**TITLE: UNASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL**

**KEY TEXT: ROMANS 1:16-17**

1. **NOTE TO HOME CHURCH PASTORS**

At the last in person service, I brought a message on the title ‘Unashamed of the Gospel’. This carried on the series on ‘The Authority of a Believer’. The key text we looked at was Romans 1:16-17. Here, Paul says:

**Romans 1:16-17** (**NKJV)**

**16**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. **17**For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

**NLT**

**16**For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. **17**This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

Below, I have extracted some key points from my preach, presented in question format to give you an overview of what I spoke about. If you were not at the service, you can access the full message [here from 15.00](https://www.youtube.com/live/oQohb4ZIS6s?si=9cX6GzK0_agaBhGL).

**RECAP OF SOME OF THE KEY POINTS FROM THE PREACH.**

1. **What is the gospel?** - The gospel is the public announcement of the kingdom of God through the story of Jesus: his life, death, and resurrection. The key content of the gospel can be found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. A good gospel presentation should include an opportunity for people to respond to the love of God.
2. **Why does Paul refer to ‘shame’ in the context of the gospel?** – Paul wrote to the Romans from Corinth. We can refer to 1 Corinthians to get a bit of context. **1 Cor 1:18,21-25**

We see from the above passage that the preaching of the gospel was seen as foolishness. The Jews could not accept that their Messiah was a humble carpenter who died on the cross. They expected a conquering, victorious, Messiah that would deliver them from the grip of Rome. The Greeks saw it as foolishness as the cross was a despised form of punishment. It made no sense to them that a man dying on the cross could bring salvation. Paul had also experienced a lot of pain, rejection, beating, imprisonment, etc for the sake of the gospel. Paul could therefore be tempted to feel ashamed of speaking about such ‘foolishness’. However, he was not ashamed because he had first-hand experience of the power of the gospel to bring transformation to his own life and to the lives of others. He boldly declares that the gospel is the power of God to salvation. Indeed, the paradox is that the very gospel that had caused shame to Paul, was also the very thing that freed Paul from shame.

1. **What makes the gospel offensive in our world today?** - There are several things that could be highlighted. In his book ‘Romans 1-7 for You’, Tim Keller refers to 4 aspects of the content of the gospel that could be deemed offensive:
2. The gospel tells us we’re spiritual failures – the only remedy is in Christ.
3. The gospel tells us we’re wicked – without Christ, there is nothing good in us.
4. The gospel tells us that many good people go to hell – this would offend.
5. The gospel tells us that suffering is normal, not exceptional – Jesus was a suffering King. He won the victory through His suffering and death on the cross.

All of these may be offensive to people especially in a world of relativism where everyone has their own ‘truth’.

1. **In addition to the ‘offensive’ nature of the content of the message, Why may we be ashamed of the gospel today?** 
   1. We could be ashamed of the gospel because we are afraid of the response we would receive to the proclamation of the gospel.
   2. Cancel culture has an impact on us and breeds fear.

John Piper captures this when he says:

* “Today the shaming is not to say that you are wrong, but to say that you are arrogant if you think others are wrong. Not that you have bad thinking, but that you have a bad attitude. The greatest weapon of shaming today in the world of religious claims is the accusation that you are intolerant and therefore mean-spirited and egotistical.” - (John Piper)

1. **How did Paul show he was unashamed of the gospel?**

We can find this in **Romans 1:15 – 17** (**NLT)**

**15**So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News. **16**For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. **17**This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

Paul says **I am eager to come to you to preach the gospel** why? because I am not ashamed of it. I am not ashamed of it because of what it does. What does the gospel do? – It saves those who believe.

JD Greear’ captures this even further when he says:

* ‘The opposite of “ashamed of the gospel,” you see, is not “proud to be a Christian.” The opposite of “ashamed of the gospel” is “passionate to spread the gospel.”

From Paul’s life we can conclude that to be unashamed of the gospel is to be willing to boldly declare the gospel. To be passionate about spreading the good news of the kingdom.

1. **What does this mean for us?** We have been commissioned in **Matthew 28:18-20** to go and make disciples of all nations. God is asking that we join in establishing the kingdom by refusing to bow down to fear and shame and rather boldly declare the good news of the kingdom. There are several practical tools that we can use to share our faith. Our testimony is the most powerful resource we have. Other resources are booklets such as [‘Knowing God Personally’](https://www.agape.org.uk/knowing-god-personally/), [The4Points](https://www.the4points.com/uk/index.php). Apps such as [GodTools](https://godtoolsapp.com/en/), [LifeonMission](https://www.namb.net/evangelism/life-on-mission-app/) are good for sharing the gospel. God Tools is particularly useful where you are speaking to some who does not speak English as a first language. For accountability as we share the gospel relationally, the [I61 app](https://i61m.org/) is particularly useful.

**Conclusion**

THE GOSPEL IS OFFENSIVE, BUT I’M NOT ASHAMED

I AM NOT AFRAID TO PUBLICLY DECLARE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BECAUSE IT IS THE POWER OF GOD AT WORK, SAVING EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.

1. **FOR THE HOME CHURCH DISCUSSION**

**TEXT: ROMANS 1:16-17 (READ IN AT LEAST TWO VERSIONS); ACTS 10:1-48 – GET SOMEONE TO RECOUNT THE STORY AFTER READING IT.**

1. **Discuss the story in Acts 10:1-48.** How do we see the power of the gospel at work in this passage?
2. **Share testimony** - Give each person an opportunity to share a brief testimony of how they came to faith and draw out the importance of someone being willing to share the gospel as without someone sharing the gospel, we would not come to faith. (Romans 10:14-15). For this exercise, make it a maximum of 2-4mins per person depending on the size of your group. Focus – what was life before Christ, how did you meet Christ, how has your life changed since meeting Christ?
3. **Discuss hindrances** - Discuss practical reasons why we may be tempted to be ‘ashamed of the gospel’ today. Include the point about ‘fear of response’ if this is not already highlighted in the group. It may be useful to discuss some cases from recent events in the media where it appears people have been ‘cancelled’ when they stood for godly principles. Let the discussion be practical so that it encourages everyone.
4. **Encourage action** – Discuss how we might take action to share our faith in a way that shows we are unashamed of the gospel. Refer to some of the materials that we can use to share our faith such as the booklets and apps in the preach notes above. Find out if anyone in the group has used them in the last week or at any other time and whether they found them helpful.
5. **Encourage accountability** – I would recommend downloading the [I61 app](https://i61m.org/) and using that to track our goals for sharing our faith especially in a relational context with those around us.