

1 Corinthians 2: 7: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even the hidden wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory...9: But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10: But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit:...12: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The righteousness he reveals is *Christ our Righteousness*. He reveals to us that we are sinners—unrighteous, unholy sinners—who cannot be justified by the works of the law. God makes us believe him. He reveals to us that because *God is just, he shall by no means clear the guilty. The soul that sinneth IT shall surely die.* He reveals that God is not going to set us free until the law of God has been honored in every jot and tittle. Until the last dregs of the cup of God’s wrath is drunk and his justice honored. **BUT HOW CAN GOD SLAY HIS PEOPLE SO THAT HE REMAIN JUST, AND AT THE SAME TIME, JUSTIFY AND SAVE HIS PEOPLE? THAT IS THE MYSTERY THAT MUST BE REVEALED!**

He reveals that only in Christ his Son can God be just and Justifier—a just God and a Savior. He reveals to his child that *HE gave his only begotten, sinless, Son—Christ is the Son of God!* He reveals to his child that *God made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* He reveals to his child that *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us.* He reveals to us that Christ paid it all, all the debt I owe: *He was wounded for our transgressions and by his stripes we are healed.* He reveals that the righteousness God requires, God provided, God worked out and God bestows on sinners freely by his grace!

“*From faith to faith*” The righteousness of God is revealed *from the faith of Christ our Righteousness to the faith* God has given the believer.

Romans 3: 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ...unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

The righteousness of God is revealed from the faith of Christ our Righteousness to the believer who God has given faith to believe God’s record of is Son.

Has God given you faith to believe the gospel of Christ? If he has you will not be ashamed to confess him before men in believer’s baptism. And by identifying with his church as we spread this gospel.

“*As it is written, the just shall live by faith*” All who Christ justified shall live by the faith of Christ through faith in Christ from the first hour to the last.

Galatians 2: 16: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Galatians 3: 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

I am not living unto my faith—looking to my faith. The ophthalmologist has his patient put on their newly prescribed eye glasses. They focus on the glasses, and the quality of vision they provide, as the patient reads the letters of eye chart. Most preachers are ophthalmologist. They make the sinner focus on their faith and the quality of vision it supplies as they read the letter of the scriptures like an eyechart. But true faith makes the believer to be like a person with healthy eyesight. When a person has 20/20 vision the ability to see is not the focus. It is forgotten in the enjoyment of seeing some delightful object before them. So the believer does not focus on his faith; it is forgotten in the enjoyment of beholding Christ.

And I am no longer living unto Moses and the law trying to earn righteousness and sanctification under legal restraints—then who does the believer live unto?

Galatians 2: 19: I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

2 Corinthians 5:15: Christ died for all [his people], that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

We live unto him by doing everything to the glory of God, so that we do not bring reproach on the gospel, as we send it forth into all the world.

“FOR THE WRATH OF GOD IS REVEALED FROM HEAVEN AGAINST ALL UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MEN, WHO HOLD THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNES.”

Men can know God’s eternal power and Godhead through the light of nature so that they are without excuse. But the righteousness of God is only revealed through the preaching of the gospel of Christ. We must preach the gospel of Christ in all the world because sinners are perishing and God only reveals Christ through the preaching of the gospel!

Illustration: The well of water in a desert. I am debtor!

Amen!